



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**

**Local Response to Global Norms:  
Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and Local Integration of  
Refugees in the Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Institute for Peace and Security Studies of Addis  
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Peace and Security Studies**

**By: Mahider Workneh Kifle**

**Advisor: Dr. Mercy Fekadu**

**December, 2022  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**



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This is to certify that the Thesis prepared by **Mahider Workneh Kifle**, entitled “**Local Response to Global Norms: Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and Local Integration of Refugees in the Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia**” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in peace and security studies complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Acronyms**

**ARRA-** Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs  
**CRRF-** Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework  
**CSO-** Civil Society Organizations  
**EPRDF-** Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front  
**EU-** European Union  
**GPNRS-** Gambella People National Regional State  
**GPLM-** Gambella Peoples Liberation Movement  
**GLF/A-** Gambella Liberation Front/Army  
**ILO-** International Labor Organization  
**INGO-** International National Non-Government Organization  
**NCO-** National Co-ordination Office  
**NCRRS-** National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy  
**NGO-** Non-Government Organization  
**OLA-** Oromo Liberation Army  
**PAPDA-** Partnership for Pastoralist Development Association  
**RRS-** Refugee and Returnee Service  
**SPLA-** South Sudan People’s Liberation Army  
**TPLF-** Tigray People Liberation Front  
**UNHCR-** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**UNDP-** United Nations Development Program  
**UNICEF-** United Nations Children’s Fund  
**US-** United States of America  
**WB-** World Bank  
**WFP –** World Food Program  
**ZOA -** Dutch translation of Southeast Asia

## **Abstract**

This research investigates how implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), a global norm on refugees was understood and experienced in the Gambella Regional State of Ethiopia. The inquiry focuses on the local response, manifested in different cover and overt ways. This paper found that CRRF which is framed as a humanitarian-development nexus is rather a humanitarian-development-security nexus. Since its launch in 2018 in Gambella regional state, CRRF faced resistance from the Anuak indigenous ethnic group. Gambella is home for diverse ethnic groups from various parts of Ethiopia but only five are acknowledged as indigenous to the land. In 2019 following the amendment of the refugee policy, Anuak group activists attempts for public display of anger and protest was quickly muffled by the government of Ethiopia, as well as their attempts to approach relevant actors in UNHCR to express their concern on the matter. Four years forward, in 2022, Gambella continues to be the most challenging refugee hosting region in Ethiopia to implement CRRF. Considering the geographic location of the region, the historic relations with neighboring Sudan and South Sudan, the state relation and interest with the international community and federal-regional government relations, it is crucial to study what CRRF implies at various level; international, regional, national, and local levels. The research undertakes a qualitative research method to gather most recent data in Gambella region and thoroughly assesses available secondary data on forced displacement, policy, and media outlets as well as various academic literatures related to the subject to provide up-to- date analysis on the topic of research.

# Chapter one

## 1. Introduction

It is important to discuss first what makes CRRF a global norm. What is a global norm? Norms are accepted ideas that are first found by an individual or group of likeminded entities called norm entrepreneurs, with capacity to persuade society, and later states, with a norm cascading effect (a). The persuasion is intended to bring social acceptance of the idea or perspective to bring the desired changes. This further requires that the norm entrepreneurs organize in organizations that support them in communicating and amplifying their norms from the bottom up to policy makers and states, making norms political. The nature of norms entails rightness or goodness of behaviors also making it a fundamental human rights issue by different groups (.Ibid). Yet it is arguable on what is right and good by different groups and states as well as it may vary across states, thus not all norms evolve through the norm phases to cascade to societies and states. According to Fennimore and Sikkink (1998), norms pass three phases of evolution before they are accepted as norms, *Norm Emergence, Norm Cascade, and Internationalization*.

Acharya (2004) argues that norms especially in non-Western states are localized on existing normative attitudes and identities. He states that local agents are not passive recipients of norms rather dynamic actors in the borrowing, localizing and diffusing norms that fit into their culture and identity. Thus, as Fennimore and Sikkink (1998) stated above because there is no one way of defining what is good or right to all, International Organizations such as the UN and the World Bank play in persuasion of states regarding norms such as human rights, banning of the use of land mines, genocide and more. Though the UN and the World Bank may have a coercive tendency especially over weak states in using sanctions and aid as leverage in getting states to accept norms, it is still up to the states to accept and diffuse norms.

The United Nations General Assembly on its seventy first session adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in New York, on 19 September 2016. This was a plenary session where Heads of States, and Government representatives attended, 193 member states signed this document. The declaration on the commitments made to refugee's page 13, number 68 and 69 clearly confirm that refugee protection regime needs an international cooperation and

that no one state can control and ensure refugee movements and protection. Thus, the need to develop a comprehensive refugee response plan, framed under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

Thus, from the experience of individual states that host majority of refugees in the world, the CRRF has been accepted as a global norm and reached internationalization level to establish a common understanding on burden sharing, protection, and durable solution of refugees among state members. We can thus say that CRRF has gone through the three phases of norm mentioned above. It has emerged from large refugee population hosting states in the world, which are mostly poor states, to the refugee protection regime, cascaded through UN member states, reaching internationalization level of the need to embrace the CRRF approach by the UN and its member states, achieving the three phases of global norm.

