Protection *for* refugees not *from* refugees: Somalis in exile and the securitisation of refugee policy

October 2017

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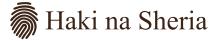- o identifying the violations that cause displacement and exile,
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Cover: Eastleigh, Nairobi. Photograph by Olivia Bueno, 2017
In text photographs: Dadaab camps by Themba Lewis, 2012

Report Summary

Over the last 25 years, drought, violence and human rights abuses have pushed millions of Somalis from their homes.[1] Many have remained within Somalia, while others have fled across international borders, either into neighbouring countries like Kenya, or further afield to Uganda, Europe or the United States (US). As with many large groups of exiles, Somalis have faced various levels of welcome, suspicion and hostility, based on where they have fled to and when.

Although many Somalis are fleeing violence associated with the militant group, *Al-Shabaab*, in countries of asylum they have often been tainted by association with the group and with the "violent extremism" that it is seen to represent. This association has been particularly acute in Kenya, where two realities – the fact that the country hosts the largest population of Somali refugees, and the fact that it has witnessed a series of terrorist attacks by *Al-Shabaab* – have heightened tensions and allowed refugees and *Al-Shabaab* to become wrongly conflated. As a result, refugee policy discussions have been increasingly coloured by the rhetoric of "terrorism" and "violent extremism", and Somalis living in exile, both in Kenya and further afield, have faced the brunt of policies that have been driven increasingly by security concerns.

Their situation is not unique. Globally, the tendency to label those who have fled "violent extremism" as extremists themselves, and therefore as an implicit danger, has led to a securitisation of responses to refugees. Of course, such concerns are not new: there have long been concerns that bad actors may be embedded in the refugee population. But these concerns have been reshaped in the era of terrorism, in which the enemy is more ill-defined.

Yet despite little evidence that refugees have engaged in terrorism, proponents of a securitised approach argue that the damage that can be done by terrorists and other violent extremists is simply too severe to take any chances. They have created a narrative that is increasingly dominating the refugee debate, in which the priority is to protect their populations *from* refugees rather than provide protection *for* them. It has created barriers for asylum seekers and refugees to access places of safety (for instance by placing limitations on freedom of movement or in the targeting of particular groups by the police) and has generated marginalisation and xenophobia.

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In response, this paper looks at the implications of this securitised narrative on the lives of Somali refugees living in three countries of exile – Kenya, Uganda and the US. Based on 80 interviews with Somalis and relevant government, civil society and UN actors, the findings point to some of the day to day realities facing Somali refugees.

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[1] The Somali diaspora population has roughly doubled since 1990 to a total of 2 million, meaning that the diaspora makes up 15% of all Somalis. Of these 1.1 million, or 55%, are refugees. Even more may have been forced to flee but may have acquired another status after a long stay abroad. Pew Research Center, "5 facts about the global Somali diaspora," 1 June 2016, available at: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/01/5-facts-about-the-global-somali-diaspora/ accessed 20 August 217.

The findings make it clear that the securitisation of refugee policy has a strongly negative impact on the lives of refugees. While acknowledging the need for states to ensure protection of all within their borders, security responses, at times overblown, have diluted the obligation to respect international law and provide both humanitarian assistance and legal protection to those who are forced to flee.

Securitised narratives
In Kenya, the government has increasingly viewed Somali refugees, both in its cities and in the Dadaab refugee camps, through a security lens and has acted accordingly. The findings show that securitised narratives have led to an over-emphasis on the use of threats and visible displays of force by authorities over other approaches. These approaches have, inevitably, led to a contraction of the space for robust public debate, based on empirical evidence, on what measures are effective and how they can best be implemented. It has also opened the door both to abuses in the name of advancing security and to exploitation of vulnerable individuals for motives of profit. In practice, it means Somalis often have to pay bribes and/or smugglers to cross the border from Somalia; and they are regularly stopped as they go about their daily lives by the police who they then have to bribe to not arrest them or release them from detention.

Negative political rhetoric, and its policy consequences, has also left these refugees feeling marginalised and discriminated against. In Kenya, this feeling mingles with the frustration of operating in an environment in which durable solutions remain elusive: local integration cannot be openly discussed, much less promoted, and livelihoods are hard to come by; return to Somalia is hampered by still active militias, insecurity, corruption and poor governance; and resettlement numbers are tiny and only contracting. While Somalis in Kenya have, of course, shown extraordinary resourcefulness in creating spaces of inclusion – not least as evidenced by the thriving economic hub of Nairobi's Eastleigh district – they have done this *despite* the policy context.

By contrast, Somalis in Uganda, while coping with the same challenges that all refugees in the country face, spoke more positively about their welcome. Although a few raised concerns about police surveillance and public attitudes, Somali refugees, for the most part, did not feel singled out on security grounds. Many talked about the challenges of integration, especially language difficulties, but there was less evidence of a securitised approach influencing their day to day lives in exile.

In the US, many also talked about the negative implications created by President Trump's travel ban – both the fear that individuals would be blocked from travelling or even deported and the fear that the nature of the ban had legitimised stigmatisation of certain sections of the population. While economic and legal integration appeared more readily accessible, refugees described discrimination in employment, in relation to policing and among some segments of the population.

Securitisation and Marginalisation

In addition, the findings echo previous IRRI research that points to the reality that policies, including those that isolate refugees in camps and restrict freedom of movement, leave refugees marginalised and isolated. Where encampment is the primary policy response to refugees, local communities are less likely to have direct contact with refugee populations, which allows for perceptions to be more easily manipulated while at the same time limiting the capacity of refugee communities to contribute positively to the local economy. Ultimately, this benefits neither refugees nor the host community. Furthermore, leaving large populations of refugees in limbo,

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without the prospect of durable solutions, not only creates frustration and desperation within those populations, it can foster negative public perceptions of these populations among the host community.

Therefore, the findings point to the fact that more attention needs to be paid to the possibilities of local integration, as it allows refugees to both contribute to and interact with host populations in a way that can help counteract negative attitudes. While some Somali refugees spoken to during this research want to return to Somalia, many do not – either now or, in some cases, ever. In this context, a comprehensive push for durable solutions which allows return, resettlement and integration to all operate to address the refugee population is needed.

The hostile political environment and policy failures combined have left many marginalised. However, while marginalisation came through clearly as a general concern, the link with vulnerability to recruitment into *Al-Shabaab* was minimal. While the findings point to a population that is diverse and complex (based on when and from where they fled, their clan background and personal circumstances), the vast majority saw *Al-Shabaab* as a serious threat to their country and either a reason why they fled (for those who fled after the rise of the organisation) and/or why they cannot go back. This diversity and range of experience has been flattened by official attitudes that look at Somalis primarily through the lens of terrorism or violent extremism.

Therefore, the findings point to the fact that policy-making needs to be based on evidence rather than on speculation or popular discourse. The connection between the increased securitisation of refugee policy and an increase in national security is empirically unsubstantiated and, in fact, our findings suggest that the opposite may be true. However, more research is needed in order to

make definitive empirical connections, in particular on the question of what specifically drives recruitment.

That is not to say that recruitment is not a concern within Somali communities in exile. There was clear recognition that the combined impact of a lack of access to livelihoods and inadequate educational opportunities, daily victimisation by the police, a broader lack of belonging and the failure to find solutions to their exile, drives desperation in the community. For many, this has led them to opt for *tahrib* (migration through non-legal routes) despite the well-known dangers involved, and this was especially pertinent where people have given up on the hope of resettlement. Some respondents said that the same factors made refugees, especially younger ones, more vulnerable to recruitment. However, others argued the opposite, that *Al-Shabaab* was more interested in recruiting those who could bring resources to the organisation. Either way, the findings make it clear that those who might engage with extremists are a tiny minority of the refugee population. The notion that somehow societies need to be protected from those who have fled violent extremism or terrorism, rather than do all they can to offer them protection, is ultimately illogical.

It is clear, therefore, that the negative narrative around refugees – and migrants more broadly – needs to be changed. Specifically, the rhetorical correlation between terrorism and people on the move needs to be broken,[2] as it is a link that is both inaccurate and detrimental to all.

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The core message of this research, therefore, is that the essence of refugee protection needs to be recovered and maintained. With the space for refugee protection shrinking globally, including in the countries in which this research was carried out, there is an urgent need to shift the narrative away from a growing emphasis on protection *from* refugees and back to an emphasis on protection *for* refugees.

Recommendations

This paper highlights the need to reimagine refugee policy in a way that more effectively ensures the rights of refugees and addresses the legitimate security concerns of states, without allowing overstated risks to propel counterproductive and rights violating strategies. In this regard, IRRI makes a number of recommendations.

To the government of Kenya:

- **Follow through on the commitment to open the Kenya/Somalia border.**
  Officials manning the border should have the necessary training to recognise and deal with refugees and asylum seekers in accordance with international law, and respect the rights of Somalis.

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[2] This point was made by H.E. Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, in his speech to the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, 8 April 2016, available at http://webtv.un.org/watch/session-i-high-level-segment-geneva-conference-on-preventing-violent-extremism/4837607115001 (accessed 18 June 2017).

- **Combat government corruption targeting refugees.**
  Recognising that securitised narratives disempower refugees and make them more vulnerable to corruption, efforts to combat corruption should include efforts to address these narratives. In particular, this will require holding police officials who violate the rights of refugees accountable.
- **Put integration and mobility at the forefront of policy responses to refugees.**
  In the long-run this is likely to better serve both refugees and host populations as well as provide a better framework for addressing security concerns. In particular, this will mean:
  - reforming Kenyan law to recognise the right of refugees to freedom of movement and ensure that this right is respected in practice;
  - ensuring that refugees have access to the right to work;
  - increasing legal pathways to local integration, including allowing Somalis to adjust to another long term legal status such as permanent residence or naturalisation.
- **Stand by its commitment to ensure that if the Dadaab camps are closed, this does not entail any *refoulement*** and publicly reassure refugees, both in the camps and outside, of this.

To the government of Uganda:

- **Combat government corruption targeting refugees.**
  Recognising that securitised narratives disempower refugees and make them more vulnerable to corruption, efforts to combat corruption should include efforts to address these narratives. In addition, government officials engaged in corruption should be held accountable.
- **Put integration and mobility at the forefront of policy responses to refugees.**
  In the long-run this is likely to better serve both refugees and host populations as well as provide a better framework for addressing security concerns. Specifically, in Uganda this should include:
  - reforming the law to ensure freedom of movement. Although Ugandan law recognises the right of refugees to freedom of movement, this recognition is undermined by the legal provision requiring refugees living in settlements to ask for permission to move. The government should remove confusion in this area by reforming the law to remove the requirement for permission;
  - increasing legal pathways to local integration, including allowing Somalis to adjust to another long term legal status such as permanent residence or naturalisation.

To the government of the US:

- **Reconsider the ban on refugee entry and reduction in the number of refugees resettled** into the US, which undermine the principle of burden sharing.
- **Put integration and mobility at the forefront of policy responses to refugees.** In the long-run this is likely to better serve both refugees and host populations as well as provide a better framework for addressing security concerns. In the US context, this primarily means addressing discrimination against the Somali community.

- **Recommit to**
  - the refugee resettlement programme, including increasing the numbers of refugees resettled as the Obama administration had begun to do;
  - provide humanitarian aid to assist lower and middle-income economies that host the majority of refugees globally to adapt.
- **Treat the language of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) with caution.** While most refugees, as more direct victims of violent extremism, are supportive of the need to address violence, caution is needed about the way in which the language is used and particular programmes are deployed. Where groups are targeted for CVE programming, this can serve to isolate, marginalise and even criminalise certain populations. By making these groups more isolated and less trusting of the establishment, such programmes could, perversely, increase vulnerability. In addition, they can send the unhelpful message that donors are only interested in addressing poverty and marginalisation if the affected population might otherwise engage in terrorism. Again, this messaging could result in counterproductive outcomes.

To UNHCR:

- **Ensure that refugees have access to adequate information about conditions in Somalia as part of the repatriation process.**

To NGOs:

- **Further research should be done on policing** (and in particular community programmes in Dadaab, Kenya run by UNHCR and efforts to recruit more Somalis into the police force in the US) in order to assess how successes can best be replicated and failures avoided.
- **Further research should be carried out on the differential impact of various policing and anti-extremist efforts**.
- **More empirical study is needed in order to effectively address recruitment**, both of the mechanisms of recruitment and of the effectiveness of current efforts to counter it.

