LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES:

The Impact of Informal Information and Communication Networks on Security in the Tanzanian Refugee Camps

Acknowledgements

Cover photograph: Amy R. West
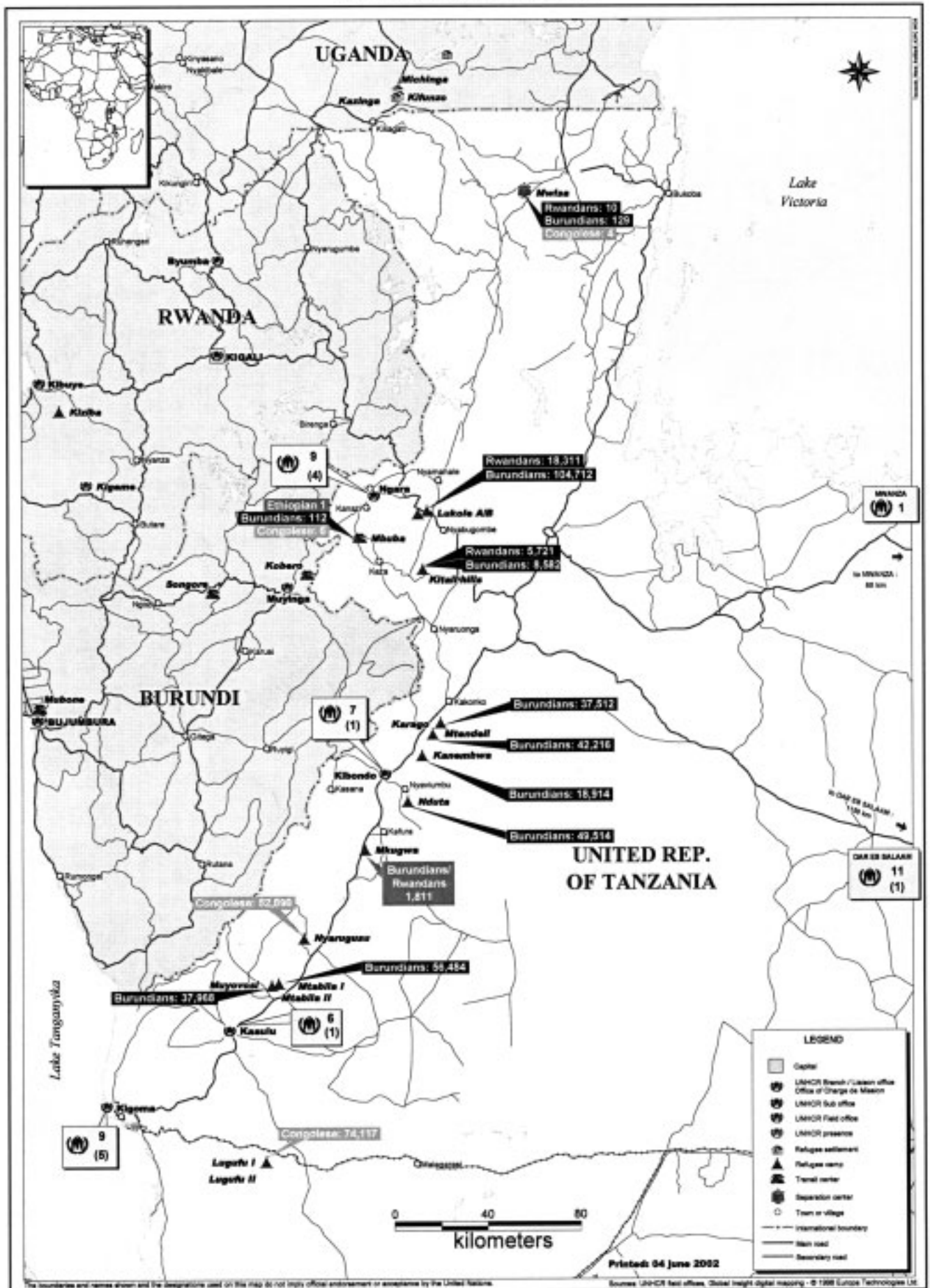Report photos: Lydia W. Wambugu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

- Erasmus, Adagia (III, IV, 96)

This report will focus on the necessity of Freedom of Information, for security and development, in protracted refugee populated areas, using Tanzania as a case study.[1] Tanzania was chosen because, historically, it has been generous in accepting refugees within its borders. However, it has not always been clear on its protection policies for refugees. In recent years, the unstable security situation along its western border has caused Tanzania to threaten forced repatriations of refugees, and in some cases, to execute such returns. In addition, the crucial lack of military and police presence, through an area prey to rebel movements and the arms trade, has heightened insecurity in the region. These facts alone should compel advocates in the refugee, human rights and development fields to look critically at the country's security issues.

By discussing the creation and utilization of informal information and communication systems in western Tanzania, the role of that informal network, and the strategic points that feed into it, will be analysed in light of the region's volatility. Emphasis will be placed on the critical connection between the free flow of information and a sustainable security. Security, an issue that comes up frequently in humanitarian and human rights theory, is essential to areas where traumatized masses have been reduced to one very human and desperate desire, the need to survive. Security is not just a physical entity in conflict and post-conflict areas, requiring military or police presence and the assurance of economic survival, it includes the rather psychological and emotional element of an individual's inherent need to have some control over what he or she understands of a situation and to whom he or she is able to communicate his or her understanding.

Where there is political stability, peace and the rule of law, there is likely to be an effective set of formal communication networks that magnify the influence of a small number

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[1] ARTICLE 19 conducted interviews with over 175 respondents from the international, governmental, local Tanzanian and refugee communities. Camps in Kigoma and Kagera regions were visited with the permission and cooperation of the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs. In all, the research was collected in a period of two and a half months (June-August) in 2001, and then updated across a period of one and a half months (April-May) in 2003. Interviews were conducted in French and Swahili, as well as with the assistance, when needed, of an interpreter fluent in both the Kirundi and Kinyarwandan languages.

of well-positioned institutions, corporations or individuals. Where there is poor governance, political instability and populations displaced through conflict, there is likely to be a significant distrust of any existing formal communication networks (and the information borne through them), leading to the emergence of informal communication networks, that may also be centralized enough to give a certain few disproportionate power, or, a mobilized multitude proportionate control.

Informal information and communication technologies, or the human network upon which they flourish, will be defined for the purposes of this report as the resourceful means of verbal exchange dependent upon sources of extremely basic economic and social needs and access to limited technologies, such as bicycle riders carrying megaphones, or, transistor radios. The significance of the need rests in the lengths refugees will go to recreate systems of information transmission and direct communication; especially when more advanced or formal means of acquiring the same end are not accessible to them. In contrast, formal information and communication technologies, then, will be considered broad enough to encompass anything from the use of telephones, to broadcast television, and internet services. Technologies have advanced so greatly in industrialized countries that the power of direct communication and informal information structures, relied upon in unstable and developing countries, is forgotten. However, "technologies that improve people's lives do not have to contain microchips, nor do they have to cost hundreds of millions of dollars to develop."[2] The ingenuity of humankind, especially in the face of great stakes and with limited resources at its disposal, should never be underestimated.

The bottom line is constituted by a series of questions: where do the greatest numbers of people go in order to get information that is intentionally restricted, what sources do they believe to be legitimate, and how does the nature of information that a refugee has access to affect security? Furthermore, are the Tanzanian government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) guilty of actively suppressing the flow of information to refugees, or are they merely resigned to passive indifference with regard to a refugee's need for and right to information? Is, therefore, an act of commission versus an act of omission any less acceptable when people's lives are in danger? With these points in mind, a critical evaluation of informal information and communication networks will show how curbing the

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[2] *"A Survey of Technology and Governance: Keep it Simple"*, The Economist, November 10, 2001, p. 13.

availability of information to refugees strengthens not only the power of a single message (and its messenger), but also reinforces a particular perspective on the conflict and the different players within it. In such a context, tensions are stoked over and over again, rather than quenched.

ARTICLE 19 sincerely hopes that this discussion on the importance of protecting Freedom of Information, as well as any active engagement in supplying information to refugees, will widen the scope on how Freedoms of Expression and Information are perceived in the context of security and development. In addition, it is ARTICLE 19's desire that where there are gaps between policy and practice, considerable and very real efforts are made to address ways in which such glaring divides can be narrowed. Lastly, ARTICLE 19 believes that protecting Freedom of Information is a crucial tool that both the Tanzanian government and the international community can use to protect not only the dignity and well-being of refugees, but also the security of their own representatives in the field.

1. BACKGROUND

To address the need for Freedom of Information, in the refugee-populated areas of Tanzania, it is important to provide a brief history of the Great Lakes Region of Africa. A predatory and perpetual cycle of politically motivated, ethnic violence rampant in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC] has caused an endless pattern of forced migration eastward into Tanzania. Despite the challenges straining its borders, Tanzania remains comparatively stable. Even so, President Mkapa's government faces no shortage of internal pressure as regional violence detracts attention from an infrastructure system in desperate need of development. This exasperating and seemingly interminable 'status quo' acutely threatens Tanzania's security and hopes for development, luring decision-makers to look for durable solutions outside the international legal order.