This thesis undergoes qualitative research with six chapters including this Introductory chapter. It investigates related secondary data and documents on refugees and CRRF, to grasp the evolution of forced displacement in Africa toward global norms such as the CRRF, its diffusion locally. It then studies the case study of Gambella Regional State in Ethiopia, the largest refugee hosting region, in the localization of CRRF. It conceptualizes the relationship between local resistance to global norms showcased through the study of CRRF, a burden sharing and solution oriented global norm on protracted refugee cases. The data for this study is collected from Addis Ababa and Gambella region through interviews with key informants in UNHCR, RRS, NGO's, regional institutes, refugees and the host community in the Gambella region, specifically Gambella town, Itang special woreda and its surroundings. In Chapter 4 and 5 the collected data is presented and analyzed to find the current perspective and stand on the subject in the regional socio-political and economic dynamics. The final chapter, Chapter 6 will summarize and conclude on the initial argument and findings from the primary and secondary data collected.

## **1.2 Background of the study area**

Conflicts in Gambella and peacebuilding interventions have attracted the attention of many academics in the last two decades (Gizachew, 2020; Fana, 2016; Dereje, 2011; Abraham, 2003). Fana (2016) has described the unrestful situation of the region as part of contemporary state

building processes, while others such as Dereje (2011) have addressed it from a historic perspective on struggle for natural resources initially and later evolved to, power and political dominance. Despite several research that highlight conflict and peacebuilding interventions, the region continues in the cycle of ethnic clashes. The existing local conflicts gets more complex as Gambella is also the largest South Sudanese refugee hosting region in Ethiopia (UNHCR Operational Portal, 2022). The South Sudanese refugees are a majority Nuer. The number of refugees has also exceeded the population size of the local host population size which according to the 2007 CSA Census is 307,096 while the refugee presence according to the UNHCR operational portal 2022 is 375,972 in Gambella region (UNHCR Operation Portal, 2022; CSA 2007).

Refugees in the Gambella region introduce a layer of complexity in the already existing complex identity, socio-economic, religious, and political landscape. A large refugee population residing in Gambella, with population size of over 375 972, from a total of 408,541 South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia (UNHCR Operational Data Portal, 2022).

The region is one of the 11 National Regional States of Ethiopia. It is located in the western part of Ethiopia, bordering South Sudan to the west and north, bordering the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State to the south and east, and the Oromia National Regional State to the north and east (Ethiopian Government Portal, 2021). Gambella is rich with diverse ethnic compositions. The major ethnic groups include the Anuak, Nuer, Mejenger, Opo, Komo, who according to the regional constitution are declared indigenous; and people from Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) and others (CSA, 2007).

The region has been marginalized and underdeveloped considering its location in the peripheries of the country. This has made the outreach of government services such as infrastructure, health, education, and access to clean water limited. Agro-ecologically, the region is dominantly lowland (kolla) with a few midlands (weyna-dega) (Abraham, UNCT, 2003). It has the most fertile land, with wide range of biodiversity and water resources. According to HoAREC&N-AAU (2019) study on land use in Gambella, the climate is formed under the influence of the tropical monsoon from the Indian Ocean. The region is characterized by high rainfall in the wet

period from May to October and has little rainfall during the dry period from November to April. As the region occurs in the lower Baro-Akobo basin, it is endowed with rich water resources (HoAREC&N-AAU, 2019). This same document also acknowledges the diversity of land, wildlife and other resources in the region.

Of the groups mentioned above, five are referred to as indigenous ethnic groups of the Gambella region by the regional constitution; the Nuer, the Anuak, the Majang , the Opo, and Komo. The majority of the population are the Nuer and Anuak , and the Majang make the third majority, making the Opo and Kommo minorities (CSA,2007). The rest of the population from Amhara, Tigray, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR) and the Oromia who live in Gambella make total population size of according to the 2007 Population and housing census. This is mostly due to the 1980's national settlement scheme by the State government as means to address severe drought and famine that affected most of northern Ethiopia (Dessalegn, 2003; Kurimoto, 2005). These groups are called 'Highlanders' by the indigenous ethnic groups to signify their relation to the Ethiopian state (Getahun et al. 2015; Dereje, 2011; Kurimoto, 2005). Dereje (2011, P. 5-6, 2011) explains the term highlanders as follows:

The relationship between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of Gambella, especially the Anywaa and the Nuer, is multidimensional. Most commonly, the boundary between these two categories is constructed in terms both of regional origins and skin colour: the 'black' Anywaa, Nuer, Majangir, Opo and Komo are contrasted with the 'red' Highlanders. The category of Highlander is socially elastic insofar as all non- Nilotic and non-Koman people with brown skin pigmentation ('red' in local parlance), no matter where they come from, are classified as Highlanders. Thus, the term makes sense only in the context of Ethiopia's borderlands, such as Gambella.