To opinion leaders, political leaders and the media:

- **Refrain from referring to or creating linkages between refugees and violence that are not clearly substantiated by empirical evidence.** Leaders have a clear responsibility to do this in order to safeguard the well-being of refugee populations, who may be unfairly targeted, and host populations, who are ultimately poorly served by misdiagnosis of any security issues.

Background

Securitising refugees?

The securitisation of responses to refugees is not new. During World War II, US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt argued that refugees were a threat to national security and Jews were turned away from the US on the accusation that they were acting as agents of the very regime that was bent on their destruction. More recently, in the 1990s the failure to address legitimate security concerns in refugee camps in eastern Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) had devastating consequences on regional security and only served to heighten this view. While the securitisation of refugee policy is not new, these concerns have adapted to a global context in which "terrorism" and "violent extremism" are seen as the preeminent security threats. Global policy makers demand solutions to these problems, but the terms themselves are ill defined and poorly understood. Indeed, their definitions often shift according to the audience. When security threats are raised, it is in the context of an enemy that is more vaguely defined and from which, therefore, it is harder for individuals to distance themselves.

While refugees have long been seen as a source of potential insecurity (drawing on the myth that refugees somehow "carry" conflict, crime or violence with them), increasingly specific groups of refugees are seen to be associated with violent extremism. This perception has been particularly intensified with the Syrian refugee crisis "encroaching" on European soil.

The term "securitisation" is used to refer to "the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience."[3] In the case of securitisation of refugees and refugee policy, refugees are seen as the potential "threat." This designation tends to overstate potential threats and can lead to popular fears that are easily manipulated. This can easily lead to policies, driven by political expediency, which address themselves to that fear rather than to any empirical justification. As Brad Evans puts it, "refugees end up all too often cast in the role of a threat to the human rights of established native populations, instead of being defined and treated as a vulnerable part of humanity in search of the restoration of those same rights of which they have been violently robbed."[4]

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This securitisation of refugees and refugee policy, justified by the purported threat of terrorism or violent extremism, is changing refugee policies both in the country of first asylum and the resettlement practices of third countries.

In the case of first countries of asylum (where there is inevitably a greater threat from violence by armed actors spilling over the border), securitisation of refugee protection is evidenced by

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[3] B. Buzan, O. Waever and J. de Wilde. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner: Boulder, Colorado, 1998.
[4] Brad Evans and Zygmunt Bauman, "The Refugee Crisis Is Humanity's Crisis," *the New York Times*, 2 May 2016, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/02/opinion/the-refugee-crisis-is-humanitys-crisis.html?smid=tw-share&_r=1 (accessed 17 January 2017).

increasing restrictions on movement (both at border crossings and within countries of asylum through encampment policies), the use of detention and arbitrary arrest on the basis of nationality, and increased barriers in accessing legal documentation for particular nationalities.

In the case of resettlement, although refugee protection is inscribed in international law, "refugee resettlement depends on the discretion of the resettlement country and since 9/11 the US and major resettlement countries in Europe have increasingly deployed security risk management practices within the resettlement selection process."[5] States, of course, are perfectly entitled to do this. Indeed, international law places high value on security, and provides that refugees are excludable where they have committed serious crimes and are removable, despite the principle of non-*refoulement*, where they infringe on the security of a host nation.

However, under international law, these security provisions require reason for concern about a *particular* refugee, not a whole group or class of refugees. A problem is created when security concerns and responses are generalised. Therefore, when securitised responses are able, in practice, to trump protection for refugees, it exposes the vulnerability of a system that is reliant only on the goodwill of individual states to implement it.

While academic literature points to multiple factors that might lead to a person being drawn into violent extremism in some form, there is limited empirical data to substantiate which specific factors play a role, as well as the relative weight of these factors.[6]

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The lack of definition and a fear-driven discourse makes everyone associated with particular identity markers suspicious in the eyes of the authorities. As a result, it is increasingly difficult for individuals to definitively disassociate themselves from extremist groups in the eyes of the host state. This is the challenge faced by many of those living in exile: decisions are being made not on the basis of the reality that few, if any, refugees become involved in "violent extremism" and "terrorism", but on the perception that refugees are overwhelmingly threatening. Purported security concerns increasingly form the texture for refugee policy.

A somewhat stark example is the speed with which the US government went from promises made during the 20 September 2016 Pledging Conference organised by President Obama (including an increase of humanitarian assistance from USD 6 billion in 2015 to USD 7 billion in 2016 and an increase of resettlement of refugees from 85,000 in 2016 to 110,000 in 2017) to an Executive Order five months later, under a new president, temporarily banning all refugees (defined in US law as those in the resettlement process – the order did not affect asylum seekers) and any immigrants from a number of predominantly Muslim countries based on their alleged connections to extremism.[7] While the circumstances might have been somewhat unusual – and,

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[5] Shoshana Fine, "Security practices and resettlement." *Forced Migration Review*, February 2017, available at http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/resettlement/fine.pdf (accessed 10 February 2017).
[6] See, for example, Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, Sasha Jesperson Sneha, Reddy-Tumu and Emily Winterbotham, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review." RUSI, October 2015, available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf (accessed 15 February 2017).
[7] The Executive Order is discussed in further detail below.

one hopes, extraordinary – it highlights the vulnerability of refugees to politicians looking to show toughness to the electorate that placed them there, rather than either pursuing real security or protecting an inviolable international human rights framework.

In exile from Somalia

Somalis, millions of whom have lost their homes and livelihoods, have to negotiate their exile within this broader political and policy context. As of mid-2017 there were over two million displaced Somalis:[8] 1.5 million inside Somalia and approximately 900,000 in Yemen, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, with Kenya hosting the largest group. This displacement is the result of decades of civil war, clan conflict and state collapse. Since 2006, many have fled – and/or been unable to return home – as a result of the ongoing violence in Somalia, caused mainly by the presence of *Al-Shabaab*. With its name meaning "the youth", *Al-Shabaab* is an extremist group that has benefited from the gap left by decades of poor governance, instability, neglect and often inappropriate regional and international intervention in Somalia.[9] *Al-Shabaab* has killed thousands of Somalis through targeted executions of, for instance, activists, journalists, those in higher education and female street cleaners, and through attacks on of government buildings, hotels, NGO and UN compounds.[10]

In 2007, the UN Security Council endorsed deployment of an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and mandated it with protecting the government and conducting offensive operations against *Al-Shabaab* and other actors, among other things. Despite the deployment of these troops, *Al-Shabaab* continued to operate and in 2010 they took their attacks abroad, attacking civilians watching the football World Cup in Kampala, Uganda. In 2011, another wave of displacement was driven by drought and *Al-Shabaab* activities that impeded humanitarian responses that could have prevented displacement and saved lives. As thousands streamed into Kenya, a number of kidnappings were carried out, some targeting Western aid workers. Following the kidnappings, Kenya intervened unilaterally in Somalia in late 2011 under Operation *Linda Nchi* ("Protect the Nation"). Ethiopia similarly sent troops into Somalia, as it has done multiple times before, advancing on key *Al-Shabaab* targets. Meanwhile *Al-Shabaab* stepped up international attacks,

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[8] UNHCR, "Somali Situation: Supplementary Appeal, January-December 2017," available at http://www.unhcr.org/uk/partners/donors/591ae0e17/unhcr-somalia-situation-supplementary-appeal-january-december-2017.html (accessed 1 October 2017).
[9] Hala al-Karib, "Trump and the ongoing fight with the shadow of the elephant." *Pambazuka News*, 9 February 2017, available at https://www.pambazuka.org/human-security/trump-and-ongoing-fight-shadow-elephant (accessed 13 February 2017).
[10] Ibid.

particularly in Kenya, carrying out, among others, deadly attacks on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi and Garissa University. By 2014, most of the Kenyan and Ethiopian units had been integrated into AMISOM. While the mission has made significant progress in taking new territory and protecting the government, *Al-Shabaab* retains significant operational capacity, both within Somalia and to conduct attacks abroad.[11]

Although the recently elected Somali President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmaajo" has promised to negotiate with *Al-Shabaab* militants if they take advantage of the ongoing amnesty programme, he has similarly promised to pursue them militarily if they refuse. As he said in a recent address to the Somali National Army, "If you refuse the peace that we are extending to you, we will come after you wherever you are."[12] There are signs that the military response may be gaining additional traction. US President Donald Trump has reportedly declared parts of Somalia "area[s] of active hostilities," easing requirements for conducting US strikes in the country.[13] However, the current emphasis on a militarised approach to ending conflict in Somalia (primarily with the assistance of AMISOM and, more broadly, as a component of the infamous US "war on terror" which has held US military interest in the country) has created a seemingly unwinnable situation. Counter-insurgency strategies have proved largely ineffective due to the weaknesses of the Somali National Army, the shortcomings of AMISOM and the indiscriminate nature of military attacks, alongside a fundamental failure to engage communities who are suffering the brunt of the violence.[14]

Despite military successes by some AMISOM troops, *Al-Shabaab* survives, particularly in rural areas. It has acted as a quasi-government in areas under its control through a combination of exploiting local grievances, using violence to keep communities under its control and drawing on resources from lucrative illicit trade including charcoal, sugar and piracy. That is not to say that all responses to the situation in Somalia have been military: there is also a growing recognition that "rebuilding the state in Somalia is the antidote to violent extremism."[15] However, part of the military interest in Somalia stems from *Al-Shabaab*'s alleged (but contested) links with *Al-Qaeda* and possibly, more recently, *Daesh*.[16]

Somalis in Kenya

As noted above, Kenya has been the destination for the largest number of Somali refugees, an estimated 313,000 as of 1 April 2017, according to UNHCR.[17] The majority of Somali refugees in Kenya are hosted in the Dadaab refugee camps in the country's east, close to the border with

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[11] For more information about AMISOM and its role in Somalia, see International Refugee Rights Initiative, "They Say They're Not Here to Protect US: Civilian perspectives on the African Union Mission in Somalia," May 2017 (IRRI, AMISOM report 2017), available at http://www.refugee-rights.org/Publications/Papers/2017/AMISOM%20-%20final.pdf (accessed 26 May 2017).

[12] AMISOM, "President Farmaajo vows to defeat *Al-Shabaab* and secure Somalia," 13 April 2017, available at http://amisom-au.org/2017/04/president-farmaajo-vows-to-defeat-Al-Shabaab-and-secure-somalia/ (accessed 4 June 2017).

[13] Jon Temin, "Somalia and the Limits of US Bombing," The *New York Times*, 25 May 2017, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/25/opinion/somalia-al-shabaab-us-airstrikes.html (accessed 4 June 2017).

[14] IRRI, AMISOM Report, 2017.

[15] Gilbert M. Khadiagala, "Dear President Trump: let me share some home truths about Africa with you," The Conversation, 23 January 2017 available at http://theconversation.com/dear-president-trump-let-me-share-some-home-truths-about-africa-with-you-71594 (accessed 26 July 2017).

[16] See, for instance, Katherine Houreld, "Somali militant group al-Shabaab formally joins al-Qaida," The *Guardian*, 9 February 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/09/somali-al-shabaab-join-al-qaida (accessed 20 June 2017).

[17] UNHCR Information Sharing Portal, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis," available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/horn (accessed 4 June 2017).

Somalia. The camp was set up in 1991 and as of July 2016, was home to some 343,000 refugees, of which more than 326,000 are Somali.[18] By April 2017, UNHCR had revised this estimate down to 245,126.[19]

In a notable difference to the other countries hosting Somali refugee populations, Kenya has a sizeable indigenous ethnically Somali population. The ethnic Somali Kenyan population is estimated to be about two million strong, representing about five percent of Kenya's estimated 38 million people.[20] This indigenous community presents a double-edged sword for Somalis. On the one hand, the population opens up prospects for integration of Somali refugees that do not exist elsewhere. The established Somali Kenyan population has jobs to offer and, for some with the right connections, can assist people in getting national identity

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documents. On the other hand, the Somali Kenyan population has had a contentious relationship with the central government ever since they expressed a desire on the eve of Kenya's independence, to join Somalia. Somalis in Kenya have long been scapegoats for insecurity in Kenya, and both Somali refugees and Somali Kenyans are widely seen as "alien"[21] and as suspect. In the words of journalist Mohammed Adow, himself ethnically Somali, instead of reaching out to the Somali community as security worsened in Garissa, northern Kenya, the "Kenyan police have treated us as part of the problem."[22]

In 2011, as noted above, the Kenyan army unilaterally intervened in Somalia. The intervention was framed as a response to a series of kidnappings on Kenyan soil. However, there was some speculation that the intervention was actually motivated by a desire to create the stability necessary to allow refugees to return.[23]

Some saw Operation *Linda Nchi* as an effort to carry out this goal. Since then, *Al-Shabaab* has carried out a number of attacks inside Kenya, including the Westgate shopping mall attack in Nairobi in 2013,[24] the Lamu County attacks in June and July 2014, the Mandera bus and quarry attacks in November 2014 and the Garissa University attack in April 2015. These incidents, and in particular the highly visible Westgate mall attack that received worldwide media attention,

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[18] UNHCR, "UNHCR appeals for additional $115 million for voluntary return, reintegration of Somali refugees from Dadaab camp," 26 July 2016, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/7/5797585c4/unhcr-appeals-additional-115-million-voluntary-return-reintegration-somali.html (accessed 2 June 2017).

