

Lived Experiences of Rwandan Former Refugees in Lusaka, Zambia: Hermeneutics Phenomenology Approach

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Abstract: The study explored the lived experiences of the Rwandan Former Refugees in Lusaka. The study was guided by the following objectives: (i) to describe the lived experiences of the Rwandan Former Refugees in Lusaka; (ii) to explore the challenges experienced by the Rwandan Former Refugees in Lusaka ; (iii) to highlight the opportunities that addressed the challenges of Former Refugees in Lusaka. The study was guided by Hermeneutics Phenomenology within qualitative methodology informed by a sample size of ten (10) former Rwandan refugees, selected using snowball sampling. The collection of data was conducted using an online interview form. The study revealed that Rwandans have been able to exploit a number of opportunities in Zambia, which include education, marriage, business, and employment. However, the study also showed that refugees encountered a number of challenges, which included discrimination, stereotypes, violence, documentation, and theft. On the factors causing the former Rwandan refugees to remain in Zambia, the study showed that peace and stability, employment, intermarriages, disbelief of restored peace in Rwanda, and fear of insecurity in Rwanda were the reasons for the Rwandans to remain in Zambia. The study also showed that changing labour and integration laws of the country was the solution to the challenges faced by the former Rwandan refugees in Zambia. Therefore, the conclusion of the study was that Rwandans have found a suitable environment to restart their lives in Zambia. Based on the findings, the study recommended that documentation of the former Rwandan refugees be expedited to allow them a legal stay in Zambia.

Key Words: Lived experiences, Rwandan Refugees, Hermeneutics Phenomenology, Zambia

I. CONTEXT

The migration of people to other countries in trying to evade persecution, conflict, natural disasters in their countries of origin has become fecund nowadays. This situation often creates a myriad of social and legal problems, including changes in the legal regime governing the affairs of these people who become refugees in the recipient countries (Guterres 2010). As the nature of the refugee problem is international, stakeholders have developed international approaches and mechanisms to protect refugees, which include resettlement, integration and repatriation. Repatriation can either be voluntary or involuntary as a result of change in the circumstances which have initially caused the refugees to escape from their home countries (Loescher et al. 2008). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR, 2012), durable solutions for refugees include resettlement; integration and voluntary repatriation. Among these, repatriation remains the most durable solution, especially when it is executed on the voluntary basis signifying the free will of refugees.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda resulted in a lot of people being internally displaced and others being refugees. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol on Refugees state that a refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion is outside his or her country, and owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." Further, the Zambia Refugees Act 2017 stipulates that a refugee is "a person not having a nationality and being outside the country of that person's former habitual residence is unable to return to that country."

Zambia being a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol welcomed the Rwandan Refugees and granted them asylum and refugee status, respectively. However, in January, 2003, the Governments of Rwanda and Zambia and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a tripartite agreement to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of the Rwandan Refugees to Rwanda (UNHCR, 2003). This was after the restoration of order and peace in Rwanda. Nevertheless, most of the Rwandan Refugees opted to remain in Zambia. s Against this background, this paper sought to explore the lived experiences of Rwandan Former Refugees in Lusaka, Zambia.

Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives guided the study:

- i. To explore the opportunities exploited by the Rwandans in Zambia.
- ii. To explore the challenges experienced of the Rwandans in Zambia.
- iii. To establish the factors causing the Rwandan Refugees to remain in Zambia.
- iv. To propose mitigation measures to improve the welfare of Rwandan Refugees in Zambia.

Theoretical framework

The study used the symbolic interaction theory (Max Weber, 1864-1920) to study the lived experiences of the Rwandans Former Refugees in Lusaka. The symbolic interactions theory postulates that, people live in both the natural and symbolic environment. Symbolic interaction is a process that is enlivened the reciprocal meaning and values by aid of the symbols in the mind.. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings from the reciprocal interactions of individuals in social environments with other individuals and focuses on the question of which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people (Slatter, 2007).