Dereje (2011) also states that the Highlanders called themselves *Degegna* or *Habesha* a more respected name derived from the Ethiopia Orthodox Church. Ethiopian Peace Observatory on ACLED also refers to the term *Degegna* to mean Highlanders (EPO/ACLED Data, 2022). While Ullendorff (1960) states that the west and south of Ethiopia's low land that comprise of the Nilotic minority tribes as the black "Shanklla" who are not only minorities but with no

significant contribution to be recorded as that of Abyssinian's from the Semetic, Cushetic and Omotic northerners. Kurimoto (2005, p.3) states that following the downfall of the Imperial system and takeover of the Derg regime, the term "Shanklla" also to mean Slave was declared as a derogative term and was banned from use. On the other hand, on the same document authored by Dereje (2011, p.1-2), it is noted that the Anuak and the Nuer called the Highlanders *Galaa* and *Buny* respectively to the Highlanders. The document states that the term *Galaa* was a derogative word used by the Amhara and Tigray to address the Oromo, and the Oromo were the first highlanders the Anuak encountered. The term *Buny* is used from the Nuer observing the highlanders bowing down to their leaders. But both *Galaa* and *Buny* are used to refer to skin color (red) and the Ethiopian state (Kurimito 2005; Dereje 2011).

I the researcher have experienced the use of the terms Highlander and Buny. In 2015, soon after I relocated to Gambella to work for an International Organization that works for refugees, on my visit to the Baro river a tall gentle man approached me and said, "Hello are you a highlander?" and I naturally replied, "no I am from Addis Ababa". I tried to explain the geographic location of Addis Ababa and getting frustrated with not convincing him still, a colleague of mine arrived and confirmed to the man indeed, I am a highlander, and we ended the conversation. The original conversation was in English, and I later learned that the gentle man was from the Nuer ethnic group, which I was not yet able to tell from a first look at the time. But apparently as he bore the 'Gar' on his forehead (a Nuer mark of manhood), it was obvious. The term Buny I heard very few times than the term Highlanders which is often used. To solve my confusion and better understanding I had to go through helpful books and further discussions with friends and colleagues whose origins are from Gambella.

It is crucial to have an overall understanding of the history of settlement and encounter of the main actors of this paper the Anuak and the Nuer, as well as the general relation the region has to the federal government, to have an overview of the different layers that make the acceptance of global norm such as the CRRF in this complex region different. This will clarify how relationships evolved since the period it can be traced until present day with hopes of finding existing gaps that require attention with an aim to finding suitable durable solution.

The Nuer and the Anuak ethnic groups live on both sides of the Ethio-Sudan border. The Nuer are pastoralist and move from place to place and even across the Ethio-Sudanese borders easily.

According to Evan-Pritchard (1947), Dereje (2011) and Kurimoto (2005) the Nuer are the second largest in population size in South Sudan next to the Dinka ethnic group, while the Anuak are minorities. In Ethiopia, the Anuak used to be majority until the first and second Sudanese civil war broke out and thousands of Nuer fled across the border to Ethiopia for protection. With ethnic kinship on both sides of the border and the Nuer assimilative culture, the Nuer from South Sudan settled in camps and out of camps with relative local Nuers. The Anuak on the other hand are primordialist and cultivate mostly corn for livelihood, so having a more settled way of life. Thus, while the Nuer married into the Anuak. Highlanders and other ethnic groups, quickly expanding their population size the Anuak remained a relatively closed within their ethnic group. The population size of the local community in Gambella according to CSA (2007) Population and Housing census, the region had a total population of 307,096. HoAREC&N-AAU, (2019) document refers to the CSA (2013) Population Projection in Gambella to be 409,002. On the other hand, the population size of the refugees as of 30 May 2022 is 371,277 in the region (UNHCR Data Portal,2022), of which over 330,000 are of Nuer ethnic group with different tribes. The local communities live within their respective ethnic zones under administrative subdivisions; the Nuer Zones, the <sup>1</sup>Anuak Zone, the Majang Zone and Itang Special Woreda. The 1991 Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) launched ethno-federal governance system has created the platform for such arrangement under the right to self-determination as enshrined on the 1994 constitution article 39 (FDRE Constitution,1994). The refugee presence also indicates though there are both Nuer and Anuak refugees in the camps, the Nuer make the majority. The camp establishment scheme also puts into consideration the separation of the Nuer and the Anuak due to their historical rivalry, and tense dynamics that often lead to deadly clashes among the locals that quickly spreads to the camps (Interview with locals,2022).

