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# **Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, October 20, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Michael Levitt**



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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•(1310)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone.

We're very lucky to have a couple of guests here today from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR. We have Mr. Van Der Klaauw, and we also have Mr. Michael Casasola.

Mr. Van Der Klaauw is the representative in Canada, and Mr. Casasola is a resettlement officer.

I would ask you to provide remarks for around 10 to 15 minutes between the two of you, and then we will open it up to some questions after that. Thank you.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw (Representative in Canada, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees):** Thank you, Mr. Chair and distinguished members of this committee.

As the newly arrived UNHCR representative in Canada, this is my first appearance at a committee of Parliament. For me, this is a memorable event. I have addressed other parliaments in the world in the past.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today on the Burundi refugee situation, resulting from the ongoing crisis in the country since April 2015.

At the outset, I would like to say a few words about the agency I represent. As you know, UNHCR is the United Nations agency mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees are the foundation of our work to help and protect the world's refugees. Our primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, but our work has expanded over the years to include other vulnerable people such as stateless persons and internally displaced people. We are currently working in 129 countries and help more than 52.6 million persons out of the 65.3 million who are forcibly displaced today in the world. Our budget currently stands at \$3.7 billion.

The current political, human rights, and humanitarian situation in Burundi is most concerning, given the continued high level of violence and human rights violations targeting not only the civilian population but also high-level political figures and political activists. Negotiations between the Burundian political actors, mediated by

former Tanzanian president Mkapa, so far have not yet reached a compromise that could restore security and stability in the country.

Most recently, with the release of the report of the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi on September 20, which was then followed by the resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 30, tensions between the government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have increased significantly.

The Government of Burundi has responded by rejecting the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council in its entirety. It has also rejected co-operation with the independent commission of inquiry, which was to be established to investigate the grave human rights violations referred to in the report. The government has also passed legislation most recently in both the lower and upper legislative assemblies of Burundi to withdraw from the International Criminal Court. This would make Burundi the first country to withdraw from the ICC.

The Government of Burundi has recently declared the three UN experts who head the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi *personae non gratae*.

Demonstrations on the ground escalated on October 9 with specific demands for the closure of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bujumbura. This culminated in the official suspension of co-operation between the Government of Burundi and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, pending a "renegotiation" of the host agreement between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the government.

As you all know, earlier on, the government rejected the plan of the African Union Peace and Security Council to deploy a 5,000-strong protection and prevention mission. The government did agree with the deployment of 100 African Union human rights observers and also 100 African Union military experts, but to date, only 47 human rights observers and 23 military experts have actually been deployed.

•(1315)

The Government of Burundi has rejected UN Security Council Resolution 2303, which requested the UN Secretary-General to establish a police component comprising 228 police personnel. Instead, the government consented only to the deployment of 50 police officers for training of the local police.

The Government of Burundi is now promoting the idea that the country is sufficiently safe for the return of the Burundian refugees in the region, and it is actually holding bilateral meetings with the governments of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Tanzania. So far, the Burundi authorities have reported close to 40,000 spontaneous returns. However, at my agency, UNHCR, which is monitoring and verifying the activities at the borders, my colleagues have confirmed no more than 3,500 returns out of the 300,000 Burundians who have fled the country since the events of 2015.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, the situation inside Burundi has been referred to by the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi as one of a pattern of systematic human rights violations against a background of a worsening socio-economic situation which, combined, have led to this large-scale displacement.

Within the country, at the end of July 2016, close to 60,000 newly internally displaced people were counted, while, as I said, over 300,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. We should not forget that Burundi itself, as a host country, has accommodated over 55,000 Congolese refugees, of whom 24,000 live in urban settings, mostly Bujumbura, and another 30,000 in the camps in Burundi.

The impact of the political crisis on the Burundian economy has been significant. The deterioration of the economy threatens to become an additional driver of the crisis and the displacement. The weakening of the economy includes a decline in foreign currency reserves, a slowdown of private sector activities, increased domestic public debt, cuts in social spending, rising unemployment, as well as decreasing donor engagement and investments. The fact that donor governments have suspended direct institutional support as a result of the socio-political crisis means that the government budgets for social services, particularly health and education, are severely underfunded. Hence, the political and socio-economic impacts of the crisis are now also fuelling a humanitarian crisis.