Therefore, this paper adopted this theory to explore the Lived experiences Rwandan Former refugees in Lusaka Zambia, owing to the fact that their experiences are as a result of the interaction between them and the Zambian community. In particular, this theory attempts to how the -Rwandan Former refugees have related in their new life experiences while in Lusaka, Zambia in spite of the restoration of order in their country of origin, Rwanda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholars have documented lived experiences of refugees in different contexts of the world; for example, Animalia (1999) accounted for the lived experience of Bosnian refugees who suffered as a result of genocide. The research method used for this study was a phenomenological method based on Husserlian philosophy. Four Bosnian refugees, who escaped to a Midwestern state during and after the war, were asked to answer the following research question: "describe your lived experience as a Bosnian refugee who has suffered as a result of genocide". The verbal descriptions of their personal lived experiences were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. These descriptions were analyzed using the Giorgi's method. Three themes were identified thus : forced exile, adjustment, and homesickness. The significance of this study was to provide insight and understanding on the lived experiences regarding the Bosnian refugee population; help develop strategies for care for the Bosnian refugee population; provide information for teaching nurses and other health care professionals about the Bosnian refugee population. This is also important in terms of providing civic knowledge and information on the status of former refugees. We mention civic knowledge and information through Civic Education because without the two attributes, it is difficult to bring out the true picture of the lived experiences of people in such situations. There are some considerable studies that point to the aspects of civic knowledge and information and how these two elements aid in providing valuable citizenry information in many areas of interest (Mupeta & Muleya, 2019; Muleya, Simui, Mundende, Kakana, Mwewa & Namangala, 2019; Kasenge & Muleya, 2020; Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya & Simui, 2020; Mwanangombe, Mundende, Muzata, Muleya, Kanyamuna & Simui 2020). This study by Animalia (1999), however, does not give a detailed description of the lived experiences of the

Bosnian refugees, but it is useful to this current paper in terms of highlighting the themes underlying the lived experiences of the refugees, which were useful in terms of coding the themes for this study.

Jops (2017) explored the lived experiences of Chin refugee women who engaged in or pursued risky livelihoods in Delhi, India between 2012 and 2014. This study used a grounded, qualitative methodology to explore the work experiences and the participants' perceptions and experiences of risk and survival within the wider context of Delhi. Qualitative data collection was carried out with Chin refugee women in Delhi, India, over three fieldwork visits. Twenty-eight in-depth interviews took place in July and August 2012, while four focus group interviews took place in January 2014. Data were analysed using a constructivist method informed by grounded theory. The findings indicate that there was no distinction between risk at work and risk in public space; risk permeated participants' entire living context in Delhi. It was uncovered that participants' experiences of discrimination and pervasive Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), have had a negative impact on their overall survival, and that these experiences were inherently gendered and influenced by intersecting structural factors, such as refugee status and poverty. The participants' strategies and coping mechanisms, while facilitating daily survival, did not generate positive well-being, at least as perceived by the participants themselves. While participants had access to and actively utilised their social networks in Delhi, these networks were not strong enough to insulate them from the risks experienced nor help them to achieve self-reliance.

Gangamma (2017) conducted a phenomenological study of family experiences of resettled refugees in Iraq. Using a cross-sectional, phenomenological design, this qualitative study sought to explore Iraqi refugees' experiences of family relationships resettled in a northeastern city in the United States after the start of the 2003 war. Participants' experience of family relationships was situated within the context of their displacement, which included fear and uncertainty during displacement, and experiences of safety and isolation during resettlement. Themes related to family relationships were as follows: shared experiences of losses; increased trust between family members; shifts in communication and gender roles; and constructing a family legacy. Findings from this study indicate that family relationships play a central role in making meaning of forced displacement and resettlement experiences, which have significant clinical implications for family therapists working with refugees.

Mokaya (2018) discovered the lived experiences of Congolese women refugees settled in Indianapolis, Indiana. The purpose of this study was to explore, through their own voices, the challenges these women face as they resettle in a new country, with new people, and a new culture. These women are expected to be self-reliant within three months (90 days) with the help of resettlement agencies. A priority is that they are expected to learn a new language to enable them to move on

to a life on their own. This is a challenge for these women who never had a formal education. Some of the challenges they face are the language barrier, living in a new country, new people, new environment, and the generational gap. Their challenge is to overcome these barriers. The study aims to share the women's voices firsthand. From the findings, awareness would be brought to the inefficiencies of the ninety-day period of service from the resettlement agencies. Another finding is that the women refugees were not comfortable with the idea of being resettled in the United States. An additional finding is that the research participants condemned the separation that took place in the family when some of them were resettled in the US and some were left in Africa.