In 1993, 300,000 refugees from Burundi's civil war entered Tanzania, to be followed by 500,000 Rwandans resulting from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.[3] In 1996, further tensions in Burundi, between a Tutsi dominated military and Hutu groups vying for political power, pressed Hutu refugees towards Tanzania. Since 1996, unresolved angst within Burundi has continued to feed this Hutu pattern of flight. The Burundi Peace Accords serve as little hope to those who have waited since initial peace talks between warring factions began in 1999. The presidential succession, in May 2003, from Pierre Buyoya to Domitien Ndayizeye brings scepticism from many Burundian refugees, living in Tanzanian camps, who feel no safety in the idea of returning to a country where a powerful Tutsi military will not answer to a Hutu President.[4]

1996, for the Congolese, marked the year that Laurent Desiré Kabila pushed through the eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), aided most notably by Rwandan and Ugandan forces, to take the presidential seat of power in Kinshasa. The civil unrest that swept through the DRC thereafter sparked an exodus of Congolese citizens across Lake Tanganyika into the Kigoma district of Tanzania. An estimated 95,000 Congolese refugees were counted, though most of these were repatriated back to the DRC starting in 1997.[5] This repatriation, however, was halted by a violent rebellion in August 1998 that

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[3] *The IRC in Tanzania* (accessed May 2001); available from http://www.intrescom.org/where/action/index.
[4] Interviews conducted with Burundian refugees in western Tanzanian camps, May 2003.
[5]*USCR Country Report 1998*: Tanzania (accessed November 5, 2001); available from http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/africa/tanzania/htm.

renewed convulsions in the DRC and caused Lake Tanganyika to witness heavy boat traffic, as vessels burdened by Congolese escaping war at home arrived in Kigoma once again.

The year 2001 observed the death of Laurent Kabila and efforts by his son, Joseph, to re-open discussions surrounding the Lusaka Peace Accords signed in 1999. No less than five attempts to resolve the unconscionable levels of violence in Eastern Congo met with failure. The most recent attacks of May 2003, in the village of Bunia, illustrate the complexity of a permanent resolution to the crisis. Meanwhile, the success or failure of the Inter-Congolese dialogue is exceptionally important to the fate of Congolese refugees in Tanzania.

Ethnic clashes in Rwanda in 2000 and 2001 added 10,000 Rwandans to the already burgeoning Burundian and Congolese camps, despite the fact that most Rwandans entering Tanzania after 1997 were refused *prima facie* refugee status and, thus, were returned immediately back over the border. Ever since Tanzania's firm decision to evaluate Rwandan refugees on an individual need basis, exact numbers indicating the amount of Rwandans crossing into Tanzania are impossible to obtain. And, UNHCR statistics on Rwandans present in the camps are not accurate for two reasons: one, many Rwandan Hutus still perceive themselves to be under threat from the current Tutsi chokehold on military and political power, and therefore, will claim they are Burundian to escape being sent home; two, the Tanzanian government does not always act in partnership with UNHCR. As recently as May 2003, the Tanzanian government entered Lukole B camp in Ngara district and, without the presence of UNHCR, announced asylum to roughly 30 Rwandans while instructing the remaining few thousand to find their own way back to Rwanda in a week, lest they wanted a Tanzanian military escort to "encourage" them in their return home.[6] The ugly reality, of the Tanzanian military driving Rwandans over the border in 1996, still fresh in their memory, the Rwandans dispersed; some to return to Rwanda, some to hide in the forests on the border, some to flee to nearby countries such as Uganda, and still others, with a lower profile, to blend in with the Burundian refugees in other camps.[7]

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[6] ARTICLE 19 was conducting interviews in Lukole B camp in Ngara district, May 2003, when Ministry of Home Affairs representatives came into the camp and announced a list of which Rwandans were being denied asylum and would have to return to Rwanda, while around 30 individuals, comprising roughly seven families had been granted asylum. These 30 individuals were to be moved immediately to Mkugwa camp in Kibondo district to await further decisions regarding resettlement by UNHCR.

[7] An article by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights supports what ARTICLE 19 verified in the field with regard to the effects of Rwandan repatriations in November 2002 (scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2002): Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, African Refugee Rights News, Vol. 1, Issue 1, April 2003 (accessed June 28, 2003); available from
http://www.lchr.org/intl_refugees/intl_refugees_news/newsletter_01.htm.

In January 2002, President Benjamin Mkapa, reiterated his frustration over the refugee burden, announcing that Tanzania 'could no longer cope' with such a crisis unless there was significant help provided by the international community.[8] President Mkapa's strong statements have emphasized his fatigue over the refugees, denying that Congolese soldiers and Burundian rebels were training on Tanzanian soil.[9] Yet, Tanzania faced serious threats to its domestic stability, evidenced by cross-border extremist activities, arms trafficking, recruitment and training of refugees by rebel groups, extortion of food or money by militias, and a rise in crime and banditry as a result of the flow of arms.[10]

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[8] Reuters, NI World Guide 2003/2004 (accessed June 28, 2003); available from http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/countryprofiles/220284.htm.
[9]IRIN, "Mkapa, Kagame discuss Great Lakes Crisis," January 9, 2001 (accessed June 28, 2003); available from http://www.asyl.net/Magazin/Docs/docs-17/L-28/L9592BDI.TXT.
[10] IRC, *The IRC in Tanzania* (accessed May 2001); available from http://www.intrescom.org/where/action/index.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 19, Freedom of Expression and Information

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),[11] guarantees the right to Freedom of Information in the following terms:

> *Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.*

The UDHR, as a UN General Assembly resolution, is not directly legally binding on States as such. However, many of its provisions, including Article 19, constitute general principles of law and are widely held as having acquired legal force as customary international law since its adoption in 1948.[12] Furthermore, the UDHR is an authoritative guide to human rights by the General Assembly and is regarded by the Assembly, and many jurists, as part of the 'law of the United Nations'.[13]

Definition of a Refugee

Article 1(2) of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention),[14] which Tanzania ratified in 1983, defines a "refugee" as:

> *Any person who as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*

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[11] UN General Assembly Resolution 217A (III), 10 December 1948.
[12] M. Akehurst, "Custom as a Source of International Law," 48 BYBIL, 1974-1975, pp. 1-53.
[13] I. Brownlie and GS Goodwin-Gill, Basic Documents on Human Rights, 4th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[14] 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 189 U.N.T.S. 150, entered into force 22 April 1954.

However, the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa[15] has modified these standards in significant ways. In particular, Article 1(2) of the Convention echoes the UN definition of a refugee as someone with a well-founded fear of persecution but then proceeds to amplify it by adding a further way of defining a refugee:

The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside of his country of origin or nationality.

1950 Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter 1(1) of the 1950 Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees provides,[16]

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting governments and, subject to the approval of the governments concerned, private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] bears the responsibility of promoting and providing legal protection to refugees, as well as coordinating international action and assistance during a refugee crisis. The mandate of UNHCR implies not only the protection of the rights granted to refugees under international law, but also works to ensure the well-being, and 'dignity', of their person. Four years ago, UNHCR's former High Commissioner, Mrs. Sadako Ogata in a speech presented at the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Geneva addressed the need for consideration of communications as a matter of security for those living and working in refugee-populated areas:

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[15] 1969, OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 10 September 1969
[16] Statue of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, G.A. res. 428 (V), annex, 5 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 20) at 46, U.N. Doc. A/1775 (1950).

". . .refugees, in their vast majority, were either born, or were thrown, on the wrong side of the 'digital divide' [. . .] and these are not just under-equipped places. They are also dangerous, especially if you cannot communicate effectively. Good, efficient, accessible telecommunications are therefore a key element of refugee operations. I would even go further and say that they are an essential tool to protect refugees and to provide security to staff working with them."[17]

Those who possess the right to be protected, as well as those working to ensure that protection, have a mutual interest in security. Communication and information exchange cannot benefit one group in exclusivity without affecting the other group. While Mrs. Ogata's statement is difficult to apply in places where the infrastructure necessary for first building and then expanding formal information technologies seems light years away, it does accurately link the necessity to communicate with the existence of security in refugee populated areas.

Focusing on Obligations and Interests

Despite popular belief to the contrary, the interests of refugees and those of governments can intersect at the point where protecting Freedom of Information crosses with issues of security and development.

In defending any argument on behalf of refugees, it must first be agreed upon that everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, and that, everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country as stipulated in Articles 6 and 13, respectively, of the UDHR. Without agreement on these two fundamental principles, the legal framework established herein will fall apart. Where there is agreement, a critical analysis of how protecting the right to information afforded to everyone by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, addresses not just the legal and physical protection of refugees, but also the political and economic evolution of those states hosting refugee populations.

The United Republic of Tanzania ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in

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[17]Sadako Ogata, *Statement of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at the Telecom* 99 + *InterActive 99 Forum entitled* "Telecommunications in the Service of Humanitarian Assistance," ITU (Geneva, 14 October 1999).

1976, two covenants that expand upon the rights contained in the UDHR. Additionally, in 1984, Tanzania ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Tanzania is legally bound to the standards set forth within these documents and, therefore, should be held accountable under international law for any violation of these treaties. Furthermore, any temptation to shirk its legal responsibilities, under the serious burden of a protracted crisis, should be outweighed by an international community committed to finding durable solutions to the 'fight or flight' epidemic in the Great Lakes Region of Africa that cripples Tanzania's western border. Lastly, ensuring Freedoms of Expression and Information can serve to protect other fundamental rights, such as rights to life, security, health and education.

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to Freedom of Information,[18] stating:

> *(1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of opinion.*
> *(2) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any other media of his choice.*

In addition, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,[19] also guarantees the right to Freedom of Information,

> *(1) Every individual shall have the right to receive information.*
> *(2) Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.*

Freedom of Information is a fundamental right of everyone. International law does not differentiate between citizens of a country and the refugees found within the borders of that country, with regard to possession of the right to access and impart information.

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[18] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, G.A. res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 U.N.T.S. 171, entered into force March 23, 1976.
[19] African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986.

Furthermore, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has underlined the importance of Freedom of Information in the preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, adopted in October 2002, [20] which states:

> (1) *Freedom of expression and information, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other form of communication, including across frontiers, is a fundamental and inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy.*
>
> (2) *Everyone shall have an equal opportunity to exercise the right to freedom of expression and to access information without discrimination.*

The *Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa*[21] also emphasizes the obligations imposed on states in taking measures to promote Freedom of Information through adherence to the following principles:

- availability and promotion of a range of information and ideas to the public;
- pluralistic access to the media and other means of communication, including by vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as women, children and **refugees**, as well as linguistic and cultural groups;
- everyone has the right to access information held by public bodies;
- everyone has the right to access information held by private bodies which is necessary for the exercise or protection of any right;
- any refusal to disclose information shall be subject to appeal to an independent body and/or the courts;
- public bodies shall be required, even in the absence of a request, actively to publish important information of significant public interest;
- community broadcasting shall be promoted given its potential to broaden access by poor and rural communities to the airwaves.
- public broadcasters should strive to ensure that their transmission system covers the whole territory of the country; and

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[20] Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 32nd Ordinary Session, 17th- 23rd October 2002: Banjul, The Gambia.
[21] *Ibid*., Articles 3(1,2), 4(2), 5(2), 6.

