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Challenges of Statelessness on Refugee Youths in Africa: The Call for Ubuntu Ethos in Policy Practices

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to discuss the challenges faced by refugee youths in Africa as result of being stateless and suggest measures to address the problem of statelessness within those youths. Living without nationality forces those youths to live frustrating life style coupled with uncertain future. This paper calls for the host countries to change their policy practices for the sake of humanity, with the concept of Ubuntu and Human security driving the policy interventions to resolve the problem of statelessness within the refugee youths across Africa. In this paper, documentary search and in-depth interviews were used.

Keywords: Refugee youths, statelessness, policy practices, ubuntu, human security

1. Introduction and Background

Across the globe, migration has been and remains an important phenomenon in the history of mankind. People travel from one place to another voluntary or involuntary and this has become a way of life to others. There are 'pull' and 'push' factors that play an essential role in facilitating these movements of people across various destinations. These factors include the socio-economic, political, cultural, geographical and environmental related and are considered to be among the major dynamics influencing the various forms of migration that exist in modern contemporary world (Chelule, 2014). However, in today's global environment, forced migration has emerged as a long-standing challenge that the world is facing. It has led to an influx of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various parts of the world. Today, the world is at 'messy' people are displaced in several continents of the world. Presently, the global statistics of forced displacement in the year 2015 stood at more than 65 million people who had to leave their homes due to fear of persecution, and other forms of human rights violations as well as natural disasters like floods, tsunamis, famine, earthquakes, and tornadoes and hurricanes (UNHCR report, 2016). The conflicts in the Middle East (Syria and Iraq), ongoing unresolved conflicts in Afghanistan, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, South Sudan and Burundi to mention a few, have severely imposed sufferings and massive displacement on their people. However, as observed by many socio-economic and developmental analysts, armed conflicts and the resulting mass fleeing of refugees constitute the greatest challenge for economic development and the greatest obstacle to economic take-off (Nabudere, 2002).

In Africa, the challenges posed by influx of refugees has been ever-present. Since the cold war period, the African continent registered a rising number of conflicts ranging from intra-state to inter-state, with these clashes being fueled by the need to control resources, identity crisis and session (Harris, et al. 2003). The main causes of these conflicts include mostly the power struggle, poor governing systems, ethnic differences that leads to tensions, uneven distribution of resources, armed conflicts and internal violence (Harris, et al. 2003). At the end of the year 2015, an estimated number of about 16 million people, mostly women and children were either forced to flee their countries or internally displaced. This figure increased by 1.5 million from the year 2014, which demonstrates the extent to which people continue to flee their respective countries. As of today, the main host nations of refugees in Africa, include Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Congo Brazzaville and other southern African countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa (UNHCR report, 2016).

Of important to reckon is the fact that, due to massive influx of refugees seeking safety in other African countries, there emerged a significant number of refugees with protracted cases. These are refugees who find themselves in refugee camps for a very long period of time. Other refugees have been living and surviving with a refugee identity for more than thirty to twenty-five years, some are born as a refugee. Hence, this situation tends to put many refugees into 'statelessness status', in which they find themselves living without nationalities. The term statelessness in this paper refers to a situation in which a person lives without nationality. A stateless person, is an individual who is not regarded to be a citizen of any country of the world, and it is widely considered to be among the cause of migration in the world today (UNHCR, 2016). This is mainly because a large number of refugees in various African countries are not willing to voluntarily return in their home countries due to fear of being persecuted, or fear of change. With western countries not willing to accept refugees. The UNHCR has been struggling to give a durable solution to most of these refugees. What is interesting to note, is the fact that refugees' youths are