The indigenous factors of the Nuer and Anuak in Gambella are determined by the settlement history. Both ethnic groups are from the Nilotic language group that migrated from present day Uganda towards north and east of Sudan in the fifteenth century (Dereje, P.150, 2011,

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<sup>1</sup> For the case of this paper while Nuer is spelled same on different literatures reviewed the Anywa are also spelled and called Anuak as well as Anywaa to refer to the same ethnic group. The Majang are also addressed as Majangir and Mazhanger in various literatures, which they consider as derogatory. Thus, I will be using the spelling Anuak and Majang to refer to the same and only group for my writing.

Dimmendaal, 2016). The Majang, Opo and Komo are from the Kuma language group. The Anuak from the Gilo lineage migrated towards east to Ethiopia. (Evans-Pritchard (1947); Kurimoto (1994)) who suggests that the Majang have already been there when the Anuak arrived in Gambella but the Majang smaller in population size and weak defensive capacity did not bring any confrontation upon encounter with the Anuak. The Nuer on the other hand have migrated from South Sudan towards Ethiopia over two hundred years back making them the newcomers. The Nuer lineage the Jikany Nuer which is further divided into clans was the first to settle in Ethiopia from the Nuer groups.

The initial encounter recorded between the Nuer and Anuak in Gambella was relatively peaceful that acknowledged each other's cultures (Mossa 2014; Kurimoto 2005; Dereje 2011; Bogale 2020; Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012). The Anuak who have settled along the river basins of the Baro and Akobo rivers, as several literatures show are 'primordialists', that is, they believe in blood relations and their livelihood and Anuakaness is based on land and farming. They have a settled way of life and political system that has structure (Mossa 2014, Dereje 2011).

The Nuer are pastoralists and have assimilative culture where Nuerness is not defined only by blood relation but also by going through the right ritual passages such as the 'gar' for men and learning the Nuer culture and way of life. 'Gar' is a ritual of marking the forehead of a Nuer male through cutting from side to side, which will live marks for a lifetime. Thus, the Nuer have value for their cattle's and cattle wealth is the exchange mechanism while the Anuak use 'dumii' valuable beads for economic exchanges as well as spiritual (Perner,1992). Upon the encounter of the two groups the Nuer negotiated with Anuak to use the fertile lands for grazing their cattle through an exchange of grazing land for cattle's and later these negotiations had marriage of Anuak girls to Nuer men, for cattle wealth for the Anuak family and in return grazing land for the Nuer (Ibd.). Evans-Pritchard (1934) also describes of the usage of Gar by the Nuer to assimilate the Dinka who live in Nuerland. Once a Dinka boy passes through this passage he is accepted as Nuer. The assimilative culture of the Nuer with other push factors such as the cattle wealth which offered better economic income attracted volunteer changes into the Nuer ethnic group in addition to marriage which brings cattle wealth to the families of the bride. This in return have enlarged the Nuer population in a short period, which brought expansion of the Nuer over what

the Anuak argue was originally their land. The Nuer on the other hand argue that Gambella being a large area, the land that the Anuak claim as theirs even when they are not living on it or farming on it is considered free to be occupied and utilized as a gift from God, land is natural resource from God, they further argue that it is enough for all. The quick expansion of the Nuer posing a threat to the primordial existence of the Anuak has evolved into a struggle for survival (Dereje, 2011).

According to Zewde (1987) Gambella following the expansion of Emperor Menilik, the Emperor signed a treaty with British Sudan in 1902 to expand trade and strengthen ties between the two countries. This treaty allowed the British to lease an enclave in Itang woreda for the establishment of a trade post. It was believed trade post would be competing to that of the Djibouti port especially in the coffee and ivory trade. During this period it is stated that the district of Illubabor which Gambella was under as well as most of the Ethiopian states were led by Highlanders assigned by the Emperor to conduct trade and overall governance. It is also evident that during this period in history the Ethiopian state undertook slave trade in the region which was customary at the time. The author states that the ambitious plans to develop the trade post failed due to the railway constructions from Djibouti Addis but also due to extremely controlled trade systems put by the assigned officials of the emperor and suspicions of British intentions.

Kurimoto (2005) states that the coercive system the region went through the times of imperial system changed following the takeover of the Derg Regime. In 1956 following Sudan independence, and the outbreak of the first Sudanese civil war in 1955, Gambella welcomed refugees from Sudan which were majority Dinka and Nuer among other minority ethnic groups that fled the civil war. The second wave of refugee influx took place in 1983 following the second civil war. The first camps were established in Itang and the others in Pugnido (Kurimoto 2005; Regassa 2007). Itang was the “the birthplace of the Sudan People’s Liberation Front (SPLF/SPLA) military group”. According to the Kurimoto (2005) and Regassa (2007) the military wing of the SPLF, the SPLA were given freedom to take refuge in the camps and later rejoin and recruit combatants from the refugees. Further they were allowed to form a committee that included refugee representatives from the leaders of the SPLA to administer the camps, Refugees were not evoked of their refugee status even when they joined military trainings or

crossed borders to South Sudan (Kurimoto, p.7, 2005). The SPLA had open support of the Derg regime, administering camps also meant easy access to relief items such as foods and services. This created grievance with the Anuak host community as the newcomers and the Derg regime settled on the Anuak land without consent and also got advantage of relief support.