- the public service ambit of public broadcasters should be clearly defined and include an obligation to ensure that the public receive adequate, politically balanced information.

Restrictions on Freedom of Information

Article 3 of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa[22] addresses prohibitions against subversive activities refugees may engage in:

(1) *Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he conforms with its laws and regulations as well as with measures taken for the maintenance of public order. He shall also abstain from any subversive activities against any Member State of the OAU.*

(2) *Signatory States undertake to prohibit refugees residing in their respective territories from attacking any State member of the OAU, by any activity likely to cause tension between Member States, and in particular by use of arms, through the press, or by radio.*

It is important that refugees know their rights as well as their duties. They cannot conform to what they are denied knowledge of. How can refugees implement their duties, while purposely kept ignorant of their rights?

The use of press or radio certainly carries with it a potential threat to the host government. However, alternatively, press and radio are used to inform people and, conceivably, strengthen relationships between the public and its governing authority. A cost-benefit analysis is critical in the face of legal obligations. Instruments and institutions that provide beneficial services can easily be perverted. The dangers communication and information technologies pose to any government must be measured, somehow, against the security gained from expanding the flow and speed of information to refugees in a camp context. Do the actions a host government takes to suppress access to information exacerbate an already tenuous environment, by further alienating a population to the point where communication becomes the very threat feared rather than a dialogue secured?

There are those that argue that Freedom of Information under international law is not absolute, and that a government such as Tanzania, finding itself inundated with a refugee crisis

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[22] Organization for African Unity's Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1001 U.N.T.S. 45, entered into force June 20, 1974.

would meet the extenuating circumstances required to legally restrict such a freedom as dictated by Article 19(3) of the ICCPR:

> *The exercise of the rights provided. . .carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions:*
> *(a) For respect of the rights and reputations of others;*
> *(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre publique), or of public health or morals.*

The question, then, is whether Tanzania meets the African Commission's interpretation of the restrictions permitted under Article 9(2). According to Article 9(2) of the Charter, dissemination of opinions may be restricted by law.[23] This does not however mean that national law can set aside the right to express and disseminate one's opinions guaranteed at the international level; this would make the protection of the right to express one's opinion ineffective. To permit national law to take precedence over international law would defeat the purpose of codifying certain rights in international law and indeed, the whole essence of treaty making.[24]

In addition, the interpretation on restrictions permitted on Freedom of Information is reaffirmed by the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa that reads,

> *Any restriction on freedom of expression shall be provided by law, serve a legitimate interest and must be necessary in a democratic society.[25]*

Though the presence of traumatized masses, admittedly, could constitute a threat to national security and public order; and, the denial of Freedom of Information to refugees, arguably, may appear to serve a legitimate interest, the case of Tanzania proves otherwise. Restrictions on Freedom of Information have created extreme levels of insecurity and threaten the interests of the Tanzanian government, the international community and refugees.

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[23] African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986.
[24] *Media Rights Agenda and Constitutional Rights Project v. Nigeria*, 21 October 1998, Communication Nos. 105/93, 128/94, 130/94 and 152/96.
[25] Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 32nd Ordinary Session, 17th- 23rd October 2002: Banjul, The Gambia; Article 2(2).

Tanzania Refugee Act, 1998

Article 18 of the Tanzania Refugee Act outlines how designated areas will control the movement of refugees:

> *(3) Any asylum seeker or refugee who-*
> *(a) without a permit in that behalf issued under section 17 leaves or attempts to leave a designated area in which he has been earmarked to reside; or*
> *(b) in a designated area disobeys any rules made by the Minister, any direction of the competent authority, the Director or any order or direction of a Settlement Officer, made or given under this section; or*
> *(c) in a designated area conducts himself in a manner prejudicial to good order and discipline, shall be deemed to have committed a disciplinary offence.*

The Refugee Act attempts to establish rules to insure public security and order. The guidelines for movement are pertinent to a Freedom of Information discussion, in that control exercised over the physical displacement of a refugee influences informal networks of information and communication exchange. The extent of any one refugee's mobility directly affects the flow of information to other refugees. In reality, control over the displacement of a refugee is exceedingly difficult. Instead of actually controlling it, Ministry of Home Affairs representatives capitalize upon it. Individual MHA representatives have been known to sell permits to refugees wanting to leave the camps, making a profit on those refugees who have the means to, in effect, bribe those in authority.[26] Some refugees do not wait for permission. They simply sneak in and out of the camps, under cover of night, along the same routes that rebels use to pass through camp areas.

Article 19 of the Refugee Act establishes how refugees may organize themselves socially within a camp:

> *(2) Such administrative organization for asylum seekers or refugees shall comprise ten cell leaders at the lowest level, road committees, village committees in designated areas or councils at the highest level.*

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[26] Interviews with MHA officials and refugees, May-July 2001 and May 2003 in Kagera and Kigoma districts.

(3) At every administrative level established under this section, there may be established any of the following committees or subcommittees for undertaking any activities relevant to the name of the Committee:

(a) finance and administration;

(b) law and order;

(c) economic and planning and

(d) community development and social welfare.

(4) Asylum seekers' or Refugees' leaders and representatives at all levels of the administrative organization established under this section or Act unless otherwise provided in this Act or other valid law, shall be elected by secret ballot based on principles of equality and universal suffrage without any discrimination as basis of sex, clan, tribe, nationality, race or religion.

The social organization and the election of leaders within the refugee camps are directly linked to how much one refugee is trusted over another. The chosen individuals become not just community leaders fulfilling a specific function in the society, but also the human infrastructure upon which information and communication networks are built.

Article 23 of the Tanzanian Refugee Act discusses communication between the Minister, the Director and the competent authority and asylum seeker or refugee. This article refers *only* to communication as a means by which asylum decisions or appeal decisions are orally transmitted. There is no reference to the mechanisms refugees have at their disposal to communicate with government officials, or the obligations of those same officials to communicate with and inform refugees.

Lastly, it should be noted that there are no guarantees outlined in the Tanzanian Refugee Act for the rights of refugees with regard to Freedom of Expression and Information.

Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Right to Freedom of Thought is elaborated upon in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, entered into force in April 1977. Within Article 18 of the Constitution Freedoms of Information and Expression are guaranteed in the following terms:

(1) Without jeopardising the laws of the country, everyone is free to express any opinion, to offer his views, and to search for, to receive and to give information and any ideas through any medium without consideration to country boundaries, and is also free to engage in personal communication without interference.

(2) Every citizen has the right to be informed at all times about different events taking place within the country and around the world, events that are important to his life and to the livelihood of the people, and also about important social issues.

While Tanzania grants the Freedom of Expression to everyone, it only grants the right to be informed to every citizen. Despite this nuance, the wording of Article 18(1) does cover those guarantees regarding Freedom of Information stipulated under international law. Furthermore, Article 20 of the Constitution permits Freedom of Association to everyone, stating,

(1) Everyone deserves to be free, without jeopardising the laws of the land, to interact voluntarily and peacefully with other people, and to associate and integrate with others, to offer his opinion publicly, and on top of that to establish or join a party or organisations established with the objectives of maintaining and promoting his faith or his interests of other interests.

Freedom of Movement, the ability to organize socially and the right to assemble, all play important roles in the construction of trusted communication networks between refugees, as well as between refugees and local Tanzanians. Why such informal communication networks are not supported and strengthened by members of the Tanzanian government and UNHCR is of grave concern for authorities seeking to establish legitimacy, and maintain control over security.

3. INFORMATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK[27]

"Of the four great instrumentalities available to nations for influencing the world around them—diplomacy, armed forces, money and information—the last is both the most powerful and the least understood."[28]

Historically, developed countries built roads, postal systems and railroads before telecommunication systems. This infrastructure affected proximity and allowed people to share information and communicate directly. Institutions accepted as legitimate by the people were then able to layer technologies on top of connections previously established between people, communities and the state. These preliminary connections have been crucial to the development of countries in Europe and the United States; they are no less important today in the context of a country such as Tanzania. Though information technology theory will laud the speed at which leapfrogging affords those coming from behind to jump ahead, there are still places in the world in which information technology will never thrive without first grasping the vital role human infrastructure has assumed.

In the context of refugee populated areas, for example, where restrictions on information have reached critical levels, refugees are creating their own form of security and developing networks with the "technologies" and limited resources they possess: namely, proximity to each other and the local community; and, a method of electing trusted sources to serve as access points to the supply line of information. The supply lines from which information originates and then passes, as well as the methods used to speed along the message, are developed over time. The value of the information and communication networks refugees create exists in the confidence people place in the source of information and the effect that information will have on their lives.

Informal methods of supplying and accessing information can fall prey to those who would manipulate public opinion for selfish gain. It was Jacques Ellul who claimed that 'propaganda is most effective and most dangerous within a group…because its clash with

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[27] Much of the theoretical framework for this section has been extracted from the unpublished research and working paper of Audrey N. Selian and Amy R. West. " Informal and Formal Communications Networks and Political Governance: Can ICTs Leapfrog Legitimacy?" Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, April 2002.

[28] Ithiel de Sola Pool, excerpt from "Information Goals" *Foreign Service*, July 1963, vol. 24, referenced in *Digital Diplomacy: US Foreign Policy in the Information Age*, Wilson Dizard, Jr., Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001: 1.