the most affected by this scenario. This is particularly because most of them are born as refugees, some has been refugees since childhood. Living without nationality has become detrimental to therefugee youth's attempt to realize their future. Some refugee youths are living without even a birth certificate. Statelessness is a major obstacle to refugee youths in Africa, it results in un-intended behaviour which forces them to live frustrating life style of drug taking, early marriage, engaging in crimes, engaging in unproductive endeavors coupled with uncertain future and living a psychological stressing life style due to eroded hope. This paper therefore seeks to discuss the challenges faced by refugee youths because of being stateless, and calls for African countries that host refugees to change their policy practices for the sake of humanity. The concept of Ubuntu and Human security are used in this paper to provide a comprehensive understanding on how statelessness amongst refugee youths should be approached from policy practices perspective. The host countries have a bigger role to play in salvaging the future of these refugee youths. There is need to integrate and naturalise these refugee youths by giving them a citizenship status so as to enable them to live the normal lives as real people with real needs. These youths are the manpower of the host nations, and can massively contribute to nation development in different ways. Not only the host countries bear such moral responsibility but also civil society groups and other international organisations should do more in order to help these refugee youths who are suffering because of statelessness. To substantiate the central argument of this paper, the researcher uses examples, cases and scenarios from various African countries hosting refugees in order to demonstrate the challenges facing refugee youths in Africa because of stateless. This paper is based qualitative methodological approach, in which documentary search and in-depth interviews were used in data collection and analysis, so as to uphold the main argument of this paper as shall be discussed below.

2. Conceptual Analysis

The term conceptual analysis entails primarily an attempt to breakdown and analyse concepts in their fundamental meaning so as to gain knowledge or a better understanding of a certain existing link of thoughts in which a particular concept is involved (Beaney, 2003). This is mainly done to analyse the relationship between the concept and the idea being put forward in this paper. It helps to generate a better understanding and lead to the expansion of knowledge in the subject area in which the concept is intricate. In this regard, the concepts such as a refugee, statelessness, stateless refugee youths, the concept of human security and Ubuntu are defined and analyzed in order to provide a better understanding of the challenges that refugee youths are facing as result of being statelessness and help the researcher to suggest measures to rescue the lives of million refugee youths suffering in Africa. These concepts are therefore defined and discussed below.

A "refugee"

Defining a 'refugee' has been subjected to definitional pluralism. In other words, it is differently defined and understood from various perspective, ranging from social, economic, political, and legal perspective. This therefore has resulted in various meanings being attached to the term a refugee. Policy makers, analysts and political actors has among themselves failed to have an unanimously agreed definition of who should be categorized as a refugee in any given circumstances (Rwamatwara, 2015). However, the comprehensive characteristics of qualifying a refugee is stipulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and the 1969 OAU, which is now the AU Convention, governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. The concrete definition of refugee in legal terms is highlighted in the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. It clearly explains the right of a refugee and the obligations of states in dealing with refugees or issues related to refugees. In this context, the article 1A (2) of the above protocol, define a refugee as: a person who lives outside his own country and is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country or to avail himself or herself to the protection of his or her government because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

In this paper, however, a refugee is defined as a person who has fled his or her home country against their personal willingness because of the existing fear or danger to his or her life. This person is pushed out of his home country by the conditions that are of potential threat to his or physical safety, security, dignity, liberty and property. According to Rwamatwara (2015) an actual or a perceived threat to these central tenets of human existence renders the place of abode, dangerous, hazardous and consequently makes the need to seek safe haven and succor in a neighboring country or elsewhere imperative. This therefore constitute what a refugee is in this paper. However, despite having the above highlighted explanations, the definition of a refugee remains a contested issue, especially on who qualifies a refugee. In countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana, for someone to be given a refugee status should provide proof beyond reasonable doubt that they fit in the conditions, spot highlighted in these legal definitions. Before being officially granted or denied the refugee status, those aspiring to the status are referred to as asylum seekers and risk to be considered illegal migrants when the decision to deny them refugee status becomes final (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees-UNHRC, 2015).

In terms of refugee management, several African countries, uses encampment policy, in which they establish known refugee camps to accommodate a particular number of refugees. For instance, Zhaleka refugee camp (Malawi), Tongogara refugee camp (Zimbabwe), Nakiville refugee camp (Uganda), Nyarugusu refugee camp, (Tanzania), Mahama refugee camp (Rwanda), Kakuma refugee camp (Kenya) and Maheba refugee camp (Zambia). However, other countries such as South Africa have no refugee camp policy, they prefer to integrate refugees in their communities across the country (UNHCR-South Africa, 2017). Therefore, a refugee is someone who ran away from his or her country due to fear of being killed or persecuted. The above analysis therefore helps to understand the term a refugee, and how a refugee is received and handled in host different

countries of Africa. Hence it is essential to define and discuss the notion of statelessness so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of what statelessness means in this paper below.