As I said, more than 300,000 Burundians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, most of whom, more than 160,000, are in Tanzania. Thousands more risk to join these refugees abroad in the near future unless a political solution is found and a descent into civil war averted. Humanitarian actors have had to react quickly and step up the provision of protection and assistance services to the Burundian refugees in the region, but we are concerned that the neighbouring countries—as I said, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo—and the aid agencies led by us, UNHCR, will not be able to provide adequate shelter, food, water and sanitation, critical protection services, and health and other life-saving services if the numbers continue to rise.

Since the reception capacities of the host countries are already severely overstretched, conditions remain dire for many refugees, many of whom, let us not forget, are women and children.

• (1320)

Tanzania, as I've said already, hosts the largest number, 163,000 as of today. In the month of August alone, we recorded close to 8,000 new arrivals in Tanzania only, and that was double what we recorded the preceding month in July of 3,735. At the current rate of new

arrivals, it is anticipated that Tanzania will surpass the projected planning figure of arrivals, which was 170,000. It will surpass that.

Rwanda, the second largest host of Burundian refugees, currently counts 81,000 Burundian refugees, 50,000 of whom are in one particular camp, Mahama, and 30,000 have sought refuge in Kigali and other urban areas. These Burundian refugees in Rwanda have joined the ranks of a recent influx of Congolese refugees into Rwanda. Together, here too, the reception capacities in the country are severely constrained.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo currently hosts 30,000 Burundian refugees. It also has witnessed a significant increase in the number of new arrivals of late. Close to 4,000 were registered only between July and mid-September, again mostly women and children.

Uganda, a fourth reception country in the region, hosts close to 42,000 Burundian refugees, and they have joined the many Congolese, south Sudanese, and other refugee nationalities that Uganda has been hosting of late.

As a result of the increasing pressures on the absorption capacity of the neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region, we now see that the Burundian refugees have started to move onwards towards countries in southern Africa, such as the Republic of South Africa and Zambia. That, in itself, makes the prospects of return even more distant.

As mentioned earlier, UNHCR continues to work with governments and partners inside and outside Burundi to provide critical protection and life-saving assistance: food, shelter, and health. In addition, UNHCR and its partners also respond to urgent needs in education, prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, youth programming, psychosocial counselling, and livelihood activities. However, our humanitarian response is becoming increasingly stretched in the face of growing needs.

On December 22, 2015, UNHCR issued a so-called supplementary budget appeal, a funding appeal for the Burundian situation, including what they would need to support the refugees internally displaced in Burundi itself, and the refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and South Africa for the year 2016. That appeal requires a total amount of \$180.6 million. By August 31 of this year, we had received 44% of the required funding, less than half what was needed.

Let me end this short presentation by making a few comments on how we see Canada can best address the unfolding refugee situation in and around Burundi.

First, so far, Canada has supported our operations in Burundi and the region by providing funding to the sub-region of a total of \$1.7 million U.S. for our work in central Africa and the Great Lakes, but we need additional funding. It's urgently needed to enable us and our partners to continue to address the needs generated by the ongoing crisis in Burundi.

Second, in light of the dramatic political and humanitarian situation and the documented human rights violations in the country itself, UNHCR encourages the Canadian authorities to give priority consideration to asylum claims lodged by Burundian nationals here in Canada.

• (1325)

Third, Canada is encouraged to continue, if not step up, its resettlement of Burundian refugees out of the region. If you take UNHCR's global projected resettlement needs for next year, 2017, more than 7,000 Burundian refugees need urgent resettlement, given their extremely vulnerable situation. The figures for Canadian resettlement for 2015 show that 458 Burundians were resettled that year, and while Canada continues to resettle Burundian refugees this year also, we encourage Canada to step up this program and to also consider what we call alternative pathways for admission, such as private sponsorships, humanitarian admissions, and student visas.