[29] Jacques Ellul, *The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Ed., 1973).

facts is least noticed on the inside'.[29] Both communications and international relations literature suggest that in areas of insecurity and conflict, those who control the access and dissemination of information can affect security and development. James C. Scott, in explaining the nature of domination theory, examines areas of insecurity where the hidden agendas of the 'weaker group' in the face of the 'stronger group' should not be ignored. Successful rebellions are often predicated on hidden agendas.[30] The government is usually seen as the 'stronger group' choosing to either impose or restrict a knowledge base of information that will shape or even manipulate people's reality. Where Freedom of Information is restricted, information takes on greater significance as human beings have repeatedly shown that gulag, prison or camp cannot stop the fundamental desire to communicate and to be informed.

Information control is wrestled between those *in* authority who wish to retain power and those *under* authority who wish to attain empowerment. When conflicting forces vie for power and legitimacy, those without power do not easily trust those in power. Inherent to the struggle is not only the information itself, but also the lengths one will go to obtain it. Those without access to formal distributions of information, i.e. formal information and communication systems and the human beings in control of that information, demonstrate their distrust for those in power by creating alternative constructs to acquire the information they need. Joseph Nye addresses this type of power struggle, one characterized by the coercive force of traditional military and economic assets on the one hand and the persuasive and manipulative strength of ideas and values on the other hand.[31] 'Soft' power, as he calls it, falls squarely into the category of the informal communication networks developed and applied in refugee camps. These networks actually emerge as an asset in and of themselves: *despite* the fact that informal networks are diffused and embedded in political turmoil and *because* of the fact that they serve to include some and at the same time exclude others from particular categories of information. Refugees, then, are showing the international community and the Tanzanian government that they have the power to leverage their own restrictions on Freedom of Information. Under these circumstances, security left to each stakeholder, means collective security for no one.

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[30] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: hidden transcripts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[31] Joseph Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, Synopsis, (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002).

Theoretically speaking, it is important to look at the scale upon which reside the varying degrees of freedom of communication and structures of power. The 'phenomenon' of information dissemination and communication flows is linked to that of power. This is captured in two major perspectives, one being vertical (where messages are being imposed) and the other being horizontal (where messages are freely interchanged). Theorists have addressed the role of communication networks in the attempt to explain power dynamics in the field of political development and transition. H.A. Innis, as a communications theorist in the 1950's, recognized that transportation and communication technologies played a central role in the development of political systems. This is primarily because transportation affected proximity and direct communication built trust; trust in turn established legitimacy, and legitimacy gave root to organizing people in social contexts, which inherently bred political systems. Innis' central focus is the social history of communication media, whereby social change is rooted in the development of communication media.[32] Innis further addresses concepts pertaining to the 'monopoly' of communications. He believed that if a society or country has a network of communication systems, there are key points within the network where significant information is stored, and from where transmission to other parts of the system is facilitated. Networks developed, then, from the margins of society threaten authority. Those networks are created when people do not have access to the points at the centre. Change invariably develops from those margins of society, says Innis, because people develop their own media. 'New media' allows those on the periphery to consolidate power, ultimately challenging the authority of the centre. The human infrastructure upon which refugees build informal means of accessing information and communicating with their environment illustrate Innis' theory regarding the power and politics of those on the periphery of society.

The volatility of the Great Lakes Region of Africa is exacerbated by restrictions on Freedom of Information. As previously stated, the harder it is to acquire information, the greater importance any one piece of information, supplied to the network, becomes. Michel Foucault postulates that individuals or groups who control access to specific information along communication networks wield great power.[33] Those who monopolize knowledge contribute, in large part, to its acceptance as 'legitimate.' If, for example, the masses acquire

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[32] Harold Adams Innis, "The Bias of Communication", 1951. Introduction by Marshall McLuhan. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).

[33] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

knowledge only through information provided by violent or extremist groups within the communication network, they will continue to react in accordance with that information. The lack of information provided by governments and international agencies thereby strengthens the legitimacy of more questionable regional actors. Furthermore, the importance and danger of informal information and communication networks rests not in their existence, but rather in the anonymity of the players who control the points of access to information. Where Freedom of Information is not permitted, it cannot be verified. Furthermore, those supplying or accessing information will remain unknown. In applying the theories of Foucault and Innis, restrictions on Freedom of Information, by the nature of the reaction such actions will cause, promote instability (or conflict) in a given system by way of polarizing society into a mass of ignorant and knowledge 'elite'. The knowledge 'elite' "…make judgments on behalf of their society, with a minimum of checks and balances."[34] Suddenly, there is no means of checking fact against fiction, verifying 'truth' from several different sources, or determining accuracy. A little knowledge possessed by a few, timely delivered to a traumatized and desperate many, is dangerous.

Furthermore, the ability to alter perceptions of a conflict by controlling methods of gathering and sharing information can destabilize security. Those who challenge the 'status quo' power balance seek to obviously subvert existing 'monopolies of information', as well as what are often precariously established notions of legitimacy. Certainly, Foucault's premises vis-à-vis a region undergoing political turmoil, with large numbers of marginalized and traumatized persons living in a state of limbo, lend credence to the argument that the existence of information monopolies, and restrictions on the flow of information, only serve to exacerbate existing tensions. In the immediate context of the Great Lakes Region, the toll of such a monopoly can be either physical or intellectual genocide, as well as the perpetuation of a conflict that has massacred, traumatized and deprived millions. Thus, a delicate balance must be struck between what could potentially be used to manipulate and destroy a society and what is essential to protect, repair and advance it.

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[34] Roger Clark, *Information Technology: Weapon of Authoritarianism or Tool of Democracy?* Department of Commerce, Australian National University-Paper presented at IFIP World Congress in Hamburg, August 31, 1994.

The proximity of Tanzania to zones of conflict, as well as mountainous geographic constraints, produces both man-made obstacles and natural barriers to smooth communication flows. In addition, Tanzania's resistance to outside influences on its beloved language and culture has historically led to much institutional 'dragging of feet' regarding development of a formal communication structure. President Nyerere, during another difficult period in Tanzania's history, used radio to try to build up a country fractured by colonialism. In 1965, Tanzania's radio became nationalized and was placed under the Ministry of Information. President Nyerere not only used the radio for promoting his government, but his efforts in building an independent country and developing the health, educational and agricultural sectors of both rural and urban societies were aided by his support of radio broadcasting. Rural villages with high illiteracy rates became well informed about both national and international affairs because of their devotion to Tanzanian radio broadcasting. "The government saw radio as their best means of linking the villages and government and motivating people to take pride in their country and to try to make it better."[35] Radio Tanzania brought the world to rural villages, and was used extensively to unite the villages with the common goal of community development.

Several years after this wave of development, the government instituted the National Security Act of 1970 giving itself tremendous leeway and power to decide what information should be disclosed or withheld to the public, as well as what punishments apply to those who publish or pass on any information which is deemed inappropriate.[36] As such, Tanzania remains in control of the formal channels of communication and information flow. Given the challenge of operating within a country severely weakened by its dearth of developed infrastructure, the government controls what it can at the price of further development. Coupled with that is the fact Tanzania must make decisions on information dissemination and communication within the context of balancing whatever control regional entities wield within its domestic borders. This is no easy task.

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[35] Don Moore, "Reaching the Villages: Radio in Tanzania" Journal of the North American Shortwave Association (accessed October 13, 2001); available from http://www.swl.net/patepluma/genbroad/tanzania.html.
[36] *Ibid.*,

"'If, then, [information], is to make a political difference,'" said the political scientist Benjamin Barber, "'it is the politics that will first have to be changed.'"[37] [38] The politics, in this argument, marry regional security and protection of human dignity with the implementation of Freedom of Information. Development cannot occur without stability. Creativity in developing systems of direct communication, along the network of human interaction and earned trust, will eventually circumvent the stagnation imposed by a failed communication and information infrastructure. Like Nyerere, who connected villages and communities through radio, thus quelling post-colonial unrest, the security of Tanzania today depends on a government that will engage in the supply of information, and invest in its flow, rather than restrict information or disengage from its flow. Efforts towards this end will build stability, albeit initially fragile, in western Tanzania.

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[37]As quoted by Jean-Paul Marthoz, *Freedom of the media*, Chapter 4, (accessed April 11, 2002); available from http://www.unesco.org/webworld/wcir/en/pdf_report/chap4.pdf. Original citation: B. Barber, The "New Telecommunications Technology; Endless Frontier or the End of Democracy," *Constellations, An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory,* Vol. 4, No. 2, October 1997.

[38] 'Information' replaces the word 'technology', given the concept of 'information' as one component of 'technology' that is addressed in this report.

4. ANALYSIS

"The best information for refugees is no information."[39]

To be human is to be interactive with one's environment. Every refugee, like any human being, is a potential "wire" feeding into a network. Though the Tanzanian government's policy makes it difficult for refugees to access information, the flow of information is not something that can truly be stopped. The dangers of this restriction of information in a refugee crisis are two fold:

1. In the absence of a diversity of sources and perceptions, information can neither be checked for inaccuracies nor weighed for relevance (i.e. a morsel of information gleaned with regard to a reduction in food or soap supplies is quickly interpreted as a clear indicator of the much larger fear of forced repatriation; when, perhaps, the lack of food or soap rations is indicative of a budget cut within UNHCR and/or WFP).
2. The informal system of information exchange and communication monopolizes the existing information it has (because it is not being constantly renewed by multiple sources, but rather is dependent on limited resources) thereby centralizing control of a network of information by those without the tools of physical or legal protection at their disposal.

Neither the international community nor the Tanzanian government is connected to the informal communication networks in the refugee camps because they have decided to either actively restrict or passively not provide information to refugees. If the Tanzanian government and the international community are not suppliers of information to refugees, those entities that do become the access points of information for refugees, influence perceptions. The way an individual perceives his situation directly affects action. And, the impact of perception on action in post-conflict zones has everything to do with security and development.