3. The Definition of "Statelessness"

The term statelessness has emerged as new global challenges that threatens the lives of many people in this contemporary 21st era. It defined as a situation that occurs when a person is not viewed or considered as a national by any given country (UNHCR, 2012). In this paper, however, statelessness is defined by the author as encompassing the wide range of people who are living lives without the status of citizenship and are not able to enjoy the rights that are associated with citizenship. The UNHRC report of 2015 highlighted that there are about 12 million stateless people in the world. In similar vein, the Forced Migration Review report of 2009 also indicated that a stateless person is someone who is not recognized as a national by any state. Sometime, those people are allowed to live in countries of residence, but are not allowed to enjoy the rights of citizens, while others are unprotected by national legislation, in which they are left vulnerable in various ways, and (Forced Migration Review issue 32 2009), which makes them vulnerable to immigration initiatives such as forced deportations and imprisonment. In many cases, statelessness is dismissed as a domestic matter. Statelessness can happen to anyone, on one hand, some people may become stateless overnight due to political, legal directives or the redrawing of state boundaries. While on the other hand, some may become stateless due to administrative obstacles as they simply fall through the cracks of a system that ignores or has forgotten them (UNHCR report, 2016). Hence, statelessness meanwhile can be both a cause and consequence of displacement creating and exacerbating situations of vulnerability. The possible consequences of statelessness are profound and touch on all aspects of life and the world's stateless populations face unique challenges and require specialized responses from the international refugee regime as well as specific instruments for their protection. Implicitly, without citizenship one cannot prove their nationality. In Africa, stateless is an emerging challenge that the continent is faced. The most cause of this problem is mostly conflicts and wars that occurs and consequently lead to displacement, and huge refugee crisis. Protracted cases of refugees, the national laws of most African country (the host nations) that offers no possibility for local integration of refugees through the process of naturalization are in this regard among the most causes of statelessness of refugees in Africa. Of important to note is the fact that, not all stateless people are refugees. Only a slight portion of stateless people are refugees. Therefore, this paper is confined on the challenges faced by refugee youths in various locations across Africa as result of being stateless. As noted earlier on, within refugees in Africa, refugee youths are the most vulnerable group to the consequences of statelessness. Many refugee youths are stranded in refugee camps, struggling for survival with no hope of making difference in the future. Some sees shuttered doors ahead of their future. Hence, it is important to understand the challenges faced by refugee youths in Africa and how such problems can be approached in order to save the lives of many youths for the sake humanity. It is therefore to define and describe the term 'stateless refugee youths' in this paper as discussed below.

3.1. *Stateless Refugee Youths*

The term stateless refugee youths in this paper is defined as the young generation, both males and females, at the age of 12 to 35 years old living in various locations across Africa. Although some of them resides in urban areas, a huge number of them are situated in refugee camps. Some are born in those refugee camps and others came as minors with their parents. They grew up, study their primary school, secondary school and tertiary education level in the host country for some while those who could not advance the studies are stranded in refugee camps and have no hope to make it in future. They have absorbed the cultural values and norms of the society that hosted them as refugees, and can fluently speak the local language of the country the host communities. These refugee youths in most cases do not know their countries of origins, and most of them have no birth certificates due to factors that made them to be refugees. What is also interesting about this people is the fact that some of them have been living in refugee camp for more than twenty years.

As result of protracted refugee situations for many refugees in Africa, more and more refugee youths are becoming stateless as a day pass by. About 100 000 refugees from Sierra Leone, and Liberia, and many others from Burundi, Rwanda, DRC, Sudan (Darfur) and South Sudan are faced with statelessness and the host countries are not willing to integrate them in their communities. Some of refugees from Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone are still residing in host countries despite their status having being invoked through cessation clauses stipulated in the 1951 Refugee Convention. While Rwandan refugees who left the country from 1959 to 1998 are also faced with the threats of being stateless at the end of 2017, after the application of cessation clauses in a highly disputed and controversial process (Kavuro, 2014); (UNHCR, 2016). According to Cacarani (2012) cessation clauses on refugees refers to a situation in which a refugee status of is terminated on the ground that the factor that cause the refugees to flee the countries of origins are no longer there and it is mainly applied by international community. These refugees are considered as stateless as they are not recognised nationals of their countries of origins or the host. Hence, it in this regard that most refugee youths are found under the dangers of statelessness. The young generations are the most affected by statelessness because their parents are most old and have nothing to achieve in life. Having nationality is an important aspect of life as it helps to link the individual and the state, including establishing the direction towards contributing to sustainable development. In the context refugee youths in Africa, living lives without citizenship makes it difficult for these refugees to survive. It makes them incapable to exercise their fundamental rights, thereby preventing them from realizing future goals and objectives (Jason Tucker, 2017); (Manby, 2014). Hence, the above helps to understand what is constantly