[19] UNHCR Information Sharing Portal, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis," available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/horn (accessed 4 June 2017).

[20] Hon Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, "2009 Population & Housing Census Results," 31 August 2010, available at https://web.archive.org/web/20130115103229/http://www.knbs.or.ke/docs/PresentationbyMinisterforPlanningrevised.pdf (accessed 2 June 2017).

[21] Neil Carrier, *Little Mogadishu. Eastleigh, Nairobi's Global Somali Hub.* Hurst & Co., London, 2016, p. 222.

[22] *Al Jazeera*, "Not Yet Kenyan," available at http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeracorrespondent/2013/10/not-yet-kenyan-2013102885818441218.html (accessed 1 June 2017).

[23] B. Rawlence, *City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp*, Picador, 2016, p.133.

[24] T. Connell, "Close your eyes and pretend to be dead: What really happened two years ago in the bloody attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall," *Foreign Policy*, 20 September 2015, available at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/20/nairobi-kenya-westgate-mall-attack-al-shabab/ (accessed 30 December 2016).

have served to solidify the international perception that addressing the situation in Somalia was key to the global fight against terrorism.[25]

The Kenyan government has increasingly viewed Somali refugees, both in its cities and in Dadaab, through a security lens.[26] This has resulted in repeated government attempts to limit refugees' movement, remove them from urban areas and send them back to Somalia.

Refugees living in urban areas, in particularly Nairobi's Eastleigh district, have faced considerable challenges. In general, they are excluded from the humanitarian assistance programmes available to the camp based refugee population. As a result, many struggle to make a living and also face an increased risk of police harassment. As Neil Carrier, who carried out extensive ethnographic research in Eastleigh, commented:

> Eastleigh itself is regarded with considerable suspicion, and is imagined by many as a place of danger. Rumours persist in Kenya and beyond that the estate has been built on money laundering of ill-gotten gains, and many fear that it harbours terrorists and terrorist sympathisers linked to the Somali militant group *Al-Shabaab*, which is in control of much of southern Somalia. Some even see it as a very alien place, despite its proximity to the heart of Kenya.[27]

While Carrier argues that Eastleigh offers an example of how opportunity can emerge out of displacement not only for refugees and migrants, but also for their host communities,[28] it is a picture that remains fundamentally unstable under the ongoing threat of arbitrary arrest and forced removal.[29]

While many have been able to forge lives outside the camps, this has often been done *despite* the policy environment not because of it.[30] It has also left UNHCR caught between wanting to help refugees outside of camps, yet having to operate in a policy environment in which the "refugee crisis" and the "war on terror" have merged into each other.[31]

In December 2012, the Department of Refugee Affairs issued a press release announcing that all refugee reception in urban areas would be halted and that refugees would be removed to the camps. Thousands of Kenya's urban refugees were rounded up and detained during a brutal crackdown, demonstrating that this was not empty rhetoric.[32] Kenya's High Court overturned

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[25] IRRI AMISOM Report 2017.

[26] Amnesty International, "Nowhere else to go: forced returns of Somali refugees from Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya." November 2016 (Amnesty International 2016) https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr32/5118/2016/en/ (accessed 15 June 2017).

[27] Neil Carrier, "What we can learn from the 'Little Mogadishu' migrant hub," Refugees Deeply, 6 January 2017, available at https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2017/01/06/what-we-can-learn-from-the-little-mogadishu-migrant-hub (accessed 17 Jan 2017) (Carrier, 2017)

[28] Ibid

[29] Amnesty International, "Kenya: Somalis scapegoated in counter-terror crackdown." May 2014, available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/05/kenya-somalis-scapegoated-counter-terror-crackdown/ (accessed 14 June 2017).

[30] For further analysis of the failures in refugee policy in the region, see Lucy Hovil, *Refugees, Conflict and the Search for Belonging.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

[31] Carrier, 2017.

[32] Deirdre Clancy, "Changing the face of refugee protection? The Kenyan High Court affirms the right to dignity and freedom of movement of refugees." IRRI Justice Matters in Africa Blog, August 2013, available at http://www.refugee-rights.org/blog/?p=374 (accessed 6 March 2017).

these limitations on free movement in August 2013 after a case led by the NGO *Kituo Cha Sheria*.[33] Following the Westgate mall attack, however, there was a resurgence of these tactics as the government launched its notorious Operation *Usalama Watch* in which hundreds of Somalis from Eastleigh were rounded up and held in a nearby stadium.[34]

Efforts to push refugees out of urban areas are operating alongside increasing precariousness in the camps, fuelled by ration cuts, pushes for repatriation and threats to close the camps. This pressure is built on the toxic policy duo of encampment and repatriation. With resettlement places extremely limited and local integration considered unpalatable (an opinion not helped by the recent association between Somalis and *Al-Shabaab*), hundreds of thousands of Somalis have remained in protracted exile, some for decades. In 2013, a tripartite repatriation agreement between the governments of Somalia and Kenya and UNHCR was signed. Since December 2014, UNHCR has been facilitating (although not promoting) returns. At the same time, cuts in rations make life in the camps more precarious and increase pressure on Somalis to return.[35] Despite the pressure, however, few have opted to return. According to UNHCR, between December 2014 and February 28, 2017, some 52,591 refugees (fewer than 2,000 per month) have been assisted to return.[36] Of those, some have been forced back into exile.[37]

Frustrated with the slow pace of return, the Kenya government's latest attempt to push refugees home came in May 2016, when officials announced publicly the intention to close the Dadaab camps within six months based on the assertion that it was "a breeding ground for terrorists".[38] The Report of the National Taskforce on Repatriation of Refugees from Dadaab Refugee Complex, set up by the Kenyan government in the wake of the announcement to enforce its implementation, stated that hosting refugees had "come at a high cost. Various challenges have been witnessed over time with threat to national security being the major concern."[39] The report goes on to allege that the Westgate shopping mall attack, Garissa University attack and the Lamu attack were "planned and coordinated" from the refugee camp and that the "[s]ocially prolonged refugee presence in Kenya has fabricated the radicalisation of some individuals and groups."[40]

Additional security concerns were raised as well, noting the "proliferation of small arms and light weapons which has compromised Kenya's international security rating."[41] The environmental impact of the camps and human trafficking were also raised. However, the fact that most of the attacks inside Kenya have been launched by Kenyan nationals and not by refugees is ignored. Furthermore, the government's strong-arm tactics have only served to alienate many of the same communities they should be working with to prevent violent extremism. Of course, this is not

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[33] See "Republic of Kenya, in the High Court of Kenya at Nairobi, Milimani Law Courts, Constitutional and Human Rights Division, Petition No. 19 of 2013 consolidated with Petition No. 115 of 2013, available at http://kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/84157 (accessed 26 July 2017).
[34] Neil Carrier, *Little Mogadishu. Eastleigh, Nairobi's Global Somali Hub.* Hurst & Co., London, 2016, p. 232.
[35] Amnesty International, 2016.
[36] UNHCR, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis," Information Sharing Portal, available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/horn?id=110 (accessed 4 June 2017).
[37] See for example, Kafia Omar, "Dadaab: Security is not only a concern for the Kenyan government," November 26, 2016, available at http://www.refugee-rights.org/blog/?p=1161 (accessed 26 July 2017).
[38] Joseph Muraya, "Kenya: Dadaab Is a Breeding Ground for Terrorists – Nkaissery," allAfrica, 11 May 2016, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/201605120545.html (accessed 22 February 2017).
[39] Republic of Kenya, "Report of the National Taskforce on Repatriation of Refugees from Dadaab Refugee Complex," 31 May 2016, report on file with the author (Taskforce report, 2016).
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

unique to Somalis, as Kenya's counterterrorism efforts have been subject to widespread criticism for their disproportionality and alleged human rights abuses.[42]

Furthermore, the report drew a deliberate parallel with the policies being pursued in Europe:

> ISIS has taken advantage of refugee inflows and processes to install its destructive cells. So much that governments across Europe and the Middle East have taken unprecedented efforts to limit refugee inflows into their countries on the grounds of national security. Kenya cannot look aside and allow this threat to escalate further.[43]

Although the Kenya government's position has since softened and the deadline for closure has been extended (partly as a result of a High Court decision to overturn the government's decision),[44] stories are filtering through of refugees being forced to return to Somalia prematurely.[45] The pressure of reduced rations and services is being exacerbated by fears within the refugee community that, despite government protestations that it will not forcibly return them, the camp may be closed and its population unceremoniously forced back to Somalia.

Such actions, underpinned by a logic that sees Somali refugees as a security threat, in practice leaves Somalis with little choice but to go underground or back to Somalia, where they face the risk of being affected by or drawn into the conflict. For example, there has been no registration of newly arriving refugees in Dadaab for up to two years.[46] This policy seems to be motivated by government fear that registration will act as a pull factor and undermine returns. Even if this were the case, having a large unregistered and untracked population seems counterproductive from a security perspective. In addition, the stories told by refugees interviewed for this research and documented by others, that individuals are able to buy their way out of police custody or to buy national identity documents indicate that at least some individuals within the police are exploiting the securitised context to pursue financial gain.[47] Even more worrying, serious allegations have been made that Kenyan government officials are financially supporting *Al-Shabaab* by allowing them to profit from the charcoal and sugar trades in exchange for allowing a Kenyan interest, thereby undermining the security that other officials may seek to ensure.[48]

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[42] Eelco Kessels, Tracey Durner and Matthew Schwartz, "Violent Extremism and Instability in the Greater Horn of Africa: An Examination of Drivers and Responses." Global Centre on Cooperative Security, April 2016, xi, available at http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GCCS_VIOLENT-EXTREMISM_low_3.pdf (accessed 26 May 2017).

[43] Taskforce report, 2016.

[44] Republic of Kenya in the High Court of Kenya at Nairobi Constitutional and Human Rights Division, Constitutional Petition No. 227 of 2016, available at http://kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/131173 (accessed 26 July 2016).

[45] Amnesty International 2016.

[46] Interview with key informant, Nairobi, 4 May 2017.

[47] See for example, Human Rights Watch, "'You Are All Terrorists': Kenyan Police Abuse of Refugees in Nairobi," May 2013, available at https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/05/29/you-are-all-terrorists/kenyan-police-abuse-refugees-nairobi.

[48] Journalists for Justice, "Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia", November 2015, available at http://www.jfjustice.net/downloads/1457660562.pdf (accessed 4 June 2017).

Somalis in Uganda

Uganda provides an interesting contrast to Kenya. Here, the number of Somali refugees is considerably smaller, an estimated 39,541[49] and, unlike Kenya, Uganda is not home to an indigenous Somali ethnic minority. In addition, Uganda does not share a border with Somalia, thereby creating some distance – even if only geographically – from *Al-Shabaab.* Although Somali refugees have been viewed with some suspicion in Uganda, they have not been as vulnerable to the same large-scale policy initiatives intended to control them as Somali refugees in Kenya, despite the *Al-Shabaab* bombings in Kampala in 2010 that left 74 dead and 70 injured.[50] Although there was some backlash against the population at that time, the relative calm over the last number of years has muted this.

In addition, Ugandan law is more progressive than Kenyan law with regards to refugee access to rights, allowing greater freedom of movement and access to livelihoods. While it is important not to romanticise conditions in Uganda, the country provides a useful comparison inasmuch as the tendency to securitise responses appears to be significantly less.