Refugees have a monopoly on information. While the Tanzanian government and the international community are involved in the practice, if not policy, of supplying little to no information to refugees, refugees are taking the social organization of the camp, and their own mobility, and using it as the foundation for a communication and information network. Lacking access to many of the more institutionalised and formalised ways of communicating,

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[39] Meeting with Ivana Unluova, UNHCR Information Officer, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, June 2001.

they take what they possess and build a system to obtain what they need. The success of this network depends on two key concepts that are being ignored by the Tanzanian government and the international community: legitimacy and proximity. Moreover, the threat that this network poses to security rests in the anonymity of those who control the access points along the network and the influence they have over shaping both the content and the understanding of that information. "Communications is a resource that can be used in the exercise of power. A minimum condition for this power to be exercised is that the people over whom the power is to be exercised are to be part of the communication process, and that they are able to receive. In contrast, the power of information depends on the nature of the information, the ability of the intended target to understand it, and the correlation between exposure to the information and expected outcomes from it being understood."[40] The Tanzanian government tries to leverage power over the information provided to refugees, the sources of information refugees can access, and the means by which they can disseminate that information. UNHCR appears to follow suit. Neither is actually successful at the control they seek to exert. Instead, their actions have created a parallel system, forcing refugees to view both as yet another threat to their survival, instead of legitimate guarantors of their security and well-being.

Information is vital to refugees. So, when they complain about the fact paper and pencil supplies have run out, they are not lamenting the loss of a privilege, but rather the denial of tools necessary to inform and educate themselves. Community radios, initiated in the Congolese camps of Nyarugusu and Lugufu, exist, but broadcasting is heavily monitored by the Ministry of Home Affairs.[41] Newspapers are prohibited in the camps.[42] In addition, printed reports, bound and collated in several languages, from the Burundian Peace Process sat gathering dust on several NGO bookshelves in early July of 2001. When queried as to why these reports were not circulating in the refugee camps, sources claimed that they were 'not allowed' by government authorities to share this information with the refugees, though informally they were attempting to do so.[43] This was confirmed in May 2003 by ARTICLE 19, when Burundians stated that UNHCR did not provide any information about the war or efforts to resolve the war in Burundi, as refugees were not permitted to participate in any way

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[40] Mark Alleyne, *International Power and International Communication*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

[41] Broadcasts were allowed in Swahili. Despite the fact that Congolese speak a 'Congolese' form of Swahili, the language is associated with that of authority, i.e. used by the government, the armed forces and the police. Lingala , however, is viewed more often than not as one of the many different languages of the people.

[42] Interview with Congolese refugees from Nyarugusu and Lugufu camps, Tanzania, July 2001.

[43] Interview in Kasulu District, Tanzania, July 2001.

in the political issues of their home countries. These are examples of active restrictions on Freedom of Information in the refugee camps. Certainly there are plenty of examples, taken from the pages of history, pointing to the power of information and communication channels that feed rebellion from the bottom-up, overturning an existing power structure, when governments start exercising top-down repression over the flow of information. The Tanzanian government should be wary of any policy that would seek to suppress the flow of information to the most vulnerable in its society. Restricting the flow of information does not guarantee an absence of information. In fact, violating the rights of Freedom of Information to refugees actually can have reverse consequences on the host government, as the equal and opposite reaction of such actions will cut off the government from information it needs to maintain public order and security. Thus, it is not the refugee who lacks participation and is marginalized, rather the Tanzanian government and the international community. The dynamic created is one in which those who have been designated to protect and control refugee populated areas, in fact, do not. As a result, the very control the Tanzanian government and the international community believe themselves to possess is actually a façade that dangerously compromises the security of everyone operating along the western border.

Tantamount to a rather collective form of the jailer's idea of solitary confinement, blocking the flow of information to refugees, a confined group with limited resources, is believed to weaken the possibility of any one group's influence in the region or ability to challenge the policies of the host government. Information though, is difficult to control. Even when governments have tried to contain people for more nefarious reasons, the flow of information and the ability to communicate can often only be reduced to a trickle. History has illustrated that information can never be cut-off completely. The story of Solzhenitsyn and the Russian Gulags, where cigarettes and matches were used to transmit messages along an 'invisible' network of people; or, that of Kenyan dissenter Ngugi wa Thiong'o who used pieces of toilet paper to write on during his year-long detention in a maximum security prison, is proof that where there are people, communication is not easily extinguishable.[44] In the case of Tanzania, what the government fears is a knowledge 'elite', fed by or able to feed into an information network that eludes a more centralized information command structure. This is seen as hazardous as supplying arms to a prisoner of war. In either case, the armament of an able mind, or able body, within the 'weaker' group is a threat to those seeking to secure power.

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[44] For more reading please see Kate Millett, *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment,* (New York: Norton, 1994).

In a similar vein, the international community protects its interests by cooperating with the government's policy on restricting Freedom of Information, as well as setting its own restrictions on supplying information to refugees and the general public. There is very little cooperation on the ground between UNHCR and its implementing partners. The public access policy of the UNHCR states,

The archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees exist to make the experience of the UNHCR, as embodied in its records and related materials, available to guide and assist the UNHCR in planning and conducting its activities and to provide information to meet the research needs of the persons of interest to UNHCR, the scholarly community, and the general public.[45]

If, indeed, it is UNHCR policy to share information with the scholarly community and the general public, as well as other 'persons of interest', it is puzzling why there are so many restrictions and suspicions raised by UNHCR personnel when researchers visit the camps. For instance, after the release in April 2001 of ARTICLE 19's *Voices in Exile* report on Freedom of Expression in the Tanzanian refugee camps, UNHCR expressed hostility to at least one researcher in the field, refusing to talk about 'anything regarding communications or information', openly stating that 'white researchers should be kept from talking with refugees', as well as spreading rumours that American researchers were CIA operatives.[46] Ironically enough, UNHCR representatives found their voices to spread dangerous rumours in places where otherwise they chose to remain mute. At the same time, ARTICLE 19's *Voices in Exile* report, found its own way into the informal information network, as it was not easily available to NGO workers and refugees in the area. A Tanzanian journalist along the border, in possession of one copy of the report, was photocopying it and quietly distributing it to researchers and humanitarian workers passing through the area.[47]

Furthermore, surely refugees qualify as both the general public and 'persons of interest' who have a right to information that is directly affecting their lives. The access policy goes on to state,

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[45] *Access Policy, Archives, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (accessed on June 17, 2003); available from www.unhcr.ch.
[46] Head and Assistant Protection Officers in Ngara sub-office, Ngara, Tanzania, June 2001.
[47] The Tanzanian journalist expressed his hesitancy over distributing a report that he believed had not only infuriated UNHCR, but also had made UNHCR and the government 'crack-down' on information provided to those working with refugees.

The refugee, his heirs or assigns or his legal representative, may have access to information related to himself.[48]

UNHCR is obligated by the very stipulations of its mandate to legally protect refugees. Legal protection surely includes communicating to refugees what their rights are under international refugee law, as well as under Tanzania's Refugee Act. Finally, if, according to UNHCR's Public Access Policy, a refugee can have access to information related to himself and his family, current practice in the field begs questioning as to why policy and practice are at odds. Refugees, in general, claim they are unaware of their rights and, barring critical health emergencies or high-profile visitors to the camps, the physical presence of UNHCR is so sporadic as to make them rather uncommunicative with refugees and equally as mistrusted.[49] There are several examples evidencing UNHCR's failure to provide appropriate legal information to refugees. In Ngara, Radio Kwizera wanted to create and broadcast a program on refugee law, in cooperation with UNHCR. UNHCR initially agreed to such a program, but later reneged, offering no further explanation to Radio Kwizera.[50] In every camp visited by ARTICLE 19, the claims were the same: refugees were not aware of their rights under international law; they certainly did not know their responsibilities; and, they absolutely had no idea which UNHCR representatives were in charge of their particular camp. This was first discovered by research gathered in 2001 and confirmed again when ARTICLE 19 visited Burundian and Congolese camps in 2003. This absence of legal knowledge in the camps means lawlessness is not just accepted, it is being reinforced.

ARTICLE 19 was invited to attend two routine meetings, one between inter-agencies and the other between inter-agencies and refugee village leaders in Kigoma region in April 2003.[51] At the meeting with refugee village leaders, UNHCR officials showed up two hours late from the sub-office located ten minutes distance from the designated meeting place. NGO officials said this was the 'usual trend' of UNHCR, as 'meetings with refugees are widely known to be unimportant'. Furthermore, at one village meeting, several years ago, a Burundian Chairman asked why refugees could not have one addition or change in the type of food being distributed to them for the past eight years. The Chairman went on to tell

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[48] *Access Policy, Archives, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (accessed on June 17, 2003); available from www.unhcr.ch.
[49] Interviews with refugees in Nyarugusu, Lugufu camps of Kigoma and Kasulu districts, June-July 2001 and April-May 2003.
[50] Interview with Radio Kwizera journalist, Radio Kwizera office, Ngara, June 2001.
[51] Interagency meetings were attended by representatives of the UNHCR, the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the World Food Program (WFP), and other implementing NGO partners of UNHCR.

'humanitarian' representatives at the meeting that he had heard that refugees in Kosovo received actual meals and even bread. UNHCR officials at this meeting, reportedly, told the Chairman that Kosovo refugees were different from African refugees; the main difference being that they were not black Africans.[52]

It is indeed strange that though the United Nations has long recognized the relationship between communication and security, as outlined already, there is very little contextual evidence of successful practice in the area of information exchange and direct communication occurring in the refugee-populated areas. Links between information exchange and security, as well as between communication networks and effective coordination are not new concepts to humanitarian assistance or the protection of human rights. "Adequate communications, both internal and external, constitute an essential element of any security arrangement. Every effort must be made to ensure that such communications are available under all circumstances."[53] UNHCR is technologically equipped to communicate with Geneva on satellite phones while driving through the bush in their land rovers, yet cooperation with aid agencies and refugees, requiring direct communication and a consistent physical presence in the camps, seems too taxing. Such a reputation in the area has sacrificed UNHCR's legitimacy among the refugees, as it should, as well, within the much more widespread context of the international community.