referred to as stateless refugee youths in this paper. It also important to understand how statelessness among refugee youths can be viewed from human security perspective so as to find a solution that help to resolve the challenges faced by those youths as discussed in the following passages.

3.2. The Concept Human Security in the Lens of Statelessness amongst Refugee Youths

The notion of human security us another conceptual consideration used in this paper to understand the extent to which statelessness is threat to refugees in Africa, particularly refugee youths. The concept of human security came as an idea that challenges the state centered notion of security, in which every policies and initiatives related to security were crafted based the prioritization of state security at all cost, the focuses of governments and international organisations was on state centered security rather than individual human security (Dorn, 2012:2). Thus, human security concept came to challenge this state centered centric perspective of security. As was highlighted in the Human Development Report of 1994, the notion human security was defined as the people's safety from chronic threats and protecting them from hurtful disturbances in patterns of life. There seven forms of human security which were outlined in same report, including economic security, healthy security, food security, environmental security physical security (personal security), political security and community security (Dorn, 2012:1). Human security is a human centered form of security. It is aimed at making sure that human freedom from persistent threats to people's safety and their rights.

The shift in the way security is viewed came in the 21st century as result of emerging new security threats and the various campaigns from international organisations, NGOs and civil society calling for the concept of security to be re-defined so as to encompass individual security. According to scholars such as Keller (2010:1), the conceptual view of human security emerged from the postulation that there are problems, needs and issues, which are common to all human kind regardless of their respective locations across the globe. For instance, issues such as the spread of new types of diseases like Ebola, heavy water and air pollution, poverty, HIV and AIDS, the growing challenges of terrorism, natural disasters (Tsunamis, Earthquakes etc.), threats to lives such as human rights violations, and other form of human misery like lack of identity and a sense of belonging in a given society are all considered to be human security issues that should be treated a global concern no matter which part of the world it occurring. Human security is primarily concerned with people's safety and survival from a group or an individual perspective. Any threat to human beings or a particular group is considered as a human security issue of concern that must be addressed with due diligence and care.

It is in this context that this paper considers statelessness as a threat to human security from an individual or group perspective. Refugee youths in Africa are experiencing survival challenges as result of being stateless. When people have no sense of belonging and identity, they become vulnerable to every threat to lives (Manby, 2014:3). Having nationality or citizenship status allows the individual to enjoy the protection of the state and gives them a legal ground to exercise some important civil and political rights, and freely contribute to nation development in so many ways. In many cases, nationality or a sense of identity and belonging in the context of citizenship helps people to find employment, benefit from public services, participate in socio-economic, cultural, political and development initiatives of their government without being discriminated (Manby, 2014). Therefore, having nationality or citizenship status is a fundamental component of human security and indispensable to human survival. Without it people are nothing and not able to enjoy a Godly given gift of life in this world. Given the above, statelessness amongst refugee youths in Africa is a human security problem that need to be addressed. In this regard, the challenges faced by those youths must be understood from a human security perspective. Refugee youths in Africa are in danger. They are vulnerable to various threats of lives due to statelessness. Thousands of them are living lives in refugee camps, without even a birth certificate, some have been in these refugee camps for the whole of their lives. Their dreams have been shuttered, and have no hope to realize their future. This is particularly because they cannot compete equally with other youths in all levels of society (Manby, 2014). This therefore affect them in different ways and pose a greatest challenge to their living. As was noted by UNHCR (2016), the problem of stateless amongst refugees and other people can only be addressed by their host governments. However, it is not easy in Africa because most governments that host those refugees have no local integration of refugee's policy in their legal frameworks, hence, making it difficult for such legal ground to be established. Therefore, cognizant of this, there is need for the host governments to assess their policy formulation and practices toward refugees, and see the important role that can be played by refugee youths, including the relationship that have been created between those refugees' youths and the host community. Particularly because most them have been living in their host countries for the whole of their lives, speak the local languages and absorbed the cultural practices of their host communities. There is need to see the challenges faced by refugee youths in Africa as a human security problem that should be addressed so to rescue the future generation of many African refugee youths living under the parasol of statelessness. The concept of Ubuntu is also another view point used in this paper to understand the problem of statelessness amongst refugee youths and how such challenges should be addressed as discussed below.