The Derg regime was also the period that Gambella witnessed relative infrastructure development such as roads, schools and services such as tele communications. The first longest bridge in Ethiopia the Baro bridge was built during this period. While these changes were appreciated the high level of taxation and forced recruitment of the locals to the Army was highly opposed. In 1979, the Derg saw its first attempt of protest in the region which was quickly controlled that led to the fleeing of prominent Anuaks to Sudan to form Gambella Peoples Liberation Movement (GPLM) with the support of anti-Derg groups in Sudan (Kurimoto,2005).

Regassa (2007) states that the GPLM was also the result of oppression and attacks on Anuak civilians by armed SPLA soldiers. He states from his source in Ministry of Defense Archives of Ethiopia that the SPLA soldiers lacked discipline and were heavily armed. In 1989 the SPLA soldiers invaded the Anuak village Pugnido and killed 120 Anuak women, children later burning the village down. Various atrocities such as theft, rape, murder was recorded. Later more military clashes were recorded between the SPLA and the local militia causing further bloodshed (Regassa,2007). This was a major push factor for the Anuak groups to flee Gambella and take refuge in Sudan where they were welcome to settle and organize themselves as Gambella People Liberation Movement (GPLM).

The Derg government at the time believed that the Sudan government supported the Eritrea People Liberation Front, the Tigray People Liberation front as well as the Oromo Liberation Front. Thus, it ensured that the various key army officials, academics and other professionals that led thousands of South Sudanese take the path to refugee in Ethiopia, organize and structure themselves as party. These groups were dispersed and had no political vision and mission set as well as the needed structure to form a political party. According to Regassa (2007) the key leaders which include the well know South Sudanese politician and former president Dr. Colonel

John Garang were welcomed by President Mengistu Hailemariam, who ensured that they get the necessary political and military training, including logistics and requested artilleries (Ibid.)

While refugee women and children settled in the newly established camps in Gambella, military recruitment and trainings were taking place opposite the refugee camps (Regassa,2007; Kurimoto 2005).

The days of SPLA came to an end following the downfall of the Derg Regime and coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). SPLA groups were considered pro-Derg thus was pushed to the Sudan border. It was high time for the GPLM with the coming to power of EPRDF. Yet this marriage didn't last long as it faced challenges in issues of disarmament of all military movements. And soon Political Advisors were assigned to the Region by the Office of Political advisors who were Tigrigna speakers, further confirming the dominance of the TPLF in EPRDF (Dereje, 2011, Kurimoto,2005). This threatened the Anuak hold of power and diluted the relationship strength as these officials took the dominating power in the regional states.

Thus, it is possible to say that Gambella went through varying range of political and social as well as economic relation with the capital during different period. It is evident that identity, culture and location have played a significant role for the inhabitants of the region bringing the interest of various actors state and non-state actors.

There are various records of deadly clashes between the Anuak, the Nuer and the Highlanders in the past two decades. In 2021, there have been two deadly ethnic clashes recorded in Gambella region between the Anuak and the Nuer (interview with residents The Niles, 2022). The most recent conflict in the region was on June 14, 2022, where the joint forces of the Gambella Liberation Front/Army (GLF) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)- Shene announced that they were undertaking a joint operation in Gambella town (Addis Standard, June 2022).

In this local situation where relations between the two ethnic groups is tense and polarized, the issue of local integration of refugees, of which the majority are Nuer faces resistance from the

local Anuak communities. The Anuak relation to land and considering most of the Gambella land as the Anuak land as first settlers before the Nuer, gives the perception that the Nuer are settling pushing them off their land in short period of time. The Nuer on the other hand believe that all natural resources belong to God, thus as long as the land is not used then they have the right to use it.

In conclusion, we can note that the relationship between the two ethnic groups go back to two hundred years back when the Nuer are believed to have moved down to the Baro-Akobo basin of Gambella region. Though their relationship was not always tense it has eventually turned to be so as the Nuer settlement continued, and their population size grew swiftly. Further the relationship of the regional leadership with the capital or federal government have played an active role in empowering and disempowering one ethnic group over the other at different period. For instance, in recent years the Federal Government has focused on development growth and have given large agri-industrial private companies authorization to operate in Gambella. Fana (2016) argues that development through large scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) in Ethiopia's western lowlands conceals political projects aiming to control the periphery and reconstitute centuries-old Centre-periphery relations by undertaking a process of accumulation by dispossession. Thus, the Federal Government considering that the region is located in the periphery, ensures that its governance is maintained in any possible means.