The UNHCR (2017) examined the economic contribution of refugees to the Zambian economy. The methodology was based on the resource allocation system of displaced people and how their economic livelihood activities of consumption, production, exchange and finance interact with the host community, and potentially affect the national economy of the host country. The study was conducted in three sites namely, Mayukwayukwa, Maheba, and Lusaka. This was a mixed approach study, and the sample was selected using snowballing sample technique the study revealed that refugees contribute to the employment and human capital, use information communication technology, and are self-reliant financially. However, they experience challenges such as discrimination, lack of capital, right of movements, expensive rent, transport and low salaries.

Donger, Leigh, Fuller, and Learning (2017) evaluated the health and wellbeing of refugee youths in Lusaka. The study was undertaken to understand the impact of protection work with urban adolescent refugees, and the effect of the existing protecting system on the health and wellbeing of youth refugees by examining a range of indicators in the areas of education, livelihoods, psychosocial and physical life, and home life, safety and violence, and knowledge and use of available programmes. Data was collected using literature review, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with stakeholders. The study revealed that the Zambian protection system in Lusaka has limited reach and adolescents revealed that they had never received any help from the UNHCR, its implementing partners, civil society or relevant ministries.

The foregoing literature has revealed a number of themes on the lived experiences of refugees at global level. The lived experiences of refugees have been expressed in a number of themes, which include, forced exile, readjustments, and homesick; loneliness and loss of status, discrimination and pervasive Gender based Violence; fear and uncertainty, safety and isolation; overcoming cultural barriers; acculturation, loss or change of identity, gender role conflicts, language barriers, lack of recognition of previous education or experience, and perceived lack of support and discrimination; social support, environment, culture, education, health

services, employment, and income. Although preceding literature seems to be abundant, there still exists a knowledge gap on the lived experiences of the Rwandan Former refugees in Zambia after the tripartite agreement on the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Rwanda. Therefore, this adopted the phenomenological approach to explore stories of the Rwandan Formerrefugees regarding their lived experiences.

III. METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The paper utilizes a Hermeneutics Phenomenological method based on Martin Heidegger's philosophy. This design was chosen because it strives to explain human experiences as described by individuals who have lived the experiences under investigation (Simui, 2018). In addition, reflection upon the phenomenon allows an intuitive insight into the experience being studied.

Sampling

The sample in this paper was selected using Snow bow sampling, which is a technique of selecting the sample using social networks. The criteria for sample selection of participants require that they lived the experience, and that they are willing to describe their experience (Burns & Grove, 1987). Therefore, the paper was connected to potential participants using the social network of the Rwanda refugees in Lusaka. Besides, in phenomenological research, the sample size is usually small and adequacy of the sample is achieved when the researcher experiences redundancy in descriptions of the lived experiences (Hungler & Polit, 1995) or saturation. Saturation refers to the repetition of discovered information and confirmation of previously collected data (Carpenter & Streubert, 1995). In this paper, therefore, the saturation point was reached at the sample size of ten (10) participants.

Data Generation

Data for the paper were generated using interviews in form of a mobile survey with the Rwandan refugees. Using a customized mobile data collection app, we created custom mobile forms responded to by the participants. The link for the custom mobile forms was sent to the participants using WhatsApp, a social media platform as advocated for by Simui, Mwewa, Chota, Kakana, Mundende, Thompson, Mwanza, Ndhlovu and Namangala (2018). Individuals were asked to describe their experience completely, and their descriptions were presented in verbatim. The interviews contained questions Refer to the suggested questions which are a reflection of the research objectives.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a technique used to get meaning from the emerging themes in data. Thus, the researcher used coding to categorize themes. Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs,

2007). Thus, the coding helped the researcher to categorise data into four meta-themes.