Somalis in the United States

Over the past two decades, the US has played a critical role in the response to the Somali refugee crisis, both by providing funding to the humanitarian response and by serving as a site for resettlement of Somali refugees from Kenya and elsewhere. Between October 2000 and September 2016, the US received nearly 100,000 resettled Somali refugees.[51]

These numbers, although considerably smaller than those received by Kenya, especially considered relative to the national population, are significant and have had a number of impacts. First, the resettlement has covered a significant enough percentage of the Somali population that it has acted as an escape valve for some of the most vulnerable. It has impacted the imagination of the refugee population as a whole by offering a hope for escape from difficult circumstances for those lucky enough to get it but filling those left behind with regret. In addition, the scale of

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[49] UNHCR, Uganda statistics, August 2017, available at https://ugandarefugees.org/category/policy-and-management/refugee-statistics/?r=48 (accessed 28 September 2017).

[50] Xan Rice, "Uganda bomb blasts kill at least 74." The *Guardian*, 12 July 2010, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/12/uganda-kampala-bombs-explosions-attacks (accessed 7 March 2017).

[51] The exact number is 97,447. US State Department statistics quoted by Nayla Rush, "Somali Refugees in the U.S." 12 December 2016, available at http://cis.org/rush/somali-refugees-us (accessed 26 May 2017).

resettlement has also, along with other types of immigration, created substantial Somali populations in the US.

As with Kenya, the securitisation of refugee policy has played out in a highly tangible way in the US, albeit in a different configuration. The US has played a significant and high-profile role in countering violent extremism for a number of years, including through military presence in Somalia. Counterterrorism and refugee policies merged in a tangible way when refugees and resettlement became a campaign issue in the 2016 presidential elections. President Obama's effort to increase the US's refugee intake numbers to accept more Syrians sparked criticism, including from then presidential candidate Donald Trump.

As a presidential candidate, Trump specifically targeted Somalis among the refugee population. On the eve of the elections, speaking at a campaign rally, Trump said: "Here in Minnesota, you've seen first-hand the problems caused with faulty refugee vetting, with large numbers of Somali refugees coming into your state without your knowledge, without your support or approval, and with some of them then joining ISIS and spreading their extremist views all over our country and all over the world."[52]

In January 2017, Trump made it clear that he intended to follow through on his campaign rhetoric. He issued an Executive Order placing a four-month hold on allowing refugees into the US and a temporary ban on travellers from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Somalia. Claiming to be "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the US,"[53] the order was deeply flawed on a number of levels. With specific reference to refugees, it lacks empirical basis: although there have been a few widely-cited cases in which Somali immigrants or resettled refugees engaged or planned violent acts, a recent study by the Cato Institute concluded that in the US your chances of being killed in a terrorist attack committed by a refugee were one in 3.64 billion per year.[54] Similarly, the countries subject to the ban do not correspond with those who have historically been most likely to plan or carry out attacks in the US. Despite the fact that the order was subsequently over-ruled in the courts, it caused widespread chaos at airports, disrupted travel and legitimised, at a political level, the exclusion of those who were seeking safety outside of their own country.

On 6 March 2017, President Trump issued a second, broadly similar Executive Order replacing the first one, but including only six target countries (Iraq was removed) and articulating a much clearer national security basis. This second ban was similarly challenged in the courts, but the Supreme Court partially lifted a lower court order halting implementation, saying that the ban could be applied to those who lack a "bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United

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[52] Jenna Johnson and Sean Sullivan, "Why Trump warned about 'Somali refugees' – and why it could backfire," *Washington Post,* 7 November 2016, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/11/07/why-trump-warned-about-somali-refugees-and-why-it-could-backfire/?utm_term=.1b11fb81a663 (accessed 21 June 2017).

[53] "Executive Order: Protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the US," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 27 January 2017, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/27/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states (accessed 11 May 2017)

[54] This analysis is based on examining the immigration status of individuals convicted of planning or committing a terrorist attack on US soil. The last attack committed by a person who entered as a refugee that resulted in a death occurred in 1976, before the current refugee admissions program was set up in 1980. Alex Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis," Cato Institute, September 13, 2016, available at https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa798_1_1.pdf.

States."[55] As a result of the order, hundreds of Somali refugees in Kenya who were supposed to travel to the US after in-depth scrutiny by the resettlement programme (and having been rigorously screened by US and UN officials with some having been waiting for up to ten years for the process to be completed) were suddenly prevented from traveling.[56] Considerable uncertainty remains over the level at which resettlement will continue under the Trump Administration and the future of approximately 3,000 Somali refugees due to be resettled to the US in 2017 remains uncertain.

Another issue of concern for the Somali community in the US is deportation. For many years, the US did not deport individuals to Somalia due to the widespread instability in the country. However, with increasing stability in Somalia, a more cooperative Somali government (i.e. that is willing to affirm the nationality of deportees and grant travel documents) and a US political climate focused on immigration enforcement, the number of deportations has increased. 260 were deported between October 2016 and May 2017, up from 198 for the whole of the previous fiscal year and up from just 30 five years ago. More than 4,830 Somalis are the subject of final orders of deportation. The majority of deportees are failed asylum seekers (people who came to the US on their own and claimed refugee status on arrival), but others have criminal convictions (sometimes minor) which open them up to deportation.[57]

Methodology

This report is based on 80 qualitative interviews conducted with Somalis (predominantly refugees, but also including some non-refugees) living in Kenya, Uganda and the US, members of local and international civil society working with refugees and UN and government officials. All of the interviews took place between March and June 2017. Somali interviewees were asked questions about how integrated they felt within the broader communities in which they were living; what factors prevented or helped integration; and what factors they saw as key in driving individuals (whether themselves or others they knew) towards extremism.

In Kenya, 47 interviews took place in Nairobi (in various parts of the city, predominantly in Eastleigh, but also in Westlands and other areas) and the Dadaab refugee camps in northern Kenya. In Uganda, 25 interviews took place in Kisenyi, Kampala and in Nakivale refugee camp in Isingiro district in south-west Uganda; and in the US, eight interviews took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In each location, the interview map was adapted. For instance, in Kenya questions were asked about specific policy decisions and the impact on their lives; and in the US, people were asked about the impact of the recent Executive Order on them or their relatives, as well as their opinions on policy decisions in East Africa including the announced closure of Dadaab. A draft of the paper was sent to the governments of Kenya and Uganda for their comments. To date, neither has responded. Names of interviewees are withheld for security reasons.

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[55] Oliver Laughland, "Trump travel ban: US supreme court partially lifts block on order," The *Guardian,* 27 June 2017, available at https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/26/trump-travel-ban-supreme-court-block-partially-lifted (accessed 26 July 2017).

[56] Jason Burke, "Refugees in Kenya hit by US travel ban after years of waiting for asylum," The *Guardian*, 30 January 2017, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/30/refugees-in-kenya-may-face-return-to-somalia-after-us-travel-ban (accessed 31 January 2017).

[57] Mila Koumpilova, "Rising deportations to Somalia raise concerns in Minnesota," *The Star Tribune*, 4 June 2017, available at http://www.startribune.com/rising-deportations-to-somalia-raise-concerns-in-minnesota/426385301/ (accessed 6 June 2017).

The issue of recruitment into "violent extremism" or "terrorism" is, of course, highly sensitive and there is a risk that putting issues of refugee policy and discussions around violent extremism/terrorism into one space only exacerbates the linkage between the two. It was also clear that many of those interviewed were extremely nervous about talking about these issues. The approach taken throughout the field research was cognisant of this reality, ensuring that those who were interviewed did not feel in any way under pressure to talk about issues they were uncomfortable discussing. It is also important to emphasise that this research is not intended to be a complete overview of perspectives of Somali exiles on securitised refugee policies – either within the three countries, or more globally. Instead, it allows for an impression of the impact of policy decisions on the day to day lives of individuals living in the three countries.

The findings of the field research are presented through a focus on the realities of life in exile and durable solutions. Throughout, it considers the way in which these policies interact with broader narratives around security and the impact on the integration or marginalisation of Somali refugees. Finally, it considers the impact this might have on people's vulnerability to recruitment.

The realities of life in exile

Reasons for flight

Somalis have been fleeing their homes for decades and continue to do so in a context of ongoing conflict and a growing drought. Those interviewed had fled at various different times and for different reasons. As one Somali man put it: "*Al-Shabaab* is a recent phenomenon and people have been fleeing for much longer."[58] A number fled when they were so young that they could not recount why their families had made the decision to flee. Of those who had fled more recently, many had left areas under the control of *Al-Shabaab*, pointing not only to the challenges of living in areas under their control, but also the dangers of fleeing. One man described fleeing the Islamic Courts Union, out of which *Al-Shabaab* grew, in 2006: "Armed militia men came to us at night. They took us and blindfolded us and beat us… they accused us of being pro-government… they told us if we were there the next day we would be killed. We started to pack but then there was fighting, so we just ran."[59] Others described being caught in the crossfire. One woman who fled in 2010 said, "A mortar hit our home. My mother, father and brother were killed. I was the only one who survived because I had gone to the market. I became like a mad person and I fled with my girlfriends."[60] As another refugee put it; "In Somalia, there are two options, you either become a refugee or you join either the government or insurgents."[61]

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[58] Interview with Somali man, Nairobi, Kenya, 2 May 2017.
[59] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 May 2017.
[60] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 May 2017.
[61] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.

It was not surprising that for many of those interviewed, reaching the Somali border with Kenya was described as extremely dangerous. Some spoke of how they had to pay smugglers to help them travel through Somalia, particularly when moving through territory under the control of *Al-Shabaab*: "[they] do not want people fleeing."[62] As a result, "either you need USD 400 [to pay a smuggler] or an AK47 to get through."[63] One woman, who fled in 2010 said that she had "lost two sisters on the way to a hand grenade."[64] Another woman described how she and her daughters were raped by armed men along the way[65] and a couple living in Nakivale refugee settlement described how four of their children were killed when they were attacked by *Al-Shabaab* as they travelled from Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle to the border with Kenya.[66]

Managing borders: security or protection?

Borders are often a key site in which the tension between refugee protection and security takes place. On the one hand, states are entitled to protect their borders, not least when neighbouring states are in conflict or are unstable. Yet on the other hand, under international refugee law, it is vital that those who are fleeing persecution are able to cross international borders in order to access safety.

However, the findings indicated that reaching the border did not necessarily mean reaching a point of safety for many of those interviewed. Instead, they encountered further barriers, including border closures, that jeopardised rather than secured their safety. Citing security concerns, Kenya has closed its border with Somalia at various times, notably in January 2007, when tanks and helicopters were deployed to support the closure[67] and thousands were stranded on the border and about 400 people were *refouled* into Somalia.[68] However, despite its pronouncements and these measures, the government of Kenya has never been able to completely close the border with Somalia. In 2017, Kenya formally announced the reopening of the border following consultations between Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Somali counterpart.[69]

The 2007 border closure also led to the closure of a UNHCR transit camp, Liboi, near the border, which many interviewees reported passing through. This meant that refugees who crossed after this closure had to travel further distances to reach the relative safety of Dadaab. This, reportedly, significantly increased the level of harassment and extortion that refugees experienced on their way into Kenya.[70]

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[62] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 6 May 2017.
[63] Interview with Somali community leader, Kampala, Uganda, 18 April 2017.
[64] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.
[65] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.
[66] Interview with two Somali refugees, husband and wife, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
[67] BBC, "Kenyans close border with Somalia," 3 January 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6227083.stm (accessed 3 August 2017).
[68] Amnesty International, "Refuge Denied: The effect of the closure of the Kenya/Somalia border on thousands of Somali asylum-seekers and refugees," May 2007, available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr32/002/2007/en/ (accessed 3 August 2017).
[69] Mohammed Yousif, "Kenya to Reopen Border With Somalia," Voice of America, 27 March 2017, available at https://www.voanews.com/a/kenya-to-reopen-border-with-somalia/3778939.html (accessed 3 August 2017).
[70] Human Rights Watch, "Welcome to Kenya: Police Abuse of Somali Refugees," 2010, available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kenya0610webwcover.pdf (accessed 4 October 2017)

There are multiple government agencies with a role in managing the border in Kenya, but refugees primarily reported interactions with the police (although it may also have been difficult for refugees to distinguish between various law enforcement mechanisms). Indeed, Kenyan police do patrol the area between the border and Dadaab and often accuse asylum seekers and refugees of illegal presence when they find them there.[71] Police often arrested Somalis who crossed the border and then asked the refugees for bribes in exchange for their release. One woman who fled in 2005 said, "I was arrested at the border. We had to pay money to get out. I had to stay there for a week because my family delayed in bringing the money."[72] A woman who fled Mogadishu in 2010 also described how her two sons were arrested and she had to pay to release them.[73]

> [B]arriers to entry, justified in the name of security, have pushed people into the arms of smugglers and have stimulated corruption, while doing little to improve Kenya's security.