### **1.2.1 Launch of CRRF in Ethiopia and the Gambella Region**

For the past two decades refugee camps are governed by Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), former Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), a federal office mandated by the FDRE Refugee proclamation No.1110/2019, to work on refugee protection with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The refugee protection regime, within which the United Nations has mandated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver has now dated over 50 years since its establishment in 1951 (Feller, 2001). Considering the mounting number of displaced people and protracted cases around the organization is moving towards the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The main objective of the CRRF is "Ease the pressures on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, support

condition in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity” (GCR, UNNY, 2018). The CRRF is an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) where UNHCR was requested to organize a consultation with States and stakeholders, based on the CRRF set on the New York Declaration (GCR, 2022). According to the GCR document, the purpose of the programme of action is to facilitate the application of a comprehensive response in support of refugees and countries particularly affected by large refugee movement or a protracted refugee situation, through effective arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing and timely contributions in support of host countries and where appropriate, countries of origin (ibid).

Mangala (2010) and Duffield (2010)) refer to the change of the global security paradigm following the end of the Cold War. The world that addressed security from a state centric paradigm and thus military lenses changed to human centric one. Mangala (2010) refers to the UN Security Council first summit-level meeting of the post-Cold War period by the president of the Council: “The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to international peace and security”. This Mangala (2010) says was the period that securitized refugees and forced displacement as a whole, in particular the refugees and forcibly displaced in Africa in the 1990’s.

The mass movement of forcibly displaced especially that of refugees crossing borders was believed to have a destabilizing effect on other states by the UN Security Council (Mangala, 2010). The case of the refugees of Rwanda genocide that spilled over to various Grate Lakes countries among others was a point in case. Thus, having a state centric approach to human security, that is the plight of those crossing boarder to seek protection was seen from the potential threat refugees would pose on the economic, social and ecological aspects to states. This according to (Mangala 2010) brought “an opportunity to UNHCR to make itself relevant to the international community” that is, by managing refugees, it assured the international community in its contribution to international peace and security.

Yet the organization also recognized that addressing the mass movement of refugees from state security lense only did not bring efforts to such humanitarian crisis. Thus, it took the responsibility to convince the international community the need to address and support by

highlighting the human security concept (Ibid.). That is, “to reconcile the security concerns of states, the protection needs of refugees, and the security needs of its staff. By drawing on the concept of human security, UNHCR sought to demonstrate the real security of states and the international community could only be achieved by providing security for people” Mangala (2010). Yet this didn’t ensure the refugee hosting regions in this case African states security as they are the ones being imposed to contain and manage the refugee influxes. Security and insecurity depend on vulnerability of states, in this case poor nations hosting refugees in border peripheries who are already underdeveloped, vulnerable to spill over of conflict from neighboring countries, including warring factions in the region posing various threats to the hosting states; conflict, economic depletion; environmental degradation (Mangala (2010); Regassa (2007); Kurimoto (2005).

Duffield (2010) argues the end of the Cold War brought with liberalism the development-security-nexus. He explains two key concerns that this paradigm shift focused on; the uncontrolled movement of migrants and states looking into their population, on human security for threats. The idea of development during the stated time surfaced with liberal way of development at heart, it was as Duffield (2010) puts it a technology to biopolitics of the developed and undeveloped. In the eyes of the liberal mass consumer system where the population is provided with social security system and services are provided, the undeveloped pose threat in that they will have to self-rely on adaptive coping mechanisms that are not controlled by states. This the liberals argue creates uncontrolled citizens that may give way to criminal and terrorist establishments posing threat to international security. Further self-reliance has never been a concrete solution as it is in an emergency crisis itself. That is development that is planned by the liberals through humanitarian approach has never guaranteed the mass consumer system put in place by Western states rather provides the basic minimum needs to contain the undeveloped (Ibid.)

Addis Fortune on an article published on September 28, 2016, addresses the travel of the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Dessalegn to New York in 2016 as ‘Ethiopia’s effort to tackle European Migrant Crisis roots. The article mentions two months prior the Prime Minister’s travel to the US to attend the Leader’s Summit on refugees, the Prime Minister was

visit by Mr. George Turkington, Country Director for the UK's Department for International Development (DIFID), with a package. The package the article covers was the 'jobs compact'. According to their sources, "It was a proposition held in tight circles, largely for fear of spoilers, which incorporates a deal for the West to fund projects in Ethiopia in order to keep refugees' content here" (Addis Fortune, 2016). The offer was a half billion dollar project that consisted of the construction of two industrial parks in Ethiopia, with the UK contributing 80million dollars as a grant, and the EU and World Bank to take part in this initiative (Ibid.)

This as Duffield (2010) frames it is the humanitarian-development- security nexus. It is where humanitarian, private sector and security actors come together to put forward ideas and solutions that would best benefit their interest in exchange for providing basic self-reliance in the global South. As he argues above this is the biopolitics of the liberal way of development for the developed and undeveloped (Ibid.)

This was at the backdrop of a letter from an Anuak group in Gambella region to Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn on their concern on the large refugee presence in the region. According to sources to this information, the Prime Minister received these concerns prior to his travel to New York.