Restricting a refugee's right to be informed and to express himself, or, herself, only limits where refugees will go to access information and the type of information they receive. Restrictions do not stop the supply or demand of information. Conversely, the restrictions imposed serve to strengthen the monopoly refugees possess over the more informal means of communication and information exchange occurring in the camps. The effects of this can be illustrated by the economics of illegal drugs. Where heavy controls on the market seek to stop the supply and cripple the purchasing power of those operating in the market, the overall exchange of goods does not stop. People simply create another market, motivated all the more because they believe themselves to need the drug, thus causing informal or 'black' markets to thrive. "An addict will continue paying higher and higher prices for a drug, giving up more and more in order to pay for it. One of the more undesirable externalities resulting from this is that in many places, drug-related crime is on the rise, affecting even those who do not use

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[52] Interview with Burundian Chairman, camp to remain anonymous, Tanzania, June 2001.
[53] *UN Field Security Handbook*, United Nations, New York, 1998, paragraph 37.

drugs."[54] Information, to a refugee, works in much the same way. Desperate for information, a refugee will give up more and more, often in terms of his security, for the price of being able to communicate along the informal network. The externalities involved, as with the illegal drug example, affect security on a large-scale.

Sources of Information and the Creation of an Information Monopoly

The policy of the Tanzanian government regarding Freedom of Information to refugees needs rethinking. Freedom of Information is a security concern. Without security, there is no development. Without development, a country and its citizens will not evolve. Clearly, Freedom of Information in this context links itself directly to other substantive human rights concerns, both positive and negative rights that international law obligates states to protect or restrain from abusing. The right to life, security, health and education, all of which are non-divisible, are just a few examples of rights that can be endangered by restricting Freedom of Information to refugees.

Information is the key ingredient of social organization and flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure.[55] For refugees, social organization and mobility, however limited, drive the information and communication network. Refugees use the social organization of the camp and the basic routines of camp life to create the network upon which information is accessed and then disseminated. While roads or electrical wires normally build a physical framework on which to connect two points in industrialized nations, refugees build a human infrastructure on which to connect themselves. The efficiency of the informal network depends on the proximity of one person to another. In a refugee camp, the limited space of the camp is then used advantageously, connecting the points upon which messages can be transmitted rather easily, in the absence of large-scale infrastructure or readily available communications technologies. The access points, or central mainframe, to which information is then supplied and disseminated, are legitimate leaders voted in by popular camp elections. Though refugees may prioritise the information they want, the limited nature of where they can acquire information, ultimately determines what information they have. As a result, this information is understood in terms of the agenda refugees are limited to: survival.

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[54]*The Economics of Illegal Drugs*. (accessed June 19, 2003); available from http://www.pancakex.com/words/old/000632.html.
[55] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

Desperation for information will sometimes force refugees to risk using limited transportation infrastructure. Buses connecting border villages, trains running back and forth between Kigoma and Dar es Salaam, as well as ports connecting communities on Lake Tanganyika all provide ways for refugees not only to displace themselves at greater distances from the camp, but also to access information that can then be pulled back into the camps. Although refugees use these transportation systems with great resourcefulness, to increase the speed and distance any one piece of information will cover, this report will concentrate more on how information flows without the existence of a transportation infrastructure.

Social Organization

Alejandro Portes defines social capital as the capacity of individuals to command scarce resources, by virtue of their membership in a network, or a broader social structure. The success of the investment in social capital, as such, is not inherent in the existence of any one individual; rather it lies in the value of the individual's set of relationships with others.[56] The social capital that exists in a refugee camp finds its value in the way in which the masses organize themselves to become the network upon which information flows.

Lugufu II, Kigoma district: Housing in a Congolese camp, May 2003.

[56] Alejandro Portes, "Social capital: Its origin and application in modern sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology,* Vol. 22, 1998.

The physical structure of each refugee camp is divided into zones and further into villages. The villages contain blocks that then break down into plots of land upon which the unit of the family exists. The plots of land for each family unit measure roughly 15 by 15 meters. Connectivity to one's neighbour, within the limited space of a camp is equally as inevitable as it is necessary. It is a combination of the physical structure of camps, which places people in very close proximity to each other and the hierarchical order instituted among the masses, which appoints certain people as legitimate leaders that form the information network in a refugee camp.

Leadership in a refugee camp is established through an election process. Leaders are elected every four years. Popular votes cast in a camp-wide election determine who will hold the esteemed positions of "Chairman" (Burundian camps), "President" (Congolese camps), or "Village Guards" (the refugee protection force within camps). The Chairman and Village Guards are critical to the communication and information network of the refugee camp. They are accessible to the masses, were chosen by a majority vote of the people and provide a system of internal protection.

Even the Tanzanian government and the international community are aware of the leadership in a refugee camp, as well as how information is disseminated to the masses. When emergency information is transmitted to the camp, NGO representatives or the Tanzanian government will meet with the refugee camp leaders and relay the information they want disseminated throughout the camp. This one-way transmission of information occurs when there is a medical or sanitation emergency or when food rations are decreased.

Mobility

Refugees are not static. They move themselves around the limits of the camp, between camps and sometimes between a specific camp and the country from which they fled. Sometimes they apply for permission to leave the camps. Other times they do not risk applying for formal permission, lest they draw attention to themselves. To gather information in an environment where information is being restricted, a refugee must be mobile. He does not possess the luxury of communication and information technologies that wire more 'connected' communities to such a degree that people can sit in one place and access an infinite amount of sources to inform themselves. Restrictions on Freedom of Information means information will not enter the camp from official sources. Consequently, refugees must place themselves physically in places where external sources of information will cross at the same point. This

includes several places in a camp that attract the local community, as well as some key locations outside of the camps to which a refugee is drawn.

The proximity of camps to local Tanzanian villages and language similarities existing between the refugees and those living on the western border, facilitate interactions between the two groups. As a result, markets and businesses, water wells for bathing and washing clothes, health clinics and religious centres are a necessary function of community life. Thus, the places servicing a refugee's economic and social needs connect at the same points that service the same needs of the local community; thereby creating an environment where information is exchanged.

Food Distribution Centres

A refugee's internal source of information, the hub of the information network, coincides with a vital need: sustenance. Food distribution centres then are sources to feed stomachs, as well as minds. Food distribution is carried out every second week on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The entire camp, by necessity, is represented at the food distribution centre. Food distribution is organized by family groups, not to exceed 250 people for each community leader. Refugees gather at the centre, meeting with friends and elected community leaders.

Lugufu II, Kigoma district: Food Distribution Centre for a Congolese camp, May 2003.

Furthermore, even refugees who have left the camp for whatever reason, organize themselves to make it back to the camps for food distribution day. Here is where, at the very least, the masses commune with key points on the communication network. As a result, information is pumped by certain suppliers into the network and rapidly disseminated along the network.

Markets

The macroeconomic traffic of goods flowing between Tanzania and the neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda has suffered greatly from regional violence. Yet, a more microeconomic market for the exchange of goods between the local Tanzanian community and representatives of the aforementioned countries thrives in refugee-populated areas. Joint market day, as this microeconomic market is called, allows local communities to receive food rations such as soap, maize flour, and cooking oil provided

Lugufu II, Kigoma district: Congolese refugee market, May 2003.

to camps by international assistance programs. For the refugee, these markets are the only opportunity to supplement their diet, one deficient in the daily allowance of minerals and

vitamins for a human being. [57] Joint market day, also, allows people to interact socially. The economic interest of a market, then, serves a more political interest, allowing both local and refugee populations to share information. Both local people and refugees see the interchange of goods and information as critical to their personal security.

Furthermore, the markets are directly linked to food distribution. When food rations to refugees were reduced by over 50% in the last several months, refugees felt threatened. A reduction in food rations does not affect the central hub through which information flows, because food is still being supplied. However, the effect incurred on the joint market is substantial. With less food portioned out to each family unit in a refugee camp, there is less food available to trade with local communities. The reduction in food rations then compounds the restrictions already in existence, and tightens the chokehold on the information pipeline, as it will impede the frequency of visitors to the market. This narrows, yet again, the perspective of refugees, for whenever one source to the information network is cut, the remaining sources are strengthened. And, the lack of plurality on the supply line of information has important consequences.

Water Wells

Water wells in the refugee camps are another important access point for information. The water wells are usually a popular gathering place for women and children after food distribution day, as distribution of soap coincides with that of food. In Mtabila II, a Burundian refugee camp in Kasulu district, for example, women and children gather to wash at any one of the 58 water taps in the camp after food distribution day. The water well in refugee camps helps centralize information for women. For a refugee woman, who is often concerned with gathering firewood, cooking and tending to children, the water well becomes the one place where traditional familial chores cross with a maximum amount of other women engaged in the same process.

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[57]An interview with the camp manager (Tanzania Red Cross) in charge of Lugufu camps revealed that 100% of a daily food portion constitutes 350 g of maize meal per person per day; 80 g of pulses per person per day; 40 g of corn-soy blend, per person per day; 20 g of vegetable oil per person per day; and, 10 g of salt per person per day. 250 g of soap are allotted per person, per month. The food rations were cut in May 2003 to 250g of maize meal per person per day; 60 g of pulses per person per day; 30 g of corn-soy blend, per person per day; 10g of vegetable oil per person per day; and, no salt. 125 g of soap were to be allotted per person per month.

Refugee women supply new information to the informal communication network when they displace themselves. Sometimes, a refugee woman will travel outside the camp to frequent water wells where women of the local community gather. This displacement widens the information network, allowing new information to enter the camp with the return of the refugee women.

The importance of water to both the refugee woman and the local female villager is noteworthy. Oftentimes, the lack of a water well in each village means a woman displaces herself, with other women from the same village, walking several kilometres down the road to gather water. Local Tanzanian women widen their own communication network by meeting women from different villages, at a common water juncture. Interestingly, according to local women, one of the most disastrous development projects ever instituted in western Tanzania sought to threaten one of their key information and communication sources. Well-intentioned NGOs sought to remedy what were perceived as excruciating walks to the nearest riverbed or the village water hole, for Tanzanian women.[58] Local women, however, find gathering water to be an opportunity to connect with other people (villagers from other communities as well as refugee women), thus expanding a base of information from something otherwise limited to a particular village.