Many of those interviewed said they had to pay smugglers to help them get across the border into Kenya, and then onwards in case they did not want to go straight to the Dadaab refugee camps (the only acceptable route). One woman talked of how she had to pay a people-smuggler to enable her to cross the border and bypass the police: "It was terrible. The Kenyan police take everything you have and leave you. We had to hide all the time."[74] As one man said, "There were '*Mukhlas*' [people who traffic or 'guide the journey'] at the border who helped us cross. They bring you from the Somali border to Nairobi, then from Nairobi to the Ugandan border. We, as people who do not know the language, have to pay an extra fee."[75] This "trade" is both facilitated by and fuels the corruption and has long been a problem on the Somali/Kenya border. Many of those interviewed referred to paying bribes, seeing them paid or avoiding patrols to avoid paying bribes.

The reality is that barriers to entry justified in the name of security have pushed people into the arms of smugglers and have stimulated corruption, while doing little to improve Kenya's security. They may even be counterproductive, by pushing more people to take "shortcuts" where their entry will not be noticed or documented by border patrols and by allowing militia and terrorists smooth passage through corruption. Indeed, more broadly, corruption and inefficiency of police forces in Africa has been identified as a key impediment to the fight against terrorism.[76]

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya 9 May 2017.

[73] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 10 May 2017.

[74] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 9 May 2017.

[75] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.

[76] Obi Anyadike, "Unfair cop – why African police forces make violent extremism worse," *IRIN,* 28 September 2017, available at http://www.irinnews.org/opinion/2017/09/28/unfair-cop-why-african-police-forces-make-violent-extremism-worse (accessed 28 September 2017).

The political climate and its impact on refugee status and protection

The growing rhetoric equating refugees with threats has impacted on the quality of reception available to refugees, both in terms of access to legal status and more broadly in terms of access to assistance and public perceptions. Therefore, the ability to secure protection once inside Kenya, Uganda or the US was, at least in part, linked to the broader political climate and whether or not it was conducive to refugees in general, and Somali refugees in particular. As Ben Rawlence comments, the terms of the official conversation seem to allow "for only two kinds of young people: terrorists and those at risk of becoming one."[77]

Although it is important to recognise that such rhetoric may not necessarily pervade all branches of government and local levels of belonging may function regardless of – or even in contradiction to – the broader policy environment, nevertheless rhetoric at the national level has an impact on refugees' lives. The degree to which politicians have created an association between Somalis and violent extremism was a key issue in this regard. One Somali refugee talked about the global tendency to stigmatise Somalis: "I get the sense that Somalis feel less welcomed – not in Uganda specifically but everywhere. In the news, there is all this talk of Somalis as a security threat, of causing trouble. This has an impact."[78]

In the Kenyan context, there was consensus that the political environment was highly restrictive for Somalis, particularly as compared to Uganda: "In Kenya I think the people are also welcoming but the government has made their position clear and is trying to create tension. That is the difference between [Uganda and Kenya]."[79] With an increasing number of public statements by the government of Kenya, many of those interviewed talked of the climate that had been created by politicians within the country by linking the presence of Somalis in the country to insecurity. Human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest and restrictions on freedom of movement, have been longstanding features of the refugee policy landscape in Kenya, but the increasingly hostile political environment is making it harder for refugee protection groups to push back. As an NGO worker said, "The policy environment [in Kenya] has become more and more corrosive. And while UNHCR and other agencies used to aggressively challenge violations where they were reported, this has increasingly ceased to happen. The response now is much more muted."[80] Even UNHCR is "a bit stuck, not knowing the intentions of the authorities."[81]

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[77] B. Rawlence, *City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp*, Picador, 2016, p. 3.
[78] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
[79] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.
[80] Interview with international NGO, Nairobi, Kenya, 23 May 2017.
[81] Interview with NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.

The political climate has inevitably had an impact on the policy framework for refugees. With the recent push for repatriation and the threatened closure of the Dadaab camps, Somalis are finding an increasingly difficult reception in Kenya. Refugees who had arrived years ago described a straightforward process in registering and accessing refugee identity documents.

This, however, has recently changed. In April 2016, Kenya quietly withdrew *prima facie* recognition for Somali refugees, meaning that Somalis are no longer recognised as a group and are required to undergo individualised screening for refugee status. Currently there is no registration going on in Dadaab, which, as mentioned above, is not only counterproductive from a security perspective as it encourages illegality, but is jeopardising people's ability to gain legal recognition and thus receive vital humanitarian assistance. One observer also noted that it could have serious public health consequences. There has already been an outbreak of cholera in the camp, and without registration, accurate numbers and proper reception planning, it is difficult to mobilise an appropriate response.[82] A Somali man in Nairobi talked of how his mother is in Dadaab and is not able to register, having arrived only a month ago. "She has no ration card… The new arrivals can't access services. My mother was refused access to the hospital because she didn't have a referral."[83]

In the US, there is also concern that the recent increase in negative rhetoric will exacerbate the already vulnerable position of the community and impede the ability of refugees to stay legally in the country. On the other hand, the link between hostile government rhetoric and practical policy changes, is less clear. There has been no change, formally at least, to the adjudication of asylum claims. Deportations may be speeding up, but this is a continuation of an Obama era trend. However, what is clear is that the heightened negative rhetoric and real or threatened actions create uncertainty about the future. As a Somali American living in Minneapolis said, "The recent Trump actions have been causing a lot of tensions. There is a lot of fear. People are wondering, 'am I going to be sent back?'"[84] In the words of an American refugee advocate: "The trust with these communities is built up over years and is built on the notion that this country has always respected laws. These types of actions undermine that trust."[85]

By contrast, Somali refugees in Uganda interviewed for the study described the process of applying for asylum in Uganda as relatively straightforward. However, it is important to note that most said that they had paid a bribe (currently around USD 50) in order to speed up the process. One refugee described how he got his refugee status:

> I went to UNHCR soon after I arrived to claim refugee status. I was in touch with them and the Office of the Prime Minister. The process was very straightforward. After a week of going to their offices, I was given my asylum card status. I paid a bribe. This is done by most Somalis. At the time, it was 50,000 UGX [around USD 14] but the cost is now much higher. A lady went just this year and had to pay USD 50. I think this is due to the increase in Somali refugees in recent years.[86]

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[82] Interview with key informant, Nairobi, Kenya, 4 May 2017.
[83] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 May 2017.
[84] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 18 April 2017.
[85] Interview with refugee advocate, Minneapolis, US, 26 April 2017.
[86] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.

Uganda's Commissioner for Refugees stated that the Ugandan government's policy was to not treat Somalis as any different to other refugees: "We refuse to profile refugees based on outside implications…we grant Somali refugees status based on individual determination. I am meant to include before I exclude. The government has systems in place to provide for their security and the security of our citizens, and we do not take them as a security risk."[87]

Uganda was by far perceived as the most accommodating, even though all three countries run individual asylum determination procedures, because the political context there is more open.

Relations with the host community

In all three of the countries studied, refugees and advocates interviewed conveyed a sense that refugees were, at least at some level, associated with violent extremism in the public consciousness and that this was undermining relations with the host communities. This phenomenon was more intense in Kenya and in the US, where the government has adopted this rhetoric and thus legitimised those within the community who hold these views. As a man living in the Dadaab refugee camps said, "[The Kenyan government] believes that all Somali refugees are bandits… they claim that the camps are *Al-Shabaab* training grounds."[88]

Of course, part of the reason why governments make negative statements is to appeal to those sections of their electorate who they believe will be won over by a "tough" stance on refugees. It is less clear, however, to what extent governments are drawing on already existing negative feelings or concerns and to what extent they are creating them by alleging connections to terrorist organisations that may or may not be supported in fact.

In Nairobi, most refugees described the relations with the host community as good. In the words of one refugee woman, "my children's teacher calls me when my kid got sick, they are good people."[89] Another man said, "I don't know how Kenyans see us, but what I know is that they are good people that you can live with."[90] Some deliberately contrasted the "good" of the Kenyan people against the hostility of the government. In the words of one, the "government is a problem, but the other Kenyans don't have a problem. We have integrated with them. They are good."[91]

However even those who at first attested to the hospitality of Kenyans also acknowledged problems. As a woman who works as a seamstress and a hawker said, "working with other Somalis we are OK, but with the Kenyans we have problems. They can push you away from the good spaces."[92] There was a sense that government rhetoric and harassment also put Somalis in a weak position *vis à vis* Kenyans if there was a dispute.

There was also acknowledgement that relations with Somali Kenyan hosts were often better than those with the host population at large. Many talked of finding work with Somali Kenyans and of

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[87] Interview with Commissioner Apollo David Kazungu, Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the Prime Minister, Kampala, Uganda, 24 May 2017.
[88] Interview with Somali refugee man, Dadaab refugee camps, Kenya, 6 June 2017.
[89] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 May 2017.
[90] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 May 2017.
[91] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 May 2017.
[92] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 5 May 2017.

positive support from that community: "There are many synergies between Somali Somalis and Kenyan Somalis."[93]

At the same time, there were reports that the relations with the local population (mostly the Turkana) around Kakuma refugee camp were more problematic. In the words of one woman who came from Kakuma camp to Nairobi, "In the camp, the Turkana come to our homes in the night and rob us."[94] Another man who had recently come from Kakuma said "The Kenyans hate refugees. They have refugee phobia. They say that all the business has been taken over by refugees."[95] Several of the interviewees also spoke of being specifically targeted as Somalis: "I came from Kakuma last Monday. The biggest problem there is the local community. They come at night and they loot everything and they rape. They only target the Somali community. There are so many incidents."[96]

In the US, those interviewed perceived that fear and concerns about the Somali community as a whole have increased as the size of the Somali population has grown. As a Somali man said, "Before we were exotic and interesting, now there is more concern. Those who know us feel better about us, but those who look at us from afar are concerned."[97]

Against this backdrop, the increase in hostile rhetoric from the government has legitimated feelings of hostility that were already present. A number of respondents cited an incident in which a Somali woman had a bottle smashed in her face at a restaurant in Minnesota and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported a spike in hate crimes against Muslims, four in a two-week period, including the choking of a Somali cab driver, in April 2017.[98]

> I have nothing to do with terrorism. I am Somali but not a terrorist. The two are not the same

A Somali refugee in Uganda expressed his anger at the extent to which Trump had reinforced a perception of the link between Somalis and violent extremism:

> I have nothing to do with terrorism. I am Somali but not a terrorist. The two are not the same. For me to be targeted for what *Al-Shabaab* is doing, it's a problem. I consider it racist and discriminatory. I think I hate *Al-Shabaab* more than Trump does. Also, this will impact so many people. Even here in Uganda those that arrive still have hopes of being resettled. I know of one family who got the visa but could not travel because the ban came into force. It has affected people a lot.[99]

In Uganda, many talked about the fact that the local population has *not* discriminated against them, contrary to the Kenya experience – although here there was a distinction between

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[93] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 2 May 2017.
[94] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.
[95] Interview with Somali refugee community leaders, Nairobi, Kenya, 24 April 2017.
[96] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 28 April 2017.
[97] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 15 April 2017.
[98] Council on American-Islamic Relations, "CAIR-MN Concerned about Spike in Hate Crimes Targeting Minnesota Muslims," 7 April 2017, available at https://www.cairmn.com/57-internships/402-cair-mn-concerned-about-spike-in-hate-crimes-targeting-minnesota-muslims.html (accessed 6 June 2017).
[99] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.

settlement-based Somalis who have less interaction with broader Ugandan host communities and urban refugees who are more immersed.

As a Somali refugee in Kampala put it, "Kenyans have an intense hatred for Somalis. People are harassed, targeted all the time, suspected of being terrorists. I have been [in Uganda] a few months and have not experienced any issues. The difference? The government here has respect for us. In Kenya, they fuel everything. People feel they can do what they want because the government doesn't want Somalis there."[100] As one man said when asked how he thought Ugandans saw Somalis: "they just think we are normal human beings who have lost their way."[101] While the general view of refugees interviewed in Uganda was positive, there were a few stories of the opposite being the case. As a Somali refugee in Uganda said, "Sometimes they insult us out of the blue and say *Al-Shabaab* is a burden to our country. Other than that, the interaction is fair."[102]

"Sometimes they insult us out of the blue and say *Al-Shabaab* is a burden to our country. Other than that, the interaction is fair."