3.3. Understanding the Concept of "Ubuntu" in Theory and Practice

The word Ubuntu is derived from the Nguni (isiZulu saying): "Umuntu" "Ngumuntu" "Ngabantu", which means that a person is a person through others (Moloketi, 2009: 244). This saying was also stressed by Desmond Tutu when he alluded that people are people because of other people. Ubuntu is an African philosophy which is widely noted in many communities, for example, in Rwanda and Burundi Ubuntu is UBUNTU, UNTU in Tanzania and UNHU in Shona (Zimbabwe) (Manyeruke, 2015).

According to scholars such as Khoza (2006:7) the Ubuntu philosophy refers to the capacity in an African traditional practice to show compassion, dignity, humanity, reciprocity, respect for one another, responsiveness as well as mutual interests towards creating and maintaining strong institutions and communities on the basis of fairness and justice. Mutual caring for one another is also an important ethos that is enshrined in the concept of Ubuntu (Mandela, 2006). The philosophy of Ubuntu is prevalent in many African society across the continent. As observed by other scholars such as Rwelamila and Ngowi (1999:337), the Ubuntu philosophy is part and parcel of human kind in Africa, it is in all aspects of day to day life across African communities and is a notion shared by many tribes and Southern Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Western part of Africa. According to Mandela (2006) the philosophy of Ubuntu does not only entail that people should not be part of the problem-solving mechanism, but they should be able to see if what they are doing will lead problem solving response or whether what they are doing can empower or enable the community around them and subsequently help to bring about improvement or better lives. This means that policies should be formulated in way that benefit the society and other groups with a society. Humanity and moral responsibility are at the center of the concept of Ubuntu. Ubuntu also suggests that if people are treated well, they are likely to perform in a better way. The driving ethos of Ubuntu such as respect for one another, love among community and groups are key to the practices that define the notion of Ubuntu.

In a society where the philosophy of Ubuntu is practiced and acknowledged, African perspective of personhood or humanity reject the practice in which a person is identified through his physical appearance, psychological features, origin, tribal or ethnic identity. Ubuntu philosophy across Africa reflect a moral basis of collective cultural life. Through the notion of Ubuntu, the community become solidly interconnected and humanity becomes central to day to day life and people become responsible to one another (Nassbaum, 2003: 22). In such community, nation development found its way at a fast rate and peace prevail.

Given the above description of Ubuntu philosophy, one can argue that it is a moral value practice that reflect the nature of Africans in living together. It shows that African society are humanistic and community based. As for this paper, the philosophy of Ubuntu can play an important role in the policy formulation and practices of many African communities toward refugees, especially in addressing the problem of statelessness. Truly speaking, the problems or challenges that are being faced by refugee youths in many parts of Africa as result of statelessness should be understood through the notion of Ubuntu. As earlier noted, Refugee youths are suffering in the face of many governments that hosted them. They are living lives without citizenship and their hopes to make it in life have been eroded. Hence, this paper calls for the Ubuntu ethos in the policy practices of the host governments towards finding a solution that can save the lives of many refugee youths who are living without citizenship in many African countries. As the notion of Ubuntu entail, people are people because of other people, hence, there is need for countries that host those refugees, to real apply the ethos of Ubuntu in their policy practices in order to help many refugees in Africa, specially the youths that vulnerable to the problem of statelessness. In the following section, the challenges facing refugee youths in Africa and their negative implications are outlined and discussed below.

3.4. The Challenges Facing Refugee Youths in Africa: "Selected Cases"

In Africa, refugee youths continue to face many problems as result of being stateless. Thus, under this section, the paper outline and discuss the various challenges faced by refugee youths using selected cases in many parts of Africa, particularly, in countries that host refugees in Africa.