Farming Initiatives

The majority of Burundian refugees are farmers. In the Burundian camps, the houses often occupy a smaller section of the allotted land space, as Burundians will cultivate the remaining land in their possession. In addition, many Burundians have been given permission to leave the camps in order to farm in the local Tanzanian communities. They are paid less than a local Tanzanian would be paid, but being able to work on local farms is nevertheless a source of income generation for a Burundian. Working amongst local Tanzanians connects refugee men to local farmers, and thus to a source of local information.

As recently as May 2003, Burundians were not allowed to farm in the local communities, as restrictions on permits to leave the camps, halted the ability of farmers to continue cultivating land outside of the camps. Thus, information gathered through these farming collectives will dry up as quickly as the meagre flow of income brought into the camps by refugee men.

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[58] Interview with local Tanzanians, Ngara district, Tanzania, June 2001.

Health Clinics

Camp health clinics, like markets, serve both refugee and local communities. Health care initiatives in the camps have developed stronger local health care systems in the Tanzanian communities. Both refugees and local villagers are able to reap the benefits of health care programs. Health care centres are social hubs that provide a basic service, but in waiting to see a doctor, locals and refugees communicate. In this environment, the exchange of information is not deliberate, but it is happening.

Limited Technologies

Other sources of information for refugees are more technological in nature. These sources of information come in the form of transmitter radio, tracing facilities, and in one case, an experimental internet project. Restrictions on Freedom of Information have placed heavy controls on these information sources, but they have not rendered them completely off limits.

Radios

Radios are perceived as a status symbol, and a security device, in all of the refugee camps. Mainly, elected leaders have access to radios. The Chairman of Lukole A, the Burundian and Rwandan camp in Ngara district, was unnerved by the distribution of radios to primary schools in the camps, while he was still waiting for his broken radio to be replaced. To the Chairman, security comes before education.

Radios are essential. They become a Chairman's connection to a wider world, or a more regional context, thus tempering or influencing his politic message to the camp. He designates certain people to listen to different stations, such as Radio Rwanda, Radio Burundi, Radio Tanzania, the BBC and Voice of America. Then, he summarizes this collection of reports. In the Burundian refugee camps within Ngara and Kibondo district, Radio Kwizera, a Jesuit-run radio station widely trusted by refugees, is used to check the accuracy of what the Chairman hears on other accessible stations. What he does not know is that Radio Kwizera pulls its information from the same sources as the Chairman. Therefore, the news is the same. It is often frustrating for refugees, to be at the mercy of heavily politicised government or international stations that manipulate news broadcasts to fit a specific agenda.

In the Congolese camps of Nyarugusu and Lugufu, in Kasulu and Kigoma districts respectively, a more informal, or camp 'radio' has evolved. The initial information system,

begun in 1997, was comprised of megaphones, both hand-held and those mounted on poles throughout the camp, accessible via a "PA" system. Hand-held megaphones were used twice a day, as volunteers would ride through the camp on bicycles to relay news to the community. The news mostly pertained to outbreaks of an epidemic in one section of the camp, the birth or death of a camp member, or sometimes coded messages regarding a security issue. Since the masses would never obtain this information from the aid workers, the town-crier system was ingeniously invented to pass information from the elected 'gatekeepers' to the wider community.

In tandem with the megaphone system, still in operation today, there is a small but effective radio station in Nyarugusu. The radio station was constructed from a small stash of cables, amplifiers and antennas engineered to connect into a car battery, in order to diffuse information by broadcasting within the limited circumference of the camp. Authorities closely monitor what information is disseminated, especially regarding Congolese interpretations of Tanzanian politics. While Congolese radio has a license from the Tanzanian government, programs are edited by the Tanzanian officials in the camps and must be broadcast in either English or Swahili; leaving the masses who most easily understand Lingala to be at a disadvantage where information is concerned.

A similar station in Lugufu existed for several years. Lack of supplies and funding has dried up the ability to operate the radio in the camp. Refugees in Lugufu reported that President Joseph Kabila recently sent a supply of batteries and money to them.[59] However, en route to the camp, these donations were confiscated by Tanzanian officials. Though it cannot be confirmed whether or not President Kabila is truly feeding the existence of Congolese radio in the refugee camps, the perception among refugees is that Kabila supports and helps influence communications in the camps. So, while the Tanzanian government does everything to avoid supplying information to refugees, questions should be raised as to the political influence regional governments have within Tanzanian territory.

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[59] Interview with Congolese refugees, Lugufu camp, Tanzania, May 2003.

Tracing Facilities

The International Committee for the Red Cross' initiative to track missing relatives and unaccompanied minors in conflict situations has been utilized mostly for the Congolese refugees. Refugees use these facilities to send out information to the Democratic Republic of Congo, for news of whether relatives have been killed or have migrated. This is a source of personal, family information that has enormous psychological effects on refugees as they evaluate their future.

Internet

Despite governmental restrictions on the Freedom of Information, a short-term internet project has been launched through funding from a private U.S. venture capital foundation, with the permission of both the government and UNHCR.[60] Several NGOs, local and international, are supporting this internet project, of which Mtabila camp, in Kasulu district, and Kasulu town are the recipients. The project, in its initial stages, allows refugees to connect to the internet, in the presence of a monitor. Though the internet is seen as a positive step towards Freedom of Information, because it allows refugees to connect with family members or friends relocated in other countries, there are also some clear problems. Almost 60% of the Burundian refugees are illiterate, therefore even if they could access the internet, it is not able to provide them information in a format they can understand.[61] Secondly, at the time of ARTICLE 19's visit to Mtabila camp, refugees were not free to surf the internet. Access to the internet translated into a transfer of information from a refugee to a Tanzanian 'monitor', who then accessed the internet. Therefore, the internet was seen hardly as a legitimate source of information or even a trusted source, as all messages sent through the internet were typed (and possibly edited) by monitors who alone were able to access email accounts and the larger world-wide web.

Other Mobile Entities

The information network expands, not just along economic and social lines, nor simply along limited technological lines, but also along spiritual and political ones as well. Religious rituals, rebel movements and new arrivals are proven sources of information. The power held by these last elements is unknown, though, because the identities of the participants remain

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[60] For more reading on the Kasulu Internet Project, see http://www.global-catalyst.org.
[61] Interview with ex-Burundian Chairman, Kasulu district, May 2003.

rather unclear. The church operates on confidentiality, rebels on anonymity, and new arrivals on ambiguity. All three are mobile in their own right. The strength of these sources comes from the new information they infuse into the communication channels and the mutual interests that they all share.

Spiritual Centres

The Church in the Great Lakes Region of Africa has a sordid history, in large part due to its ability to influence large numbers of people. Such sway has not always been used for the perpetration of good. For centuries, people have counted on the fact that the Church is a sacred haven that will protect its people, speak the truth and seek justice. In the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda, the pulpit has been used to disseminate hatred, betray the most vulnerable and hide murderers. Though feelings expressing abandonment by God are common, the majority of refugees continue to practice their respective religious beliefs. Admirably, some legitimate local and international faith based organizations are establishing a rapport among refugees because they are present for more than just the rites of sacrament and confession.

Religious rites are not just sources of comfort; they also serve as fluid networks. Following the death of a community member, Congolese, Burundians and Rwandans travel between camps and mourn together. Nights spent keeping vigil with the deceased's family members and honouring the dead happen in all the camps and allow for representatives from different camps to gather together. Marriages also provide an opportunity for the movement of refugees between camps. Refugees will travel under these circumstances to celebrate as well as to grieve. Some refugees believe that these sorts of gatherings are not as reliable for exchanging information, as the communication network becomes more vulnerable to the emotional state of the occasion.

New Arrivals

Though newly arrived refugees take four to six weeks to process through reception centres before they are placed in designated camps, new arrivals bear witness to the most recent situation in the home country. Along with those refugees who frequently travel between the camps and home in between food distribution days, new arrivals cast their personal family and communal histories within the context of the current political tide that force them across the border and into the camps.

Many of the new arrivals at one of the reception centres in Kigoma town know what is happening in the refugee camps. Following an interview with UNHCR protection officials, one refugee journalist was absolutely terrified that UNHCR would send him to a camp in Kigoma district. He was certain that Mai-Mai rebels, who he had condemned in his coverage of the violence in Eastern Congo, were in a specific camp and would kill him should he be placed within their reach.[62]

Newly arrived Burundians recounted the failure of peace initiatives in Burundi. Though the Tanzanian government and UNHCR were trying to encourage voluntary repatriation to certain villages across the border, the new arrivals at Kibirizi Reception Centre, specifically, talked of violence and human rights abuses. Many of the newly arrived in May 2003 seemed to be academics and civil servants, rather than the wave of farmers that previously filled the Burundian camps. These rather middle to upper class refugees already had a rather fixed impression of the refugee camps, the international community and the Tanzanian government. Moreover, aside from providing information on the current conflict in Burundi, they were unafraid to express their opinions on the failure of the international community and the Tanzanian government to protect the safety and rights of the refugees they were to join in the camps.

Rebels

The existence of rebels in the refugee-populated area is of no shock value to anyone working in the camps. Fear of rebels and the inability to control what happens after dark is the principle reason why the international community and the Tanzanian government exit the camps before sunset. Refugees, then, by default, fall prey to the information campaigns or communication patterns of the rebels. What should be of great concern, to those responsible for refugee protection is what information the rebels are passing on to refugees. The leveraging point of rebels lies in their ability to capitalize on the weaknesses in the communication network where those who hold theoretical authority over an area have convinced themselves that that alone is sufficient for control and legitimacy.