Finally, like other humanitarian crises in the world, the Burundi crisis can only be solved through a negotiated political settlement. This would be needed for the peace and stability of the country but also for the return, safety, and dignity of all these Burundians nowadays abroad. We call upon Canada to join the efforts of the international community to make this happen.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your comments, Mr. Van Der Klaauw.

We're going to open it up to some questions.

We're going to begin with MP Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Can you clarify what your role is in the administration of the camps? Do you oversee the management and administration of them? Your title has to do with humanitarian and resettlement coordination. I'm wondering how directly your organization is involved in administering the camp.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Normally, indeed, in any refugee situation it's UNHCR that is, in principle, responsible for camp management. Also, in countries in which there are IDP camps, we also have the overall responsibility for the management.

There are situations in which the host country works together with us and wants to also have a say in this management, or we have a partner—I can speak from my own experience—who co-operates with UNHCR in the day-to-day management.

I also know of situations in which the host authorities in the end are taking responsibility for the camps, and that sometimes creates some friction, as you can imagine. I cannot tell exactly for the Great Lakes region, or the four countries I mentioned, how exactly the camp management is run per country. I can provide the information later.

What I also want to say is that we often talk about camps. Yes, there are refugee camps, but let's not forget that many of the refugees are in urban settlements. I mentioned that they are in Kigali. They are in Kampala. They are not only in the camps. We also have the

responsibility to care for and maintain the well-being of refugees in an urban setting, which poses its own challenges.

**Mr. David Anderson:** This has to do with my next question.

Today in the House we're talking about the Yazidi situation and the place they find themselves in. The failure or inability of our government to effectively allow for immigration from those minority religious and ethnic groups was tied to the fact that many of them did not feel secure or comfortable going into the UN camps. That has directly affected the government's choice, if you want to call it that, or decisions on who is allowed into Canada, and as a consequence virtually no Yazidis and very few Assyrian Christians have come to Canada in our immigration stream in the last year.

Do you know in the Burundi situation, if you're dealing with multiple ethnic groups, how the smallest minority ethnic religious groups are being protected? Is the UN able to address that problem a little bit more effectively than they have been able to do in that area in the Middle East?

• (1330)

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** I happen to know that my colleague, Michael Casasola, was a witness in the other discussion last July on the protection of vulnerable groups and minorities in the OECD, and we can speak about that, too.

In the Great Lakes area, where we see the Burundian refugees, we have no knowledge about this type of problem of ethnic or religious minorities being trepidatious about contacting the UNHCR and to settle in camps where there are other majority groups and there might be tension, but I speak here in general. Sometimes these minority groups don't want to come forward because they don't want to be seen as then being registered as refugees, or in the case of Yazidis, they need to be registered by the host government and they don't want this. It's not so much an issue of the management of UNHCR or its partners which prevents these minorities from coming forward; sometimes it's their own decision, but we can have a whole discussion about this.

What I can say is that we have no knowledge of Burundian minority groups having no access to camps. UNHCR camps should always be accessible to any refugee.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Thank you.

We've heard a fair amount of testimony here about the threat to women and children, but particularly women, as they're trying to get across the border and into the camps, and then some of the threat that's in the camps as well. Is there any legal recourse for women who are in the camps and find themselves victims of sexual assault, the kinds of testimony we've heard about? Is there any sort of legal recourse in your camps at all for them, or are they basically at the mercy of what goes on around them?

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Again, in general terms there should always be recourse, but in practice it is often—and I know it again from my own experience, having worked in a number of operations—not that easy for a victim of sexual gender-based persecution or violence to come forward to testify. We do have, of course, the systems in place to also protect the victim and also as a witness, but that doesn't mean that in practice it always works as it should. The victims need to feel comfortable to come forward. They need to be assured there is a system where their claim will be taken further.

There are many situations where the victims can also be men, who have major difficulty in their culture also to come forward with these types of claims. Let's not forget that if we talk about sexual gender-based violence and persecution, the perpetrators are sometimes very well known to the victims. They might be militia men. They might be strangers. Sometimes it is within their own community. It depends on the situation.