One of the challenges facing refugee youths in Africa as result of being stateless is the vulnerability to exploitation as cheap labor. Most refugee youths live in camps, where making living and being self-reliance is difficult and sometimes not attainable. This is particularly for those youths at the age of 15-30 years old, especially those born in the camp or refugee situations. Having no nationality makes them vulnerable to discrimination in hiring process as they are treated as foreigners. At the end of the day they end up doing jobs that are poorly paid, under poor working conditions. Even for those who are qualified for the good jobs are forced to do dirty jobs, because they are discriminated in hiring process. One interviewed refugee youths from Sudan who held a degree in industrial engineering noted that: "getting a job in Kenya as refugee is difficult because he is treated the same as an expatriate, I made more than 60 applications for the jobs that I qualified but could not get it, now I decided to do a money changing job to make a living, there are a lot of risk associated with it, but I have no option; my boss pays my rentals in Nairobi." Asked if there was a something that should be done, he cited the fact that having no citizenship that allows him to be treated as local citizen of the country is a factor in his struggle. Therefore, this is among the thousand cases happening across Africa. Refugee youths are suffering because of being stateless. They are vulnerable to discrimination and can be exploited as cheap labor as observed in the above case.

The lack of nationality or being stateless is also a demotivating factor amongst many refugee youths in Africa. This is mainly because many refugee youths who are educated in many refugee camps are still living the same live style as for these who didn't go to school. For example, in the area under study, Tongogara Refugee Camp, Zimbabwe, education is offered for free from primary to secondary school as well as University for those who would have done well in High School. Despite the fact that education can easily be attained for free, many refugee youths are now not preferring to engage into early marriages especially for these who have the chance to be resettled overseas. Pursuing school is no longer a motivating factor to others. One interviewed respondent (a Burundian refugee) from Tongogara refugee camp cited that, I am 35-year-old, and have been a refugee for the past 25 years, I was funded to study until I earned my Bachelor in Business management and Administration, but now I am ling in the refugee camp, living the same life style as for these who didn't go to school. If I had a nationality, I

would have travelled to another country to look for a job, but now I have no option. This is also demotivating to our young brothers and sisters who are living in this refugee situation"According to a Rwandan responded in the field, marriage at a younger age was more favorable than the option of going to a school that she did not like, because education is not helping for those who went to school. Some are doing interpreting jobs in the refugee camp where they earn not more than 50 USD per month. This is another example that shows how statelessness is affecting the future of many refugees in Africa. The lack of nationality tends to restrict refugees from exploring other options that can help to improve their living conditions.

Hence, as highlighted above, refugee youths are forced to take on adult responsibilities to survive the circumstances they find themselves in as a result of being stateless. Most employment opportunities available require hard labor like construction or cultivating fields which obviously favor the boys. In Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Tanzania, for example, girls have fewer options for work, often ending up with tasks such as making palm oil or chopping wood to sell in the market and they do not earn as much money (Girl Child Report on Refugees, 2013). As a result, some of the refugee girls are exposed to prostitution and manipulation both from within the refugee community and by members of the host community. Despite awareness campaigns on safe sex and the dangers of prostitution, they have adopted this lifestyle for lack of a viable alternative source of income, exacerbating further their risk of abuse, unwanted pregnancies and premature marriages due to lack employment opportunity because of discrimination in hiring processes, economic resources that would have enable those refugees to better live their lives and be able to realize their life goals and objectives. Therefore, the lack of nationality is major challenge facing refugee youths in Africa.