The extent to which Somalis were either accepted within communities or associated with violent extremism was also seen to correlate with terror attacks. In Kenya, it was clear that the upsurge in attacks since the government entered Somalia has led to an increase in negative perceptions of Somalis. As a Somali living in Nairobi said, "there have been no terror attacks recently, so there has also been less harassment. But if there is another attack, then the situation is likely to deteriorate quickly."[103] Or as another Somali refugee in Kenya put it more starkly, "All Somalis are seen as potential terrorists."[104]

While most of those interviewed in Uganda were far more positive, however, there was still an awareness that a terror attack could unravel public perception towards them. As one man said, "any attack that happens here will generalise all of us."[105] Likewise a Somali in the US said, "I have experienced welcome here. But the situation is just one unfortunate act away from going bad."[106]

Police abuses and access to documents

Securing appropriate documentation was seen as critical by all those interviewed, not least in a context in which many talked of the frequency with which they were stopped by the police. As a human rights activist in Kenya said, "One of the biggest issues that [Somali refugees] face is documentation. It is not easy for them to get documentation and as a result they can have bad interactions with the police. The police stop them regularly and ask them for documentation and if they don't have it they are asked for bribes and threatened with deportation."[107] Where the speaker talks about documentation here, he means Kenyan national IDs, for which refugees are not eligible because they are not nationals. Refugees are eligible for refugee ID cards, colloquially called "alien cards," issued by the government of Kenya.

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[100] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.
[101] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 6 May 2017.
[102] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 11 May 2017.
[103] Interview with Somali NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 April 2017.
[104] Interview with human rights activist, Nairobi, Kenya, 24 April 2017.
[105] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, May 2017.
[106] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 15 April 2017.
[107] Interview with key informant, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 April 2017.

Most of those interviewed in Kenya did have the "alien cards", and many had other forms of documentation as well, including ration cards issued in the camps, letters from UNHCR noting that the agency had received their cases and student ID cards (for those attending schools). However, because refugees are not legally allowed to leave the camps and because of the generally hostile environment for refugees, documents issued specifically to refugees are generally not recognised by police, despite them being legally recognised documentation. In some cases, police are explicit in saying that such documentation is not valid outside the camps. Several refugees said that they were better off saying that they had forgotten their Kenyan ID at home and showing nothing than showing their refugee ID.

Refugees in Kenya have very little in the way of legal options to adjust their legal status and obtain a national ID card, although this may be possible in a limited number of cases, such as marriage to a Kenyan national. More commonly, it was reported that national ID cards could be obtained informally, by paying a bribe or by having family members on the Kenyan side of the border vouch for an individual.

In the interviews in Nairobi, police harassment was cited by most as a daily concern.[108] In the words of one refugee woman, "These guys hurt us. If you work all day to earn something, the police are waiting there to take it from you."[109] One woman recounted how "one day I was taking my girl to the hospital and I was stopped by the police. I had only 200 shillings [about USD 2] and they took it from me."[110]

> "I have experienced welcome here. But the situation is just one unfortunate act away from going bad."

People spoke of how they feel that police disproportionately targeted Somalis, both those who are refugees and Somali Kenyans. As a Somali journalist said, "Here there is always an issue of harassment by the police. For me personally, I don't have an issue because I have a Kenyan face, but if you have a Somali face then you will be suspected. Somalis have been having a very hard time and are always needing to explain to and bribe the police."[111]

As at the border, police are using security as a smokescreen to enable them to engage with corruption and extortion. One Somali Kenyan man described the situation in Eastleigh in this way:

> The police will stop people at random in the street. For me, it is not that much of a problem, I have a national ID and I speak Swahili. In general, if you speak Swahili it is not that much of a problem. If you have Kenyan ID, it is no problem. But if you don't have ID, they will put you into a land cruiser and they will take you to a private place, where they will ask for a bribe of between 1,500 and 5,000 Kenya Shillings [USD 14.44 to 48.15]. If you don't have the money you can call a friend or a relative to bring it for you. If you still can't pay, they will take you to the police station. In general, women are more likely to pay because they are worried about sexual abuse… If they take you to the police station, the amount needed to get you out will increase because there will be more officers who need

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[108] Interview with key informant, by skype, 21 April 2017.
[109] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.
[110] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 May 2017.
[111] Interview with Somali journalist, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 April 2017.

to take a cut. Legally, the police can hold people for 24 hours without charging them, but sometimes they hold them even longer.[112]

In addition, some of those interviewed saw themselves as scapegoats. In the words of one refugee woman, every time there is a security incident, Somalis encounter problems with the police:

> The Kenyan police get angry and they look for some criminals.[113] I think that they are looking and they don't know if you are a criminal, so they stop everyone. They have several options, but they only use mass arrests. They won't listen if I have other suggestions, but they should not act as though all Somalis are criminals. They could coordinate more with the local leaders to distinguish.[114]

As in Kenya, Somalis in the US complained about relations with the police. While in Kenya nearly every refugee had a personal story of harassment and extortion, in the US the conversation was usually more about systemic racism and disproportionate policing. As one Somali activist said, "This is a hostile environment. There is serious over policing in the community. People are shut out and there is an impression that Somalis are untrustworthy. That they are bringing down the areas around them."[115] This perception was backed up in other interviews, which point to the fact that a disproportionate number of Somalis are ending up in deportation hearings, suggesting a bias against Somalis from policing through to the prosecutorial system.[116] As another interviewee put it: "In practice, Somalis face three layers of discrimination. First of all, they are immigrants, second, they are Muslims and third they are African American."[117]

It is worth noting that a number of efforts are being made in the US to address these issues, including by recruiting Somalis into the police force and using them as ambassadors to help other police understand and better interact with the community. This effort is supported by a Somali organisation of police officers and has received positive attention in local and national media.[118] Somali activists generally saw this as positive development, but reflected that it did not fully address the problem. One activist reflected that it was good to have a seat at the table, but that this did not address structural inequalities.[119] This positive recognition should be explored in further detail and additional research should be done to demonstrate more clearly the impact of such particular interventions to create better relations between police and specific communities.

By contrast, in Uganda, the majority of those interviewed reported no issues around harassment by the police. A significant number of interviewees, all of whom had passed through Kenya en route or had previously lived there, stated that life in Uganda was considerably easier as a result and that there were "no policies targeting Somalis": "There are times [when the police] stop a

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[112] Interview with Somali NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 April 2017.

[113] References to criminality refer both to *Al-Shabaab*, which is rarely referred to by refugees directly by name, and to gangs such as Superpower who operate in Eastleigh. See, for example, Fuad Abdirahman, "Origins of Eastleigh's Super Power Gang," 24 November 2016, available at http://www.qoononews.com/?p=508 (accessed 8 May 2017).

[114] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.

[115] Interview with two activists (one Somali and one Kenyan) working with immigrants in Minneapolis, US, 17 April 2017.

[116] Interview with key informant, Minneapolis, US, 27 April 2017 (by phone).

[117] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 18 April 2017.

[118] Libor Jany and Nicole Norfleet, "Minneapolis police's Somali outreach gets national attention," The Star Tribune, 28 January 2015, available at http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-police-s-somali-outreach-gets-national-attention/290017061/ (accessed on 20 June 2017).

[119] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 18 April 2017.

vehicle and ask for everyone's ID, but everyone in the vehicle has to show their IDs, not just Somalis."[120]

One Somali refugee, who had spent a year in Garissa (Kenya) before coming to Uganda, articulated the contrast: "Now I don't ever have to worry that the police will stop and treat me badly because they suspect I am with *Al-Shabaab* or a sympathiser… I have only been here [in Uganda] for four months but can already see massive differences."[121] Likewise a man resettled to the US as a child talked of how he had recently visited Uganda and Kenya: "I travelled around Kenya and Uganda myself last year, and I noticed a big difference myself. In Kenya, I had to show my passport all the time, but in Uganda no one bothered me and I could move around freely. And it seems like a more relaxed place."[122]

That said, there was a strong awareness among Somali refugees in Uganda that they still remained the focus of suspicion by security organs. As a refugee man living in Nakivale said, "Somalis are often investigated for no reason, more than any other group."[123]

Durable solutions?

Given the protracted nature of exile for the majority of Somali refugees and the fact that Somalis continue to flee the country, questions around durable solutions are crucial given that a lack of prospects for long term solutions inevitably impacts upon people's feelings of marginalisation and exclusion. The majority of Somalis have not found a solution to their exile, as is the case for multiple groups of refugees around the world who have been in exile for extended periods of time. The following section looks at some of the specific challenges that Somalis face in seeking to end their exile. It looks at local integration as both a temporary and permanent solution to exile; the challenges around repatriation; and the dynamics created by resettlement to a third country.

Local integration

Integration functions as both a legal (*de jure*) solution to exile, and a practical (*de facto*) process. The former is represented by the formal process of obtaining a new citizenship, while the latter

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[120] Interview with Somali community leader, Kampala, Uganda, 18 April 2017.
[121] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.
[122] Interview with Somali man, Minneapolis, US, 17 April 2017.
[123] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.

takes place primarily at a local level, whereby refugee individuals or groups negotiate belonging in the locality in which they are living. [124]

Legal integration
In both Kenya and Uganda, legal integration is extremely difficult. However, partly due to the Somali Kenyan population, in Kenya a number of Somalis have been able to get national IDs and gain access to good jobs – legally or illegally. In the words of one man, "A Kenyan ID doesn't guarantee anything, but if you work you can make something. And they are easier to get these days."[125] Another man said, "I have a Kenyan ID card, which I used family connections to get, so I am able to work here and to move around without a problem."[126] Both of the men cited above had jobs and expressed the sentiment that they had achieved a high level of integration.

On the other hand, only some have this integration option. Some who might have at some earlier point have had access to this option are now blocked by anti-fraud procedures put in place to address double registration. In practice, a number of Kenyans from surrounding communities registered as refugees in Dadaab and other camps to access assistance and some refugees had both ration cards and a Kenyan ID card. In response, a system was put in place to screen applicants for either ID against a database of the other. For those who are able to get Kenyan IDs, they are treated in practice as Kenyans and can access rights consistent with that status. However, their status is vulnerable. From a legal perspective, their status could be stripped if someone were able to show, later on, that they used fraud to obtain their documents. On a social level, they are able to integrate with the Somali Kenyan community, but many in that community (refugee and national alike) feel that they are treated as second class citizens.

At the same time, for those who are unable to get Kenyan ID cards, legal rights are extremely limited. They are not able to move freely, are generally restricted to camps, and are not allowed to work without pursuing complicated and expensive procedures. These barriers appear to have become more intense as concerns over security have grown, as the government has become stricter in its insistence that refugees should remain in camps and more forceful in enforcing this.

Refugee advocates said that it was hard to even talk about local integration as a legal solution to exile in the current political climate. In the words of one, "At the moment, integration is not possible… The process should be gradually opened up so that we can move in that direction. For the moment, however, that is unpopular, so it is better to talk about self-reliance."[127] In the words of another, "Inclusion is a very possible thing in Dadaab. The population has ethnic ties with the local community and is very resilient. The question is, 'is the government willing?' Right now, there is little prospect."[128]

In the US, resettled refugees are permitted to work immediately on arrival in the country, they are entitled to apply for legal permanent residence one year after they arrive[129] and are typically

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[124] For a wider discussion on local integration, see Lucy Hovil, "Local Integration." *Handbook on Forced Migration*, Ed Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al, Oxford University Press, 2014.

[125] Interview with Somali man, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 May 2017.

[126] Interview with Somali man, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 April 2017.

[127] Interview with NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 28 April 2017.

[128] Interview with NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.

[129] US Citizenship and Immigration Services "Refugees," available at https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees (accessed 6 August 2017).

eligible to naturalise after having permanent residence for five years.[130] This legal regime is far more facilitative to integration than those in Kenya and Uganda, where adjustment of legal status is extremely difficult. While there are some barriers to adjustment of status in the US, such as poor knowledge of English and difficulties in accessing legal assistance with the process, in practice a large number do access citizenship, as evidenced by the number able to vote and run for office.