I mentioned in my statement that the response to, if not the prevention of, sexual gender-based violence, is a key concern and priority globally for UNHCR as a protection agency. We have rolled out a global strategy in very many refugee situations so that we pay much more attention to this, so that we have many more resources to work on this because, as you indicated in your question, it is a major concern and is grossly under-reported.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to MP Miller.

**Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs, Lib.):** Mr. Van Der Klaauw, one of the accusations you hear as a recurring theme from the Burundi government is that the UN agency's foreign powers are just perpetuating foreign interests, supporting an insurgency movement. It seems to be a repeated theme throughout and it falls quickly into a colonialist discourse, probably too quickly but for opportunistic reasons. How do you respond to that on the ground and what is your relationship with the Burundian government, if any?

• (1335)

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Thank you for that question.

As I mentioned, I'm here on behalf of a particular UN agency, the refugee agency, but of course, I represent also the UN.

The UN is very much at the moment focused on Burundi. The relations are very strained. I mentioned how our colleagues at the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the moment have been asked to close the office and to leave. As you mentioned, the Burundian authorities have considered as undesirable the involvement of the UN, its human rights machinery, but also its political mission, because there's a special adviser for the Secretary-General, with his team. The tension has risen.

I mentioned Burundi is the first country that has decided to leave the International Criminal Court, which by the way takes a year before it comes into effect. Let's hope and see what happens in that year.

What I want to say here is that there are behind-the-scenes negotiations ongoing to bring the Government of Burundi, the UN,

and the international community together behind closed doors, outside Burundi, to discuss the ongoing political crisis and also the socio-economic consequences I mentioned. The dialogue behind closed doors is ongoing, but the relationship is very strained. As you heard from other witnesses, it all started, of course, with the re-election of the current president for the third term and then the failed coup in May 2015. This all has escalated the tensions between the government and the UN, which is there to help countries to ensure peace and stability, but also to promote democracy and respect for human rights.

**Mr. Marc Miller:** We often get caught in a bit of a circle when we talk too quickly about prosecuting people, bringing people to justice, and often then neglect something that is almost equally, if not more important, which is preventing the degeneration of hostilities, preventing these situations in the first place, which is a much more difficult issue to address. What do you recommend to a country like Canada that has very little involvement with Burundi economically, politically? I think our representation is run out of Kenya.

What do you recommend to countries in our situation that are willing and wanting to act as to how we would work in a multilateral situation, whether it's more money, aid? Really, the question is yours.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** If you have a crisis as in Burundi, you often have a few member states that have leverage over the parties, through the conflict, because they have a long-standing development relation or are very much involved in humanitarian efforts or have political relations, which is not the case for Canada vis-à-vis Burundi, as you mentioned. That doesn't mean a country like Canada could not take other methods. I mentioned a few in my opening statement. I ended by saying that only negotiated settlements around the table can solve the crisis and also then address the humanitarian problems. That should be in a multilateral framework. There, Canada could take a role. Canada, in general terms, has made it clear of late that it wants to re-engage in the UN, but here I speak in general terms, in much more multilateral discussions on peace-making, but also on development. I would say to Canada, please follow very closely what the special adviser to the Secretary-General, with his department, is trying to develop to get the country out of this crisis.

Once there is a political process ongoing, maybe there should be again a reinforced force. As you remember, there was an idea to have an African Union force, not a UN force, in the country. That didn't work out. Canada can, in those negotiations at least, play its role. Furthermore, Canada can indeed hopefully contribute financially to the regional situation, particularly the situation of the displaced refugees. I would like to put on the record here, now that we speak about this, that Canada has, over the last year, increased by 66% its humanitarian aid to UNHCR only, and not only for the serious situations, but also for these types of situations in Africa. Again, if there's a bit of budget left by the end of your current fiscal year, then please think of a crisis like Burundi which by that time, January and February of next year, unfortunately will not be solved.

This is also what you could do.