The Ethiopian Government co-hosted the Leaders' Summit on Refugees on 20 September 2016 in New York and made nine pledges to implement the CRRF in Ethiopia. The aim of these pledges is to minimize encampment and bring refugee inclusion into the national system for common benefit of the refugees and host communities. The Refugee presence that is administered by RRS and UNHCR under the mandate promulgated in the 2019 Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation, the right for refugees to have the proper documentation to work and own resident ID, for refugees who have lived for over twenty years are among the few that are amended from the previous refugee proclamation. The nine pledges made at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees are (UNHCR Briefing Note, July 2018):

1. To expand the "out-of-camp" policy to benefit 10% of the current total refugee population.
2. To provide work permits to refugees and those with permanent residence ID.

3. To provide work permits to refugees in the areas permitted for foreign workers.
4. To increase enrolment of refugee children in preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education, without discrimination and within available resources.
5. To make 10,000 hectares of irrigable land available, to enable 20,000 refugees and host community households (100,000 people) to grow crops.
6. To allow local integration for refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for over 20 years.
7. To work with industrial partners to build industrial parks to employ up to 100,000 individuals, with 30% of the jobs reserved for refugees.
8. To expand and enhance basic and essential social services for refugees.
9. To provide other benefits, such as issuance of birth certificates to refugee children born in Ethiopia, and the possibility of opening bank accounts and obtaining driving licenses.

Thus, the government of Ethiopia took the lead in the Humanitarian- Development nexus approach to provide sustainable solution to the protracted, non-emergency settlement of refugees. Even though there has been progress in the implementation of the pledges in other refugee hosting areas such as Jijiga and Melkadida, where Somali refugees are hosted (Binkert et al.2021), it has been challenging to implement in complex ethnic setting such as Gambella. Danish Refugee Council (DRC) report on refugee and host communities in Gambella identifies and informs on the challenges faced in Gambella in regard to CRRF (Carver et al, 2020). While the 2019 Global Compact Report (GCR) on Gambella (UNHCR, July 2019) shows that there has been some progress in regard to having refugees and host communities' access to school, it is not detailed on what exactly this means considering the national education system put in place. That is, when the report says refugees and host community it gives the complex situation of Gambella a very vague understanding of the reality on the ground. While such vague reports highlight the success story on integrated services, they might also put the steps to durable solution off track as issues that need to be addressed are concealed.

This research looks at efforts made by RRS and UNHCR to implement the CRRF in Gambella with focus on local responses towards CRRF in the Gambella region.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Since EPRDF introduced the ethno-federal system in Ethiopia in 1991 and promised self determination to regions and sub-region, mostly based on languages commonalities among groups, a country where over 80 languages are recorded to be spoken, the nation has been more divided, as elites quickly cease on the opportunity to construct narrations of grievances of the past to justify the need to organize ethnically. Yet through time this has shown to fail and create more division and intolerance to diversity and inclusion.

It is evident from the discussion above that CRRF as a global norm has been endorsed by member states of the United Nations including Ethiopia. Ethiopia was a co-convenor of the summit and has made nine pledges at the Leaders' Summit in New York in 2016, the next step that followed was diffusion of this global norm in refugee hosting regions of the country by the Federal mandated government entity RRS and the UNHCR.

The FDRE Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy drafted in 2002 securitizes poverty and makes it an existential threat that needs to be addressed by speedy economic development, democracy, and peace. Economic development being at the heart of the Government, and Ethiopia being the third highest refugee hosting country in Africa, CRRF is a trending norm in the refugee protection regime with an opportunity to tap into high potential of financing for investment and development activities in marginalized regions such as Gambella. The success of the implementation means securing financial support to better services in education, shelter, water and sanitation and health as well as create job opportunities, benefiting both refugees and host communities.

Today in Gambella, the population lives in explicitly marked invisible territory strictly cautious of not trespassing one into the other. Movement into these territories is relatively easier for Highlanders and other ethnic groups other than the Anuak and Nuer. It is as if these two groups are always on guard of a possible attack from the other. The biggest town, Gambella town, does not show visible development activities such as infrastructure, clean water access, electric power, hospitals, and lack of decent hotels to promote tourism despite having rich wildlife, forestry and the transboundary river Baro. Markets and transport services are dominated by highlanders. Refugees reside in 6 refugee camps, depending on UNHCR and RRS for protection services,

meaning dependent on humanitarian aid. What makes the situation complex is that the refugees are also from the two contending ethnic groups of the Anuak and Nuer. The majority of the Anuak reside in Pugnido camps, which is an Anuak Zone.

Most of the refugees in camps have been in Ethiopia for almost ten years now. The population is also majority Nuer yet again making the Anuak a minority. The ethnic dynamics is like that of the host community, ethnic kinship runs naturally between the refugees and the host community. This has made movement and dual identity easy for the Nuer, further escalating the concern of Anuak.