IV. FINDINGS

During the process of data analysis and in line with the objectives, four broad themes emerged as follows: The opportunities exploited by the Rwandans in Zambia; the challenges experienced by the Rwandans in Zambia; factors causing the Rwandan Refugees to remain in Zambia, and measures for mitigating challenges associated with Refugees in Zambia. Within each broad theme, there were sub-themes that emerged and have been presented after the main theme.

Opportunities exploited

On this overarching theme, the study revealed that employment is one of the opportunities exploited by the Rwandan refugees in Zambia. The findings confirm the study by Mincin (2012) who revealed that integration of refugees occurs on multiple pathways that include employment, learning the language of the host country, acquiring health care, and housing. For example, some participants revealed that they have been able to get employment as teachers and nurses in government as can be seen from the following extracts: *'I appreciate it that I am employed in government as a nurse'* (Participant D, 13032021). *'I thank God I managed to be employed as a teacher'* (Participant G, 14032021).

The receding extracts suggest that some of the Rwandan refugees have been able to find employment in Zambian government. There are also others who have managed to be employed in the private sector rather than the government. For example, a participant publicized that he had been teaching at a private school in Lusaka for the past ten (10) years. *'I have been teaching French language at...school for the past ten years'* (Participant I, 14032021). *'I am in a shop as a shopkeeper'* (Participant B, 13032021). The foregoing seems to suggest that Rwandan refugees have been able to exploit the peaceful environment in Zambia and have been able to get employment both in government and private sector.

The possible explanation for this finding is that some refugees have been able to acquire work permits or Immigration status that allows them to be employed in Zambia. This is because of the fact that the Zambian law does not allow an individual with refugee status to be employed. According to the World Refugee Survey (2008) reported that though Zambia is a party to the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees, its 1967 protocol, and the 1969 convention governing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, it maintained reservations on the 1951 right to work, education, and freedom of movements. This suggests that after change of refugee status, and managed to acquire work permits were able to get employment in Zambia.

It is also possible that others managed to get employed after acquiring dual citizenship in Zambia. The introduction of Dual Citizenship under the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment No. 2 of 2016) made it possible for

some foreigners, including Rwandan refugees to acquire Zambian citizenship and be able to acquire Zambian citizenship without losing the citizenship of their country (Article 39 (1)). Possibly, some Rwandans took advantage of this situation to be able to acquire citizenship and become eligible for employment in Zambia.

The other opportunity exploited by the refugees is business. The following extracts demonstrate this fact: *'I came to Lusaka in 1998, and have been running a shop in Garden Compound since 2003'* (Participant B, 13032021). *'I have been running a grocery shop in John Laing area'* (Participant A, 13032021). Other participants stated that they had been involved in making blocks for construction. This is evidenced in the following extracts: *'We are operating a block making company with my colleagues...'* (Participant J, 13032021). *'We supply ceiling boards and design sitting rooms and kitchens for the people'* (Participant C, 14032021). These extracts suggest that some Rwandan refugees do their businesses in the construction industry. Further, others are involved in textile industry, especially in tailoring and designing. They have been able to buy tailoring equipment for designing and making of different garments as can be observed from the following extracts: *'I have a tailoring shop in town; I make and sell school uniforms'* (Participant E, 13032021).

There were also others in hospitality industry. Some participants reported that they were running cafeterias and take away. *'With support from my compatriots, I set up a restaurant in town for fast foods'* (Participant F, 14032021). The above section demonstrates that Rwandan refugees have been able to exploit the peaceful environment in Zambia to be able to invest in different business such as selling grocery, construction, hospitality and textile.

The study revealed that the Rwandan refugees have been able to use their grants from the UNHCR to invest in various businesses. The findings are consistency with Mokaya (2018) who discovered that despite language challenges, Congolese women refugees in Indianapolis were able to set up businesses and became self-reliant within three months (90 days) with the help of resettlement agencies.

It is possible that the Rwandans have ventured in to business because of the favorable business environment. For example, the procedure to set up a business is not complicated, especially for the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SME). What matters is for one to identify a trading place and then register with the relevant authorities. There is no law that restricts foreigners from operating businesses in Zambia. This suggests that as long as they have capital and abide to the Zambian Law, the Rwandans had no restrictions to start business in Zambia.