De facto integration

While Kenyan identity documents are hard to obtain legally in Kenya, social integration is facilitated by the large ethnically Somali Kenyan population. Interestingly, however, this did not always translate into broader notions of acceptance: although refugees generally refer to individual Kenyans as welcoming and referred to most problems emanating from government, there was also concern about intercommunal issues around integration, which could partly be explained by demographics:

> How can there be integration? There is a problem with the host community. The refugees would be the majority [in the immediate areas around the camps and Eastleigh] if there was integration and this is a political issue. The host community is concerned that the refugees could take over political issues.[131]

As noted above in relation to the relationships with host communities, the possibilities for acceptance and integration vary by location. For example, one interviewee pointed to the fact that around Garissa, in northern Kenya (an area where there is a considerable Somali Kenyan population) Somali refugees felt more accepted.[132]

On a social and economic level, a number of those interviewed who lived in Nairobi indicated that they had better opportunity for integration than those in refugee camps. In the words of one, "In the camp, there is no economy and no work. Even if there is some work, they call a relative and you cannot get the job unless you are connected. Here, it is based on ability. I started to work as a guard and then as a waiter."[133] "There it is like a village, it is hard to work, but here I was able to find work. I do most of the cooking and the cleaning. My boss is nice to me."[134] A number of others also told of how their children were able to attend school. Socially, language played an issue in integration and those refugees who spoke better Swahili indicated that they felt more accepted. Nonetheless this d*e facto* integration was recognised to be weakened by the lack of official acceptance, which made refugees vulnerable, both at the hands of officials and to Kenyans in the case of a dispute.

Similarly in Uganda, although most interviewees said they felt welcome in Uganda and they reported very few tensions with host communities, they also emphasised their close links within the Somali community, with some even suggesting that the strength of Somali social networks was, in fact, an obstacle to integration. And, although some, particularly those living in Kampala, spoke about having Ugandan friends and acquaintances, the majority said interaction with

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[130] US Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Naturalization," 22 January 2013, available at https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/citizenship-through-naturalization (accessed 6 August 2017).
[131] Interview with Somali journalist, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 April 2017.
[132] Interview with NGO worker, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 April 2017.
[133] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 3 May 2017
[134] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 3 May 2017.

Ugandans was minimal as they found it easier to connect with other Somalis. In addition, many reported that they worked for other Somalis and did not interact that much with their hosts. As one Somali woman in Kampala said, "I usually go to areas where I know there are some Somalis because I don't speak good English. We are very community based and are always willing to help each other out even when we don't know each other."[135]

However, the strong community networks is not the only issue for example, for most Somalis in Nakivale refugee settlement, integration was also stymied by the refugees' lack of interaction with Ugandan host communities due to their geographic isolation, compounded by the fact that they have few opportunities to leave the settlement. In addition, as a Somali man said, "There are cultural differences and religious differences. We are very Arab and Muslim and here it is predominantly Christians. Developing relationships takes time but is not impossible. I think people here might be initially suspicious of us but as they get to know you that goes away."[136] Another woman summed up her feeling of alienation: "This is a country of *matoke*[137] and beans, and we cannot cope."[138]

The extent to which the tendency of the Somali community to rely on itself for support is driven by internal factors within the community, or by their feelings of exclusion and failed outreach is unclear. Either way, it limits integration. Furthermore, there was some reference to the fact that members of the host community sometimes express negative associations. As one man said, "I think we are mostly accepted but I do wish parts of the population wouldn't refer to us as terrorists or troublemakers."[139] However, there was consensus that this was not a majority view or a particular concern.

Access to work
One of the ways in which many of those interviewed assessed their level of local integration in all three countries was with regards to access to jobs. Most of those interviewed in Kenya and Uganda who have been able to secure employment, work for other Somalis rather than for the host population. While in Uganda, national law technically permits Somalis to work, in Kenya it does not. In reality, however, prohibitions to work were perceived to be similar – in other words, it was less a matter of law, and more a matter of other more localised factors that determined whether or not a person could gain employment.

In the US, efforts are also being made to help refugees to integrate. When they arrive, refugees are offered classes which cover both practical matters (the bus system in the host city, who to call in case of a medical emergency etc.) and culture. Many programmes also offer language classes although refugees are sometimes limited in their ability to access these by both demand and pressures to begin working as quickly as possible. However, as the discussion above notes, there are significant barriers to social integration in terms of social perception and prejudice against immigrants, blacks and Muslims.

Ultimately, of course, *de facto* and legal integration are hard to separate. Although the package of rights that come with refugee status are greater in Uganda, where it is legally easier for refugees

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135 Interview with Somali refugee woman, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.
136 Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
137 Local bananas, a staple food in many parts of Uganda.
138 Interview with two Somali refugees, husband and wife, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
139 Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, 26 March 2017.

to move freely and work, long term legal integration remains problematic. In Uganda naturalisation of refugees is possible under the law, but almost never happens in practice. A similar discussion took place in Kenya. Yet interestingly, this is one of the areas in which Kenya was seen as more attractive than Uganda: "We know in Uganda we will never get citizenship. Only in Kenya that is possible."[140]

Political integration
Political engagement and representation was seen as another marker of integration. In Nairobi, the MP for the area that includes Eastleigh, is Yusuf Hasan, a Somali Kenyan. He has formed a committee of business leaders, including Somalis, refugees and others, to discuss how security, at a local level, can be improved: "it has put pressure on the police to stop the harassment, and the situation has got better."[141] In addition, inclusiveness has become a campaign issue nationally. The ruling Jubilee coalition has touted its diversity, and its inclusion of members of the Somali Kenyan community as part of its 2017 re-election campaign message. Despite the issues of police harassment noted above, the coalition appears to believe that Somali Kenyans will vote with it in the upcoming elections.

Several interviewees in Nairobi stated that they feel at least partially represented in the Kenyan government as a result of Somali Kenyans being members of parliament, in contrast to the situation in Uganda: "Somalis are not a part of the Ugandan government and cannot be political. In Kenya, you can get nationality, but in Uganda it is hard. There are Somali MPs in Kenya, but in Uganda I think there is only one, and they might have been born here."[142]

Likewise in the US, for those we spoke to, one of the signals that the population is succeeding in integrating was the extent to which they have achieved political representation. The community is well organised and is beginning to be recognised. In Minneapolis, there is a city council seat being contested by two Somalis and, in 2016, Ilhan Omar, was elected to the state legislature. Political representation was seen as critical for giving the community a voice, even as it was recognised that the impact of a single representative is necessarily limited. As one interviewee said "This community is getting some political representation for the first time and it is a tremendous comfort. It is hard to measure, but it can have a profound impact. It can change someone's perception. They are making monumental progress in this area."[143]

Encampment or freedom of movement?
A key factor with regard to integration revolves around freedom of movement for refugees. In both Kenya and Uganda, the default response to refugees has been to put them in camps (or "settlements" in the case of Uganda), which has inevitably limited peoples' freedom to move either in law or practice, or both.

Uganda was seen, by those we interviewed, as being more relaxed in its approach to encampment. As one woman living in Nakivale refugee settlement said, "I need a permit to move but I have never experienced difficulty."[144] As a refugee living in Kampala said, "If people have their IDs and

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[140] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 18 April 2017.
[141] Interview with Somali, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 April 2017. However, although arbitrary arrests have gone down, concerns remain around a growing number of reported extra-judicial killings of individuals and disappearances.
[142] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
[143] Interview with key informant, Minneapolis, US, 27 April 2017 (by phone).
[144] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 11 May 2017.

the right papers – they can go anywhere without any fear. It is far better than Kenya when it comes to that."[145]

However, the reality remains that refugees have to go to a settlement in order to receive assistance. As one man explained, "Before, people could get an upkeep kit once reaching Kampala... But now it is different... people are only given the upkeep kits when they reach the settlement."[146] When asked if people are allowed to stay in Kampala, he answered, "Yes, but those who opt to stay in Kampala are those whose relatives outside of Uganda can pump something to restart their life until they open up a small business or something...and also people who stay in Kampala are those who left Somalia with a lot of money and who had the chance to come and invest in this place."[147]

By contrast, there was frequent reference to the Kenyan government's emphasis on encampment, which has become a hot-button political issue. The government has periodically issued statements saying that all Somalis must be in camps, with round-ups of Somalis to reinforce this. As a refugee in Kampala said, "I think many comparisons are made to Kenya and when that happens Uganda is viewed as the best. Freedom is very important to people. No one wants to be put in camps like animals. Here you have the chance to have as much of a normal life as possible."[148] Indeed, another interviewee said that one of

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the reasons that smugglers are used to cross over the Somali border into Kenya is in order to enable those fleeing Somali to by-pass the Dadaab refugee camps.[149]

As a result, movement around Kenya is both highly securitised – and, in turn, criminalised – for Somalis: "We pay money to get the pass to travel [to Nairobi]. There are brokers in the market and if you pay them it takes four hours to get a pass. If you don't pay though, it can take six months or more to get permission."[150] Although the government does officially allow for refugees to settle in urban areas in narrowly circumscribed circumstances (to study or for medical reasons, for example), there is little assistance available for those officially allowed to stay in urban areas and even less for those who choose to stay informally. Those in urban areas are expected to be self-reliant.

Encampment policies provide a strong example in this regard: although camps are often claimed to provide greater security by keeping refugees in a confined area where they can be better monitored, this is often not the case as camps are left with inadequate policing and can become

[145] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
[146] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, 6 May 2017.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
[149] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.
[150] Roundtable with 3 Somali Bantu and Nilotic Community leaders, Nairobi, Kenya, 24 April 2017.

more insecure. Refugees may then be doubly victimised, by the criminal behaviour that is allowed to fester where they live and by being blamed for this.

Increased talk of repatriation

> [A]lthough camps are often claimed to provide greater security … this is often not the case as camps are left with inadequate policing.

Of late there has been an increased push for repatriation of Somalis from Kenya, which has fundamentally altered the space for protection within the country. This push is strongly linked to the narrative of security with the government of Kenya. Repatriation from Kenya operates under a tripartite agreement signed by UNHCR, Somali and Kenya, in 2013, although the process did not start until December 2014 and has continued slowly since then. The government is frustrated with the slow pace of return, which UNHCR is "facilitating" but not actually "promoting".[151] In other words, UNHCR is providing support to those who wish to return, but is not encouraging refugees to do so. While this repatriation programme is relatively recent, it is, in fact, the continuation of a broader policy approach to refugees within the region. The entire protection structure is predicated on the assumption that Somalis will one day repatriate – an assumption that is not unique to Somalis but more a reflection of a broader approach in which repatriation has been perceived as the only viable durable solution for the majority of refugees in the region.

Increased talk of repatriation, threats to close Dadaab, reduction in assistance and the refusal to register new arrivals are all increasing the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for Somali refugees. As a Somali refugee in Nairobi said, "Before the repatriation was voluntary, but now it is forced. People are not all from Kismaayo. Kismaayo might be safe, but we can't all go to Kismaayo. When people are going back, the militia know that they have money, so they are targets. If you refuse to go back, they will block your ration card and claim that you are a Kenyan."[152]

Despite government rhetoric to the contrary, there was strong cynicism among many of those interviewed that the situation in Somalia makes return viable and safe, particularly to areas under the control of *Al-Shabaab*. As a Somali refugee in Nairobi said, "[In Somalia] there are two types of regions, those that are controlled by *Al-Shabaab* and those that are controlled by the government… Those that want to go back are those that are from the urban areas, where they haven't seen the same sort of problems."[153] Or as another refugee man said, "I don't think I want to go back yet. There is still fighting, there are explosions. *Al-Shabaab* is a big obstacle to peace. I need to see big changes before ever considering to return. I am a young man and when attacks happen, the youth are targeted so I personally wouldn't feel safe going back with the way things are now."[154]

Indeed, the ongoing presence of *Al-Shabaab* was seen as a key factor preventing return. People talked not only of being scared of the implications of living in areas under *Al-Shabaab* control, but

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[151] Interview with key informant, Nairobi, Kenya, 8 May 2017.
[152] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 May 2017.
[153] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 May 2017.
[154] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.

of the fact that young people, in particular, might be vulnerable to recruitment by them if they return. As a refugee woman in Kampala said, "To combat [*Al-Shabaab*] what we need is the creation of jobs. It is the youth that are more likely to be recruited and it worries me if people are forced to return with nothing. But if they learn and get educated, find work... they won't. When they have nothing to do, *Al-Shabaab* will do what it needs to get them onside."[155]

Although *Al-Shabaab* was most commonly noted as the main factor prohibiting repatriation, many interviewees, (particularly those that fled earlier), also expressed a sense of distrust in the government. Many pointed out that they had fled prior to the rise of *Al- Shabaab* and so for them, they were not the only problem. Other accused the government of corruption or of committing abuses themselves. In the words of one woman, "Both the government and the terrorists are killing people in Somalia, so we feel unsafe."[156]