•(1340)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'm now going to MP Hardcastle for a question.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Thank you very much for your presentation. It's really intriguing to hear that some of your recommendations are very similar to recommendations we heard previously this week from someone who has made Canada home, but who still has family in refugee settlements in Burundi.

I'd like to ask you two things. I want to ask you a bit more on when you talked about. I hope I'm not putting you on the spot, but you used air quotes when you talked about the renegotiations of host agreements. I thought maybe you could get into more of the nuances of that and if you thought that Canada's role in the international community now would be helpful with consistent messaging around that. I'll let you think about that for a bit.

The other question I want to ask you is about Burundi and asylum seekers who are in Canada. We've heard from a previous witness urging Canada to do whatever we can to accommodate them, and that these people can't be safely and securely returned home. I don't know if you have any insight about how you think we can facilitate that, or if you think that's something we can step up on. It sounded like your recommendation was aligned with that, so I'm asking you to enhance that.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Thank you for those questions.

I'll answer your first question about what Canada can do. In this case, an agency of the UN, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a fundamental one, has promised to be present in the country. It was present to advise and to help strengthen human rights mechanisms, but then it was told to leave. I have experience in negotiating host government agreements, and if a host government wants to reopen that, then that is a very problematic issue, because it takes many months, if not years, in my own experience, to get a host agreement signed, and normally that is for the long term.

I can speak out of experience why I negotiated such an agreement. The support of member states was very helpful vis-à-vis the host government in saying, and this was in UNHCR's case, "If you want to play as a host government and in your role in the international community you want to be seen as a country respecting human rights and democracy, then you should allow UN agencies a presence, and

you should work with them. Don't isolate yourself." These types of political messages need to continue to be articulated.

I have not been able, before this appearance here, to consult my colleagues at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, but I would encourage you, through your permanent mission in Geneva, where its headquarters are based, to see what the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would wish from a country like Canada to be supported and to avoid this renegotiation—because that is to be avoided—and to let its staff return and work among the UN community in the country.

Thank you for the other question about the Burundian asylum seekers in Canada. We have had some discussions, but it's maybe too early. If Canada keeps doing the same for the Syrian and Iraqi asylum seekers, and fast-tracks the treatment, then they will have a leaner process of deciding on the claims, but I have to tell you it depends also on the numbers.

I'm not in a position here to share with you the number of Burundian asylum seekers. You can talk with the immigration ministry. If the numbers are not yet that high, then normally the relevant authorities will still use the current systems and procedures, but if the numbers significantly increase, then it could be a response to have leaner, shortened approaches. This is not regularly used. This has been done for the Syrians and Iraqis, but my colleague Michael is more experienced, since he's been working here for many years. It requires a bit of a political discussion on whether this should be done, but I mention it here to keep it as a possibility on the agenda.

•(1345)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Next is MP Saini.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Van Der Klaauw, I want to ask your opinion on the long-term effect in Burundi. In your opening comments you mentioned that private sector spending is down, unemployment is rising, and the government debt is also increasing.

We know 300,000 Burundians are leaving. Half of them are ending up in Tanzania, and a high percentage of those who are going are youth who are under 17 years old. Is that correct?

In that regard, you have youth inside the country who are being radicalized or being used to support the government by violent means and you have a large proportion of the youth leaving the country. Obviously, there's going to be a void for the next generation.

I don't know what the education system is right now in Burundi. I'm sure the universities are closed. Even if you talk about the most basic professions that any country needs, whether it be physicians, dentists, skilled tradespeople, it seems to me that one generation is completely being wiped out. In terms of the long-term prospects of Burundi, if in five or 10 years from now you tend to bring peace to the situation, you're going to have a huge gap, and economically that's going to be a problem, going long-term.

Would it be ideal, in some of the camps that are surrounding Burundi where Burundian youth are fleeing, or would it be possible to set up some education system, in the event that tomorrow peace breaks out and they can return, whereby although they would still be behind a bit, at least the gap would not be so much that one generation would not be able to contribute to the economy of the country?