The other opportunity that the Rwandans have been able to exploit is access to education because there are no restrictions regarding education of foreigners in Zambia. For example,

participants stated that: *'I managed to go back to school at the national university (Participant C, 13032021).*

I have been able to complete my studies in veterinary' (Participant G, 13032021). Apart from going back to school and advancing their careers, Rwandans have been able to take their children to school. Participants reported that they have been able to educate their children from primary to university as evidenced from the following extracts: *At least children are able to go to school until secondary level while others have gone to university (Participant H, 13032021). We were allowed to go to school even if raising funds were real hard (Participant J, 13032021).* It is clear from the above that Rwandan refugees have been able to take advantage of the peaceful environment in Zambia to advance their education and career aspirations, and take their children to school. The findings are in agreement with the study of Ghahari, Lui, Nagra & Morassaei (2020). They disclosed that refugees in Canada were able to attend university and take their children to school. The results submit that Zambia upholds the rights of refugees to education by allowing them access to education.

In addition, the study revealed that the refugees have been able to exploit marriage as a way of settling easily in the Country. Participant B stated that he was thankful he found a wife and family. *'At least I found a wife and we have two children' (Participant B, 13032021).* The above stated extract clearly demonstrates that apart from other opportunities they gained while in Zambia; they have also been able to find new families through intermarriages with Zambians. The findings are consistent with Rashid (2013) who claimed that successful integration is based on intermarriages and learning of the new language. It is common for refugees to experience loneliness and isolation; as a result, they desire to belong to a family. It is possible, therefore, that some Rwandan refugees got married in order to reduce isolation or to start up a new family in Zambia. This outcome of the study suggests that the law in Zambia, protects refugees' right to freedom of association

Challenges experienced by the Rwandan Refugees

On this principal theme, the study revealed that discrimination is one of the challenges affecting Rwandan refugees in Zambia. The results are consistent with the findings of Zihindula and Meyer-Weitz (2015) the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) refugees. They claimed that refugees faced medical xenophobia when seeking medical care.

For example, a participant reported that they were forced to change the Cell meeting group at church because of using local languages at meetings, and joined another one where they mixed local languages and English: *'I felt excluded whenever we had cell meetings at church; I decided to change the group to where they mixed local languages and English' (Participant A, 13032021).*

These results should be interpreted with caution as not every act may be considered to be considered to be discrimination;

possibly, some of the actions could have been interpreted as discrimination while the others were just following procedure. For example, in the job industry, the law forbids employment of refugees or foreigners with no work permits. Therefore, an officer enforcing such a law may be considered to be discriminating, while they are just applying the law. However, in some situation, there are some individuals who are not just comfortable with the foreigners from war stricken countries for different reasons, such as language and culture. Thus, Davidson and associates (2004) confirm that refugees also suffer from ethnic seclusion, cultural and language variances within their new communities (Huntoon, 2001).

The study also revealed that Rwandan refugees experience various stereotypes at different levels of society. A participant revealed that some of the refugees from Rwanda were victims of community attacks on suspicions of being the perpetrators: *'Some of our colleagues were assaulted on suspicions of being behind gassing accidents in the country' (Participant E, 14032021).* The results of the study are consistent with Lo (2019) who revealed that refugees experience stereotypes related to cultural differences. Possibly, these findings are related to the popular beliefs that Rwandan and Congolese refugees use charms in doing their businesses. However, such beliefs are to be considered with caution as there is no evidence regarding this allegation.

Further, the findings revealed that documentation is another challenge regarding the lives of the former Rwandan refugees in Zambia. The following extracts are testimony to this reality: *'My wife is a trained social worker back in our country, but she cannot be employed because she has no document to show that she is qualified' (Participant F, 14032021). 'I would have loved to join university to further my studies, but I have nothing to show that I qualify for university studies' (Participant D, 13032021).* The results substantiate the study by Ghahari, Lui, Nagra & Morassaei (2020) who submitted that lack of documentation contributed to refugees' loss or change in identity. The findings could be attributed to the fact that after deciding to remain in Zambia, the former refugees were supposed to normalize their status by acquiring Rwandan passports and then apply for citizenship in Zambia, but the process of acquiring these documents has been slow. As a result, some of them still do not have proper documentation for their stay in Zambia; they just survive on the principle of non-refoulement (UNHCR, 2017).