Another consequence faced by refugee youths as result of being stateless is inability to participate in decision-making processes at individual, community and country level. This create a situation, perceived or genuine, where young people feel they are unable to influence their own future. It is also a challenge for them to link into existing national, regional and international networks aimed at supporting the voices of youth, especially in the areas of putting forward their views, towards national development. Statelessness makes it difficult for refugee youths to define their destiny. In most cases, they depend on UNHCR and the host government for survival, and most policies affecting their lives are usually imposed from the top (Manly and Persaud, 2009). "One interviewed young refugee girl from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in South Africa, noted that, we cannot push for our rights in a country where we are perceived as foreigners who are living in South Africa for the purpose of stilling and taking the jobs of the local people. That is why we are killed and discriminated by the locals, through xenophobic attacks, we have no option. I have been living in South Africa for the past 15 years, but up to now I am still treated as foreigner. In South Africa, a refugee and an economic immigrant or expatriate are treated the same". This therefore makes it difficult for refugee youths to advocate for their rights or be able to participate in decision making processes that affects their future. Hence statelessness is a serious problem affecting the lives of many refugee youths as exemplified above. As was also noted by scholars such as Manly and Persaud (2009), the lack of nationality is a major problem to refugees in Africa. This assertion is also put forward in this paper, that statelessness is a major problem to refugees in Africa, especially those at the youthful age. The lack of identification papers to prove their citizenship, refugee youths are unable to access a range of government services and employment. Stateless people can neither vote nor access the national justice system. As articulated by Manly and Persaud (2009), statelessness often means that living a life like others in society is just not possible. This particularly true because, most refugees have no access to the rights, services and legal documentation available to citizens. Therefore, the lack of nationality poses massive consequences to refugees in Africa, especially for among the refugee youths living in their host countries for a period ranging from 1-10 years and above at the same time thriving to survive in the face of un-allowing environment.

Psychological distress is another challenge encountered by the refugee youth, due to lack of belongingness, which have negative impact on their wellbeing and life. This is due to the fact that, they lack the fundamental sense of belonging within the host community as preferential support is given to nationals, they also fail to adapt to the new society and new role and responsibilities caused by stateless which makes them to feel out of place, refugee youths finds it difficult to make friends, and to get on with life since it becomes difficult to easily trust others, reliving/revitalizing the trauma can affect them and begin to question their own identity due to low self-esteem. For example, in a protracted refugee setting like Dzaleka, Malawi, where multiple generations are born and raised, young refugees are struggling to hold on to hopes and dreams for a future that does not include the label of refugee as a result of stateless (Forced Migration Review Issue 40: 2012). Malawi is obliged to adhere to the Convention as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention but made nine reservations. The reservations pertain to the provisions of wage-earning employment, public education, labor legislation, social security and freedom of movement for refugees within Malawi. These reservations pose complex challenges, especially for adolescents entering into adulthood who wish to seek higher education, gain employment, marry and begin families. Without the inherent rights and freedoms of citizens, the younger generation of refugees is more and more despondent. To add on, when students graduate from secondary school in Malawi, there is little opportunity for tertiary-level or higher adult education due to limited capacity and inadequate resources which in generally result into lack of a sense of agency to relationships, to employment and to educational prospects. Hence this explain the extent to which stateless is posing a major threat to the lives of many youths in Africa. Stateless is there a serious challenge that should be resolved in order to serve lives of thousands of refugees across Africa.

A Refugee Act adopted in 2006 largely brought Kenyan law into line with international standards of refugee protection, but the Act does not give refugees the right to work, nor does it contain any explicit right to naturalize as a Kenyan

citizen. In practice, Kenya excludes refugees from the naturalization provisions of its general laws; though a public opinion survey conducted in 2008, in response to discussions about reform to the law, showed that almost half of Kenyans felt that children of refugees born in the country should be given citizenship (Forced Migration Review Issue 40: 2012). Interesting though, even if the law was reviewed in favor of refugees, Kenya would still find it difficult to grant citizenship because it has no inventory of the refugees in the country.

Statelessness has also forced many refugee youths to live lives full of uncertainties and no hope for the future. One interviewed refugee from Rwanda who has been living in Maheba Refugee Camp (Zambia) noted that; "living life without having a country that I call home put me in a hopeless situation. I don't know my future at the moment because I have no country to call home, I chose not to get married because I don't want to put my children in trouble. "This particularly because he has been living in the refugee camp for the past 18 years, and he is 26 years old. Despite spending most of his life time in Zambia, speaking Nyanja a (Zambian local language), and having studied in the Zambian education system since the age of 6, and knowing the only Zambian national anthem, including paying the allegiance to the Zambian national flag, the government of Zambia cannot integrate refugee youths in with similar case. This case, is akin to what many thousands of refugee youths are facing in many African countries