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Here you touch upon a problem that is typical. It is not only for the Burundi situation, but in fact, what you mention is a fundamental issue in any refugee situation of a large scale that results in the flight of talent and of competent people who should be able to keep the services in the country running but who sit idle in camps or in the cities in the country of refuge. We need to do something about that, indeed.

In general terms, as you have seen, the education of refugees at all levels, including the tertiary level, has become much more of a priority nowadays than it was. This particular Canadian government has recently indicated that a key priority for its support to refugees and its involvement in addressing humanitarian crises is education, as also is the situation with women and girls.

The UNHCR—here I speak generally, and I'll come back to the Burundi situation—is indeed rolling out much more forceful activity to support education at various levels for refugees in the host countries.

The other aspect here is that we of course hope, if the situation can be solved to such an extent that the refugees can return in safety and in dignity and that conditions become conducive to this, that then the targeted group—in the first place, the talented ones—resume the work and keep the services and the economy going in the country or restart them, but this is not always an easy process. For this to happen, we really need to have a situation in which they can exercise their profession again.

In general terms, we still hope that this crisis in Burundi can be addressed effectively so that we can work towards such a return. As I mentioned, the government very much wants the people to come back, but our figures are that they are very hesitant to come back.

If you talk about return, let me say this here, UNHCR must always be involved as a partner between the returning and the receiving country. We cannot be left outside this. We are discussing this with the Burundian authorities, but we are not yet there. There is a first meeting between our office in Tanzania and Bujumbura now scheduled for next month because the Government of Burundi wants to first arrange coming back from Tanzania to Burundi. So we are engaging, but we need to have our proper place here.

Again, coming back to the issue of education and how important it is while people are outside the country as refugees, I mentioned that

Canada has made this a priority. I also want to say that when we had the summit in New York amongst all the member states of the UN last September—and there are many side events when you have such a setting—there was a clear focus on education. It was also an issue in which member states in the body called the Obama summit the next day pledged support for investment in education in refugee situations. You will see more attention to that, and hopefully also in the situation in the Great Lakes region for the Burundians.

• (1350)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll go now to MP Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Van Der Klaauw, thank you very much. I apologize for our security not being aware that you were coming. We certainly wanted to welcome you a little more warmly than that.

You mentioned there are basically three ways that you run camps. One is, of course, the ideal situation where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees manages and staffs the camps. The second is a camp run in partnership with the host country. The third way involves those situations that are a little bit more—I forget your diplomatic term—complicated, where the host country decides to run them and you do your best to monitor.

In the case of Burundi's neighbouring countries, Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC, and Uganda, are you able to tell us in which of those countries UNHCR has full control of the camps?

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** I'm afraid I cannot do that here, but I can come back to you after this meeting with an overview.

I thank you for this question because I would like to take the opportunity to say something else about the management of the camps, and this is certainly relevant for this situation.

**Mr. David Sweet:** As long as it's brief enough, because I have one more question.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Yes, in two lines.

Certainly this also concerns the civilian character of the camps, and that's often an issue in the management of a camp because you need to make sure that fighters are not using these camps as staging places. You need security in these camps, and that is often provided by the host country. As the UN, we don't have our police, let alone armed police, and this often causes all these discussions and where we also come under criticism, but we can't really safeguard the civilian character of these camps. This is particularly the case when these camps in large majority are women and children, but you have these fighters. That is a clear issue.



**Mr. David Sweet:** Exactly.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** In my subsequent reply to you, I might want to find out more what the situation per country is.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you. Yes, we were on the Jordanian-Syrian border two years ago and we saw a substantial difference between camps. Some were very sophisticated with their own currency, and others were, how would I say, much more precarious.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Yes.

**Mr. David Sweet:** That's a very unique situation there that most people aren't aware of, where the royal Jordanian border guards are actually supplying humanitarian aid as well as security, which is very complex as well.