The study also showed that violence is one of the challenges experienced by the Rwandan refugees in Zambia. A participant alleged as follows:

They accuse us of having dominated grocery shops in communities, a business which was supposed to be for the locals. They think we have a lot of money, so in case of anything, they rush to break our shops and steal (Participant E, 13032021).

This study is in line with Jops (2017) who explored the lived experiences of Chin refugee women in Delhi. The study demonstrates that women faced pervasive Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), which had a negative impact on their overall survival. The possible explanation of this result could be attributed to cultural differences and mistrust of the refugees. Thus, Williams (2020) submits that refugees experienced uniquely insecure circumstances, language barriers and cultural differences.

The study also revealed that refugees experienced theft of their property in homes and, especially their business premises. Participants reported that it is assumed, in communities where they live that refugees have a lot of money. Besides, most of them live in shanty compound where security measures are compromised. *'I have stopped closing my shop at 21 because of thieves'* (Participant E, 13032021). *'I have stopped selling alcohol in my shop because I was attracting thieves'* (Participant A, 13032021). The above-mentioned extracts clearly show that theft constitutes one of the critical challenges to the Rwandan refugees in Lusaka.

Similarly, the UNHCR (2011) noted that despite receiving some assistance, refugees endured harsh living conditions. These results have to be treated with caution as the security system of individuals and property in Zambia, is quite good. The theft experienced could simply mean the normal one experienced by the nationals rather than the one targeted on the refugees alone. However, we cannot as well rule out incidences of thefts targeted at the refugees as some sections of society assume that these people receive a lot of money from the resettling agencies such as the UNHCR.

Factors Causing the Rwandan Refugees to remain in Zambia

On this primary theme, the study revealed that peace and stability was one of the reasons that prompted former Rwandan refugees to remain in Zambia. This was evident from the following extracts of the interviews: *'I cannot go back to Rwanda now because I there is security and protection in Zambia'* (Participant H, 13032021). *'Zambian people are social and peaceful and they are always helpful in any way'* (Participant B, 13032021). The above extracts provide evidence that the refugees opted to remain in Zambia because of the country's peace and stability.

The findings are concomitant with the study by UNHCR (2019), which showed that some refugees refuse to go back home because they experience peace and stability in their host countries. These findings are attributable to the peace and stability in Zambia as well as the consistent peaceful transitions of governments since independence.

The study also revealed that employment statuses of some Rwandan refugees caused some of them to remain in Zambia. Participants reported that those who were in employment felt more comfortable to remain in Zambia than to go and start over in their country as clarified by the following extract: *'I managed to go to the national university and got employed, so*

I cannot go back home' Participant H, 13032021). *'I am progressing well in my career here; may be later on, not now'* (Participant B, 13032021). The findings are consistent with Mincin (2012) who submitted that refugees get fully integrated in host countries through employment. Some refugees took advantage of their change of status as refugees to normalize their situation by acquiring passports or becoming Zambian nationals and have since secured employment. Thus, they could not leave their jobs to go and start their lives afresh back home. Besides, the UNHCR (2011) report that despite receiving some assistance, returnees endured harsh living conditions. Therefore, it was appropriate for them to continue living and working here instead of going back to their countries.

Other refugees, on the other hand, decided to remain in Zambia because of intermarriages with Zambians. Participants reported that some refugees who were married to Zambians could not leave their partners behind and go back home; they decided to continue living with their new families as can be observed from the extracts below: *'I am married to a Zambian and we have children together; I have found a new family here'* (Participant A, 13032021). *'My children are still young and at school'* (Participant C, 13032021). This shows that intermarriages with Zambians were critical for the refugees in deciding to join voluntary repatriation or not. Refugees have taken advantage of the principle of non refoulement to be integrated in Zambia through intermarriages; they have been able to find new families and feel at home. The IRIN (2010) reports that refugees found new families through intermarriages with the nationals of the host countries. Once individual refugees found new families, they slowly get attached to their host countries, and become reluctant to return to their home countries.