Restrictions on information to refugees means nothing to a rebel. Human rights are, certainly, of no concern. Rebels as a source of information are mobile units that carry information in and out of a refugee camp and with it, enormous influence over the way refugees perceive their situation. The fact that these disenfranchised groups, the rebels and the

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[62] Interview with a refugee at one of the reception centres in Kigoma, May 2003.

refugees, occupy a certain territory and have limited resources from which to leverage political influence, creates a natural alliance where information is concerned. This is a direct threat to the host government and the international community, because they are not part of such a political alliance and offer no alternative detraction from the mutual dependence strengthening such an alliance.

Refugees value information as much as they do food.[63] When the supply of information is limited, there is little choice but to go 'forage' elsewhere. The social organization of the camp and the movement of people in the camp, around the camp and between camps, serve mutual economic, social and religious interests. It is where those interests cross that the informal information and communication network refugees so desperately depend on is established. In the end, it is how 'technologies' are created, used, or substituted for, and not what is in their inherent design and functionality that matters.

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[63] Interview with Burundian refugee, Lukole A/B camps, Ngara district, Tanzania, July 2001.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"You can murder an entire population by depriving them of information."[64]

The evolution of conflict throughout history is a sombre reflection of how information and communication technologies have aided in the spread of antagonisms, as well as the scope and scale of aggression. The cycle of violence that has caused millions to suffer in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and the refugee camps in Tanzania is exacerbated by the lack of information flowing into these countries, as well as a scarcity of information flowing out. Furthermore, the methods by which refugees from these countries are forced to communicate and gather information, when information is not freely offered, reflects not only the desperation of the emergency, but also the nature of power dynamics. What truly should be of grave concern to the Tanzanian government and the international community is their inability to recognize and act upon the mutual interests they share with refugees.

Tanzania's policy to restrict information to the refugee camps has created a monopoly on information in refugee-populated areas. This monopoly is neither controlled by the government, nor influenced by such parties as UNHCR, whose purpose is to protect. Protection of refugees is more than containment and certainly more than just a camp. Protection is providing information to refugees and communicating with them. Without knowledge of what they are protecting, or what is happening in the refugee camps, there is little hope that the government or the international community can provide adequate protection. The very methods by which those in power mean to control information have, in fact, caused the government and the international community to lose control of information flows.

If refugees fail to receive the protection they are guaranteed under international law, they will try to protect themselves. The survival instinct is accentuated among the traumatized. When refugees find that a 'safe haven' is, in many ways, an illusion; and, that those with the military power and the legal authority to protect them refuse to inform or communicate with them, they will protect themselves by communicating with each other and whatever other entities fall within their information network. With limited resources at their disposal, refugees will turn the very basic elements of economics, politics and religion afforded them into access points of information.

[64] Interview with Congolese refugee, Lugufu Camp, Kigoma district, Tanzania, July 2001.

The Tanzanian government, along with the international community, asserts its authority over more formalized channels of information to protect its interests. Refugees must be seen in the context of a partnership rather than as more fuel flowing into a political powder keg. When governing bodies do not communicate or allow multiple sources of information to flow into the refugee camps, a critical opportunity to widen refugees' perceptions and understanding of their current situation is lost. The tighter the reign is held on the very human need to communicate and exchange information, the more desperate will be the means by which it is attained. That desperation is what truly threatens national security and public order, driving the masses to create informal channels of information, a communication network inaccessible to the 'authorities'. The power of informal information and communication networks, virtually banned in a more public context, rests in the value attributed to each piece of information acquired and the source from which that information is extracted. Allowing for a diversity of communication channels will let information itself evolve, as well as the perceptions formulated by it. It will also ensure that no one stakeholder has ultimate control over any one message.

It should not be forgotten that restricting Freedom of Information to refugees is an abuse of international law. The Tanzanian government is obligated by international law to physically protect the refugees within its border. The Tanzanian government is also obligated, by the authority it possesses over the state and its borders, to protect its citizens and defend the interests of the republic. Freedom of Information is a recognized right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. Guaranteeing Freedom of Information serves more than the development of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights meant to empower individuals and evolve democracy. If the Tanzanian government, with the acquiescence of the international community, chooses to disavow its obligations under international law, perhaps emphasizing the threat to security its policies have created will provide the greater incentive to rethinking its obligations to protect refugees' rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Serious concerted efforts should be made to initiate direct communication between the Tanzanian government, UNHCR, the international community and refugees. Direct communication between those obligated to protect refugees and refugees themselves, as well as between the international community and the Tanzanian government is crucial.

- Providing information to refugees through the gatekeepers they deem legitimate, and at the economic and social source points they easily access, will make use of an already existing informal information and communication network.

UNHCR & International Community

- UNHCR should be held accountable for not fulfilling its obligations under its mandate and the UN should review its responsibilities for protecting human rights under the UNDHR.

- Refugees should know and understand what their rights **and** responsibilities are.

- UNHCR should ensure that all refugees are provided with information about their rights.

- UNHCR should ensure that refugees are provided with legal services through access to a legal centre or law clinic.

- UNHCR should put into practice its public access policy, by ensuring refugees are aware of the fact that any personal information UNHCR may possess with regard to an individual and/or an individual's family members is accessible to that particular refugee. In addition, refugees should also know, under the public access policy, that they possess a right to all information relating to their circumstances.

- Refugees should have access to several sources of information to enable them to make an informed decision regarding voluntary repatriation.

- UNHCR should allocate resources towards public awareness raising programmes, aimed at improving relations with NGOs, locals and refugees. Information campaigns and a consistent physical presence in the camps would build UNHCR's legitimacy.

- The international community and UNHCR should be part of a system of information sharing. UNHCR should coordinate more effectively with its implementing partners and work towards a common goal.

- At a time when funding is being cut, UNHCR and international funding should be reprioritised to spend more money on basic needs and basic technologies rather than on luxury vehicles (SUVs) and unnecessary administrative costs.

- The basic needs of refugees need to be met before support for more formal information and communication programmes can be initiated.

- Refugees should be provided with radio sets and batteries. Camp based radio stations should be encouraged and these stations should be able to broadcast in the language of their choice. Radios provide a variety of information from several different sources and are an effective and efficient source for health, education and security issues.

- Several forms of expression should be encouraged within the camps; these can include radio, newspapers, theatre and song. Refugees should be provided with paper and writing utensils and existing educational and literacy programmes should be supported and strengthened.

- Informal innovations, such as the use of bicycles and megaphones to deliver messages should be encouraged and shared between camps. This will go a long way in facilitating the effectiveness and speed by which information regarding security in the camps is disseminated. Village guards reported that lack of transportation hindered the effectiveness of their work.

- The international community should assist in funding low-tech communication and information networks. Refugees want post offices and radios before the Internet. Afterwards, they will want telephones and Internet connections. Such investments will yield higher returns if done in conjunction with the order of need.

Tanzanian Government

• The trends set by Tanzania, as a member of the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as the African Union (AU), will have a far-reaching influence on the other EAC and SADC countries. Such trends would include, but not be limited to addressing how African nations will protect and assist refugees, as well as critically evaluating what impact future policies will have on refugees.

• The Tanzanian Government should fulfil its obligations under international law, providing physical protection to refugees and Tanzanian citizens within the borders of the country. This would include a sincere resolve to remove rebel groups from western Tanzania and secure refugee populated areas at night, as well as during the day, by the presence of military and police forces.

• Tanzanian military presence should be strengthened at the borders of Rwanda and Burundi, allowing refugees to enter the country, but monitoring attacks between rebel groups and villagers at the border, as well as the flow of arms.

• The Refugee Act of 1998 should be revised to include guarantees of:

   ○ Protection of Freedom of Expression and Information
   ○ Protection of Freedom of Movement for refugees with permission of the government and within a certain parameter of the camp
   ○ Support for information exchange between local Tanzanians and refugees
   ○ Legal education for refugees, including international law, the Tanzanian Refugee Act and the Tanzanian Constitution

• More researchers and journalists should be encouraged to access the camps. This will allow interaction between various members of the international community while providing a voice for refugees beyond the camps. Ongoing research will also provide recommendations for improving the overall coordination and operation of the camps.

• More development projects, such as cooperative farming, community health workshops and educational exchanges should be initiated between locals and refugee populations. Such initiatives will facilitate cooperation between the two groups.

• Refugees should be allowed access to newspapers from their countries of origin. This way they will be updated by news sources from their respective communities with regard to the current conflict and the possibility for return.

Chart representing Radion Stations in Refugee Camps in Western Tanzania by June 2003

Districts	Camps	Radio Name	Radio Operation Status
Kigoma	Lugufu 1* Congelese Lugufu ll* Congolese	• Radio Recolta (Community Radio run by Congolese refugees) • British Broadcasting Co-operation (BBC) • Voice of America (VOA)	Seasonal Operational by May 2003 Operational Operational
Kasulu	Mtabila 1* Burundians Mtabila ll* Muyovosi* Nyarugusu* Congolese	• British Broadcasting Co-operation (BBC) • Voice of America (VOA) • Radio Burundi • Radio Tanzania • (RTTS) Radio Tarifa Tangazo na Salamu (Community Radio run by Congolese refugees) • British Broadcasting Co-operation (BBC) • Voice of America (VOA) • Radio Tanzania	Operational Operational Operational Operational Operational Operational Operational Operational
Kibondo	Mkugwa* Mixed Marriages and Refugees with security concerns (Rwandans, Burundian & Congolese)	• Radio Burundi • Radio Kwizera (Project of the Jesuit Refugee Services)	Operational Operational

	Nduta* Burundians	• Radio Tanzania	Operational
		• Voice of America (VOA)	Operational
	Mtendeli* Burundians	• British Broadcasting Co-operation (BBC)	Operational
		• Voice of America (VOA)	Operational
Ngara	Lukole A and B* Rwandans and Burundians	• Radio Rwanda	Operational
		• Radio Burundi	
		• Radio Kwizera	
		• Radio Tanzania	Operational
		• British Broadcasting Co-operation (BBC)	