Another notable challenge faced by refugee youths due to lack of nationality is the inability to cope with the daily hustle that comes with survival. For example, the lack of fundamental documentations such as birth certificate, or living life without any single proof of one's date of birth. This has been the case for Burundian refugees who left their country in 1972 civil war, and never returned home. Most of their children were born in exile, in countries like Rwanda and DRC, which also later on erupted into wars, hence, forcing them to flee again for the third times. This problem caused many refugees from Burundi of this nature to live without any birth certificate or anything to prove their date of birth. A Burundian refugee living in Mozambique, who was interviewed noted that; "in all our family we decided to call January first our date of birth, we had no any proof to demonstrate that, however, sometimes we miss a lot of opportunity that requires us to produce birth certificates". This case also demonstrates how statelessness can be a serious threat to the lives of many refugees, particularly the young generation. Below the paper presents the policy measures and issues that should be adopted in order to serve the lives of many refugee youths suffering as a result of statelessness.

3.5. Policy Interventions from the 'Ubuntu' and 'Human Security Perspective'

To help resolve the problem of statelessness within the refugee youths across Africa, there is need for the host countries to review their legal frameworks and policy practices towards refugees. This is because most countries in Africa have no local integration as policy aimed at giving durable solutions to the refugee problem. This can be achieved if regional and sub-regional organizations like AU African Union, (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Arab Maghreb, are to take a leading role in advocating for the ending of statelessness within refugees. There is need for the coordinated efforts on refugee issues across Africa. Not only those institutions should play a major role in encouraging their member states to integrate refugees, but also civil society, churches and individual people should also be involved in efforts aimed at ending the problem of statelessness within the refugee youths of Africa. Statelessness within the refugee youths should be viewed as a human security problem that requires policy intervention driven by humaneness as suggested in the notion of Ubuntu. The host countries should be aware that refugees, youths in particular cannot realize their dreams without other people. Hence, there is need for the host nations in Africa to review their ways of treating refugees in relations with the growing problem of statelessness within the refugee youths, and make changes aimed at tackling the problem of statelessness faced by many refugee youths in Africa.

The most policy suggestion in this paper is the call for the process of local integration as a durable solution to the problem of statelessness within the refugee youths in Africa. Local integration refers to the process of naturalizing the refugees with protracted cases, and who have been living in the host country for a given period of time. It is done by giving them a citizenship status that allows them to live permanently in the host country, at the same time giving them the opportunity to enjoy the same rights as the ordinary citizen of that particular country. Local integration is instrumental to national developments, should be encouraged, especially in Africa where such practice is uncommon. It removes the problem of uncertainty within the mind of the integrated refugees, as it gives them a sense of belonging, a place to call home. Thus, local integration would be a better solution to ending the problem of statelessness with many refugee youths across Africa. This can be achieved if the host nations are to understand that statelessness is a human security problem that requires a policy intervention driven by the ethos of Ubuntu in its practices. Humanity must be at the center of the policy practices within the refugee.

4. Conclusion

The problem of statelessness within refugee youths in Africa has been accelerated by the growing influx of refugees seeking safety in many African countries, which results in protracted cases of refugees. The term statelessness in this paper has been defined as a situation in which a person lives without nationality. The most affected group of refugees by the challenges brought by being stateless are the refugee youths as has been earlier noted in this paper. This is because most of them are born as refugees, whilst others have been refugees since childhood. Thus, as noted in this paper, statelessness is a major problem to refugee youths in Africa. It results in unintended behaviour which forces them to live a frustrating life style of

drug taking, early marriage, engaging in crimes, engaging in unproductive endeavors coupled with uncertain future and living a psychologically stressing life style. It in this regard that this paper discussed the challenges faced by refugee youths in Africa and how such challenges should be resolved. The paper called for the host nations in Africa to adopt policy measures aimed at changing the policy practices for the sake of humanity. In same vein, the notion of Ubuntu and human security were used in this paper to provide a comprehensive understanding on how statelessness amongst refugee youths should be approached from policy practices perspective. The host countries have a bigger role to play in salvaging the future of these refugee youths. There is need to integrate and naturalise these refugee youths by giving them a citizenship status so as to enable them to live the normal lives as real people with the real needs. These youths are the manpower of the host nations, and can massively contribute to nation development in different ways.

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