The study also showed that Rwandans in Zambia did not believe in restored peace in Rwanda. and is clarified from the following extracts: *'There is no restoration of peace in Rwanda'* (Participant I, 13032021). *'Says who? The system in Rwanda will never be restored'* (Participant D, 14032021). *'Peace is talk by these who don't know Rwanda'* (Participant H, 14032021). The above extracts signify that not every Rwandan believes in restored peace in Rwanda. D'Orsi (2013) observes that there is an interplay between voluntary repatriation and the non-refoulement in the sense that for voluntary repatriation to occur, subjective fears by the refugee play a role. This means that when the refugees have fear to return to their country of origin, return should not be promoted. Similarly, in the case of the Rwandans, those who experienced fear were not forced to go back home.

Further, the study showed that Rwandan refugees felt their country was still insecure for them.

As illuminated from the following extracts: *'There are still areas of great concern to achieve real peace'* (Participant A, 13032021). *'There is still persecution of those with different views from Rwandan government'* (Participant I, 14032021). Though not clearly stated in the above extracts, it is possible

that areas of concern point to security related issues. The findings are consistent with Ahimbisibwe (2018) who observed that out of 25,000 Rwandan refugees in Uganda, only 850 refugees accepted to return on voluntary repatriation, and most of them came back almost immediately to Uganda claiming insecurity and human rights violations in Rwanda. However, these claims of insecurity are important in terms of considerations to be made for voluntary repatriation, but they should be considered with caution; they are likely to relate to trauma still being experienced by the refugees themselves rather than real insecurity.

V. MEASURES TO MITIGATE REFUGEE CHALLENGES

On this prime theme, the study noted the need for changing employment and labour laws of the country to accommodate employment of refugees for their survival. These findings should be handled with restraint as adjusting this law is likely to create other problems, because already people in Zambia get agitated when they see people of foreign nationals occupy employment positions, which can easily be filled by Zambians. The alleged taking up of employment positions by foreign nationals contributed to the Xenophobia in South Africa (Zihindula and Meyer-Weitz, 2015).

The study also revealed that the integration of laws could ease the challenges facing Rwandan refugees in Zambia. This suggestion is good, but it needs to be critically evaluated. The rush into legally integrating refugees could lead to legalizing the stay of individuals who, in the long run, could become a threat to the peace and stability of the country. For instance, Williams (2020) revealed that about 200 Namibian refugees were among the guerrilla fighters whom SWAPO detained during its internal crisis of 1976. Thus, legalizing the stay of such people could be risky to the country.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the papersought out to explore lived experiences of the Rwandan Former refugees living in Zambia. The paper has demonstrated that Rwandans have found a suitable environment to restart their lives in Zambia as observed by the number of opportunities that they have exploited in business, education, marriages and employment. They may have experienced challenges, such as discrimination, documentation, violence, and theft, but these are normal experiences, which are even experienced by the nationals of the host country. However, where necessary, as is the case of documentation, there is need for stakeholders to address the problem.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations:

- i. The Rwandan Government needs to expedite the process of giving passports to the former refugees. Providing this necessary identification guarantees full protection and no

risk of statelessness or temporary “in limbo” status for the refugees. This process should include: □

- a) Diplomatic efforts and dialogue to get both the country of origin and host country to agree to implement and fund this identification process;
 - b) An agreement between the country of origin and the host country that this is a necessary process for the full protection of the protracted refugees and/or refugees who have recently been declared non-refugees through the cessation clause; and
 - c) A guarantee from both country of origin and host country that the identification process is for protection and the fundamental right to citizenship and not to be used for refoulement (the forcing of the refugees to return to their country of origin).
 - d) A permanent residency status with a guarantee of the eventual right to apply for citizenship with the host country, following host country’s citizenship laws.
- ii. Zambian Government should review the article on the requirements for the naturalization of citizens so that the former refugees can easily qualify, especially those who have been in the country for over ten (10) years.
 - iii. Provide designated areas of land and allocate land for both the refugees and host country citizens to settle and form a new community or expand an existing community. This is especially relevant when the refugees predominantly rely on agricultural livelihoods. It is preferable that this land be near the area where refugees originally settled, which will allow for greater integration, as the refugees will already be known by these communities.

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