Could you tell me if there is a place where our committee could find the ideal model for a camp? Here's what I'm getting at. Is there a per capita security quotient in a United Nations high commission refugee camp where you would say there would be one security personnel for a certain number of people? I'm asking this question particularly in regard to those vulnerable women we've heard about who have been raped in the camps and, of course, the youth.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** In general terms again, in the way we manage camps, there are, indeed, all kinds of tools and procedures and schemes for certain sizes of camp, or complexities of different minorities or populations, and what they would require in terms of layout and from a protection and security point of view. There must be sufficient space in the camp to walk around, lighting at night, but when it comes to how many security personnel you need, these are normally things which are being negotiated in the individual situations. Again, I can get back to my headquarters and find out a bit more, and also, particularly in the Burundi situation in the camps, I can include that with my response to your previous question.

• (1355)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you very much. I'll try and squeeze one question in here then.

You mentioned you only have 44% of the budget that you need to continue on in Burundi. When you make an appeal, do you make it to the general members of the United Nations, or do you target members who haven't committed what they should, per se?

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Thank you for this question.

Again, I can speak out of my own experience. Such an appeal is published so it is for the community at large; however, the UNHCR always goes to a number of member states that have more leverage and have developed a privileged political relationship with the country to at least get their funds. But you also go to those states that don't have this type of relationship and that can be seen as much more neutral by the receiving community.

Again, and forgive me for digressing, but I used to be the humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, and I have just been out of Yemen in the last three years, so I've dealt with all this. You have the usual suspects among the donor community that have a political relationship with Yemen—and I won't mention the names now—but a country like Canada is, in that sense, seen as a neutral and very objective partner, and in that sense can be asked.... I know, for

instance, in the Yemen situation, Canada has re-engaged because we reached out to Canada.

Since you have been funding the Great Lakes situation, I really hope you can continue to do it, not only for the UNHCR, but for the various humanitarian partners. If you have a specific interest in education, for instance, which the government has, then we can also look at UNICEF, international NGOs, and other partners that deal with education.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have time for MP Khalid to ask a short question, but I want to give her an opportunity to ask it.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming in today to speak about this very important issue.

I recently had the opportunity to speak to the Canadian High Commission in Kenya, and I got to see first-hand the impact such a crisis has on geographical regions where the displacement of people affects the development of neighbouring countries as well. Whether they are willing to host or not, it does have a detrimental effect.

In my conversation with the high commission, I asked them what a proposed solution to this issue could be, and the African Union was mentioned.

I understand that Canada does play a bit of a role with the African Union with respect to development in that region, but I would like your comments on how Canada could play a role in having the African Union really have a political solution to this problem.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Yes, this is a wide-ranging question that goes a little bit beyond my mandate.

As you mentioned, often nowadays when there is a crisis on the continent, the regional bodies try to engage the African Union in a crisis. It's not only in Kenya, as you've mentioned, but Somalia for that matter, or Sudan, but sometimes you have a hybrid situation also in the UN force. It depends in the end on what the parties to a conflict agree to and what would be welcome.

In that sense, what could Canada do in such situations? There are relationships, of course, with the African Union. You have your representation in Addis Ababa, I assume. Your ambassador will discuss this, but if it comes to the wider question of how you can engage with the African Union, this is, in my view, something that has to be discussed case by case.

In the situation of Burundi, it was agreed that the African Union would send its military observers and its human rights monitors, but in addition the high commission has the right, and a specific investigation committee of inquiry on behalf of the UN would also be sent, so that would be a more hybrid situation.

However, I don't do justice to your question because it may be a separate discussion.

•(1400)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** I have a short comment.

We've heard a lot of testimony about what Canada can do and, because we do have a very minimal role, it's a very difficult issue. Providing monetary contributions to refugee camps in that region help in the short term, but I find that if we don't find a long-term solution, then any monetary contribution is ineffective, and it doesn't really help to solve the problem.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** With that I want to thank our guests for joining us here today, and thank you, Mr. Van Der Klaauw, for providing the testimony.

We are seized with this issue, especially given the escalation of the situation over recent weeks and months in Burundi, and I thank you very much for your efforts in attending here with us today.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** There were a couple of things that you were going to follow up on. If you wouldn't mind sending those to the clerk, she can distribute them to the committee.

**Mr. Johannes Van Der Klaauw:** Will do.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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