That is not to say that many Somalis do not want to return: there was considerable variation in views on repatriation and some of those interviewed did express cautious optimism that they might soon be able to return to Somalia. As one man said, "We didn't see much under the last government but Somalis ... are now filled with hope. Farmaajo has said he will tackle *Al-Shabaab* and has already

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promised soldiers their pay. I think we will see changes in a positive way."[157]

For some, return is complicated by the reality that their exile has been so long that for them, repatriation would be less of a return and more of a new journey to Somalia. One young woman, who came to Kenya in 1992 when she was just two years old, explained that she didn't want to return both because of ongoing fighting and because "we don't know the place and they don't know us."[158] Others said that they didn't even really know the situation on the ground, they had no connections and only heard about the situation on TV. In the words of one woman who arrived in 1995, "I don't have a lot of information, but I know that it is not stable."[159] For others, trauma is a serious issue. In the words of one young man, "I will never go back. *Al-Shabaab* can kill me like they killed my mom."[160]

Resettlement

With few prospects of citizenship in either Kenya or Uganda, not surprisingly many have put their hope in resettlement to a third country – often because they see it as the only durable solution that is likely to offer a real solution to their exile. Strikingly, despite the generally positive response to Uganda as a host country, many of those interviewed said that they were waiting for

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[155] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.
[156] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 5 May 2017.
[157] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.
[158] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 3 May 2017.
[159] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 5 May 2017.
[160] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 May 2017.

resettlement as the only option: "I hope to be resettled to the US where I would have more support or that Somalia gets safe enough that it is an option to go back. We cannot remain in Uganda forever."[161] One woman in Nairobi opined that Uganda was a better host for its increased chances of resettlement: "Uganda is very different. You will be resettled there after four years."[162]

A human rights defender in Nairobi explained the inordinate hope in resettlement: "there is so much expectation that there will be resettlement. They are always in their suitcase, even when they have been here for 30 years. There is way too much hope put into this and people need to understand that it is basically like winning the lottery."[163]

Furthermore, many talked about the frustration they felt in the resettlement process, which was seen as being fundamentally unclear to them with regards to who is selected and how that happens. Some blamed corruption for the failure of their resettlement efforts. Although Somalis are among the largest groups of those resettled,[164] others blamed this identity: "I ask myself why? Why have I been excluded? Is it because of my nationality? Is it because I am a Muslim?"[165]

However, the option of resettlement to the US, albeit one that only a small minority have so far benefited from, has become even more elusive with increased checks and vetting in place, falling admission numbers and the prospect that numbers could be cut further, especially for this population, or that the programme could be halted altogether. As one man said, "It was only the Americans that took Somalis then this ban [put in place by President Trump's Executive Order] came into force and ruined everything. We have lost hope."[166] In reality, most of those who had already been accepted for resettlement suffered a delay but ultimately will be resettled. However, there is now considerable uncertainty over the number of those who will be accepted for resettlement in the coming years.[167]

Irregular migration

As a result of losing all hope in resettlement, the difficult situation in host countries and the fear of forced repatriation in Kenya, many of those interviewed now plan to create their own "durable solution" in the form of "irregular" migration. As one young man said, "More and more – especially since the ban from Trump – I have been thinking of '*tahrib*' [migration through non-official routes]. I know it's possible and am looking into it."[168] The option of *tahrib* was particularly popular with younger men in their twenties who hope to provide for their families back home and believe they have no viable options in their current situation. Yet given the significant dangers associated with it, it was causing considerable disquiet among families and was identified as one of the biggest challenges the community is attempting to address collectively and on a household level. Ultimately, therefore, it was irregular migration rather than recruitment into *Al-Shabaab* that was causing great concern within communities.

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[161] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.
[162] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nairobi, Kenya, 9 May 2017.
[163] Interview with key informant, Nairobi, 25 April 2017.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nairobi, Kenya, 3 May 2017.
[166] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
[167] Interview with man who came to the US as a Somali refugee as a child, Minneapolis, US, 17 April 2017.
[168] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.

One refugee woman in Nakivale refugee settlement talked about how "the discussion around my kitchen table is *tahrib*, or running away from this place, to a place where they cannot be sneered at or laughed at."[169] She later talked about the fact that there are few Somali youth in Nakivale: "Where are the youth you speak of? In Nakivale they have all gone! When they have missed all of the opportunities in this place, they go for *tahrib*, and they are supported by their parents and communities."[170]

One young man told of how he had attempted to reach Europe from Uganda with some friends. Of the 15 men who travelled, 11 made it to Europe, three died, and he returned.[171] He described how they all travelled through South Sudan in a container with "hundreds of Somalis," including men, women, children and elderly people, "and no oxygen." He was eventually arrested in Egypt, escaped after six months and returned to Somalia before fleeing to Kenya and then Uganda. Despite all he had been through, he said he would try the whole thing again as he sees little alternative to create a future for himself and his family.[172]

Many parents talked of the anxiety illegal migration attempts have created: "Every mother is worked up – we are all restless. If they don't come back for lunch, we wonder if they have disappeared."[173] While some admitted that the dangers of the route had so far dissuaded them from going, there was also reference to the fact that sooner or later, they might be tempted if there are no alternatives.

Vulnerability to recruitment?

The question of whether or not – or to what extent – the experiences of exile have had an impact on people's vulnerability to recruitment is hard to assess with the current data, in part because talking about this issue is difficult, and certainly should not be overstated. Indeed, it is worth emphasising that there is no evidence from this research that refugees present any greater risk of radicalisation and violent extremism than that of the host population – indeed, anecdotally it is quite possible that the opposite is the case.

However, throughout the interviews a significant number of people did make a link between failures around integration and the injustices, and vulnerability to recruitment. One man talked about how Somalis in Kenya are more vulnerable: "Many Somalis [in Kenya] feel targeted [by the host population] and so, even though they have been in Kenya a long time, they join *Al-Shabaab*. Somalis here [in Uganda] are far more integrated so they have no reason to join."[174] As another man said, "*Al-Shabaab* are a big problem in Somalia. Kenya too. But not in Uganda. Here *Al-Shabaab* know they can't get people here on side as Somalis do not feel alienated."[175]

When talking about the challenges of accessing education, work and other opportunities, many of those interviewed specifically linked failures in this area to an increase in the vulnerability to recruitment by *Al-Shabaab*. As one man said, "There is nothing to exploit when people have

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[169] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 9 May 2017.
[170] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 10 May 2017.
[171] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
[172] Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
[173] Interview with Somali refugee woman, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 9 May 2017.
[174] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.
[175] Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 26 March 2017.

education and are satisfied with their lives."[176] Or as another refugee man said, when asked if he thought people might think about joining *Al-Shabaab*, "Yes, people are vulnerable to being recruited. They are jobless, they lack education, and they feel pain."[177] Of course, while it goes without saying that most people who are unemployed are not recruited, any increased vulnerability needs to be recognised in the context that the rate of recruitment is very low.

Furthermore, the extent to which people feel like scapegoats for security was seen by some to create a vulnerability to recruitment. In other words, targeting of the community was seen to exacerbate the problem that the security apparatus is supposed to mitigate. As one Somali refugee woman said, "In Kenya there are more problems [of recruitment by *Al-Shabaab*] but that is because of how close it is to Somalia and the way they manage their border control. Also, Kenyans arrest Somalis and that gives *Al-Shabaab* the chance to recruit from people who have been targeted and made to feel like they are criminals when they are not."[178]

Likewise in Uganda, several of the interviewees then linked the levels of police harassment to the extent to which individuals are vulnerable to recruitment. As one Somali replied when asked if he knows of any recruitment taking place in Uganda, "No. The Ugandan government's policy is very different to Kenya's. In Kenya, the government blames Somalis for everything. Some people who haven't done anything are victimised and then it's possible for *Al-Shabaab* to recruit them. Here Somalis don't have such problems like arrest and harassment so *Al-Shabaab* have no influence or impact. They look for people with problems."[179] Therefore, while the findings did not find a clear correlation between notions of marginalisation and recruitment, there was concern that the former can be part of a broader context in which specific individuals are targeted by *Al-Shabaab.*

Although some referred to the notion that targeting Somalis, including but not limited to, refugees could increase marginalisation and increase the vulnerability to recruitment, others pointed out that the inherent limitations placed on refugees made them *less* attractive as potential recruits. As a man living in Dadaab said, "[*Al-Shabaab*] have no presence in refugee areas. They want to recruit Kenyans because Kenyans have freedom to move and that is of help to *Al-Shabaab* activities in Kenya. Refugees have no freedom to move so how can they help *Al-Shabaab*?"[180]

With regards to durable solutions, there was concern that where people had given up hope of an end to their exile, they might be vulnerable to recruitment: "The fate of the youth has become the Mediterranean and *tahrib* or returning to Somalia and fighting either with or against the government. When someone becomes desperate, young men don't think twice, they think once."[181] As another refugee said, "I think a lot of children don't see a future and start looking at what else they can do. Some end up trying to reach Europe and risk their lives while others are seduced by *Al-Shabaab* into joining their cause and feeling like they have a purpose."[182] And, while interviewees in all three countries were quick to state that recruitment is not common and most denied any knowledge of it, there was also an underlying acknowledgement that it was, at the very least, a concern, though for many less of a concern than the risks associated with *tahrib*.

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176 Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.
177 Interview with Somali refugee man, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
178 Interview with Somali refugee woman, Kampala, Uganda, 11 March 2017.
179 Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 25 March 2017.
180 Interview with Somali refugee man, Dadaab refugee camps, Kenya, 7 June 2017.
181 Interview with two Somali refugees, husband and wife, Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda, 8 May 2017.
182 Interview with Somali refugee man, Kampala, Uganda, 9 March 2017.

Conclusion

The findings point to some of the realities that emerge when governments fashion a correlation between forced migration and insecurity. Whether rhetorical or expressed through policies, this flawed correlation, while fundamentally flawed, continues to have serious implications on people's lives. Existing security strategies targeting refugees – for instance the discriminatory use of policing – are not only ineffective, but act as a smokescreen for criminal activity in some cases. As such, they neither provide security for the country nor protect refugees. Indeed, quite possibly the opposite: they are policies that foster fear and exclusion, rather than generate security.

To define the role that marginalisation and vulnerability play in potential recruitment goes beyond the remit of this paper. The paths that lead someone to "radicalise," join an extremist movement and eventually commit an act of violence are complex and multi-faceted. However, the findings point to the fact that ensuring inclusivity, protection and long-term prospects for refugees are better responses to security threats than the securitisation of refugee policy.

The findings contribute to a wider, global discussion around the securitisation of policies responding to people on the move. They point to the need to reorient migration debates away from overtly securitised narratives that likely benefit neither refugees, nationals, nor global security, towards an emphasis on greater protection through greater inclusion. After all, a stronger emphasis on inclusion has been shown in many different countries and contexts to in fact facilitate better security through community engagement and cooperation. The impulse to exclude groups as an ill-informed and knee-jerk reaction to an often-undefined threat is ineffective and even potentially damaging.

Fear over security threats can be exploited. Political opportunists can drum up fear within the population for their own political gain. When the security situation is presented as sufficiently dire that responses to it cannot be questioned, space for debate about the effectiveness of different security measures closes down. It is all too easy to prioritise symbolically tough actions, even if they are actually largely ineffective (or even counterproductive), to appease populist tendencies. This approach can legitimise rights violating practices that weaken the confidence of the community in authorities, undermining their willingness and capacity to support security and policing efforts. When this happens, no-one wins.

Instead, therefore, the notion of "protection" needs to be recovered and rehabilitated in refugee policy. Not only is this an obligation for states that have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, but represents an approach that is based on the premise that refugees can be seen as part of the solution rather than treated as part of a collective problem in the struggle against extremism. It is therefore a process in which "migration and terrorism [are] de-linked in the public mind and the national discourse",[183] and that pulls refugees into the centre of polities and of communities – a notion that is so deeply unpopular to many political leaders, and yet so vital. At the end of the day, the antidote to terror and criminality is not, and has never been, in battening down the hatches, but in precisely the opposite.

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[183] This point is made by H.E. Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, in his speech to the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, 8 April 2016, available at http://webtv.un.org/watch/session-i-high-level-segment-geneva-conference-on-preventing-violent-extremism/4837607115001 (accessed 18 June 2017).