Thus, this paper studies the perspective of CRRF under the above circumstances at different level; refugees, host community, local and Federal government, and humanitarian actors, in Gambella region. It investigates the dynamics of Humanitarian- development nexus and ethnic identity in such complex situation.

Following the New York Leader's Summit and the 9 pledges the Ethiopia Government made, CRRF was launched in Ethiopia in 2017. The launch was also made at different refugee hosting areas as steps of the framework to trickle down to the bottom. It faced opposition when launched in Gambella with few attendants walking out of the launch workshop in objection. Louder oppositions were heard especially when the country's most progressive refugee proclamation was adopted in 2019. Thus, this research paper aims to understand why and from where CRRF saw resistance in the case study of Gambella.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objective of the research paper is to:

1. Understand the political and programmatic steps taken so far to implement CRRF in Gambella and how they are perceived by refugees and their host communities
2. Investigate local response to CRRF policy and initial implementation in the Gambella region
3. Identify the counter response by regional, federal and international actors to the local response to the global norm

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How is CRRF understood in Gambella?
2. What is the local response to CRRF? How are these responses manifested?
3. How are the local response addressed by authorities in the regional, federal international level?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Poverty and economic backwardness remain a major concern for the country but regions like Gambella are most affected. What makes Gambella unique is despite its challenges it continues to host the largest refugee population in Ethiopia, and most of all with a refugee size equivalent if not more than the host community population size. The host community population comprises of five ethnic groups that are indigenous to the land and various others from different parts of Ethiopia. Most of the refugee cases are protracted cases, the oldest over twenty years in Ethiopia. The resistance to CRRF and refugee presence by the Anuak groups via open letter or the walking out of their representative from the launch program, is neither acknowledged by the government or any organization officially. There is no research as to why and who from the Anuak resisted. Further it is also important to understand at what level the resistance existed and if it still exists; is it a community level; regional local government level or at the federal level? This study is therefore significant in its contribution to the efforts of peaceful coexistence and durable solution vis-à-vis refugees and host community in Gambella region. Specifically, this research paper by investigating “local responses” to CRRF investigates what the perceptions are by various key stakeholders internationally as well as at the Federal, regional(local) and community level as it trickles down to the bottom. The finding would inform if it is indeed a durable solution with humanitarian-development approach that benefits both refugees and host community or if it has other paradigms to it that need to be explored.

## **1.6 Limitations**

During my data collection in Gambella region, I intended to take public transportation to Pugnido to meet with my key informants but due to rumors of close movement of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) also called Shene, and Gambella Liberation Front (GLF), two armed groups declared by the government of Ethiopia as terrorist group close to Gambella town, I did not travel to Pugnido. Instead, I conducted the interview via telephone call with the informants targeted in Pugnido. Other interviews in Gambella town and Addis Ababa were conducted in person. As the refugees that has stayed the longest are in Pugnido an Anuak zone it would have further enhanced my observation if I had the opportunity to stay there for few days.

## **1.7 Organization of the Research**

The research is organized into six chapters that would guide readers into step by step process of the research. The first chapter is an Introduction to the study, based on secondary data and documents that relate to the subject matter outlines the background of the study, the problem statement and research questions that would enable for the raised concerns on the problem statement to be addressed.

The Second Chapter assesses different literature reviews on the topic of the study until present day that would help make my argument relevant and highlight gaps that this research aims to assess.

The third chapter looks into the research design and methodology used to collect data and analyze it, while the fourth chapters focus on the data presentation. Each chapter have sub-sections that guide readers through steps followed that to the last chapter which is the conclusion.

## **Chapter –Two**

### **2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

#### **2.1. Literature Review**

##### **2.1.1. Refugee Situation in Africa**

Crisp (2003) on his working paper on protracted refugee situation in Africa argues that protracted refugee cases in Africa are concerns that require long-term solution. He acknowledges this situation is not new and has existed over a decade. Crisp defines protracted refugee cases as cases that have taken more than five years since arrival of people in plight in the country of asylum. Even though there were other protracted refugee cases in other parts of the world such as Central and South America, the majority of such cases are found in Africa.

According to Crisp (2003) conflict is the major reason for the plight of millions of refugees from their country of origin to neighboring countries of asylum. He refers to a UNHCR statistics published at the end of 2001; he claims there are 400,000 Angolan refugees in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 520,000 Burundi refugees in Tanzania and 275,000 DRC refugees in Angola, Congo Brazzaville, Tanzania and Zambia. Further 325,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan, 210,000 Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, 165,000 Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, 150,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and Liberia, 300,000 Somali refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen, 450,000 Sudanese refugees in Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Countries such as Angola, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia were in ethnic and communal wars during this period and the effects of conflict was cause for the plight of millions mentioned above.

In contrast to the above statistics at the end of 2001, the latest UNHCR statistics from 2020-2022 on the above host countries, as seen below, shows that most of the refugee situations have grown in size and complexity. While large repatriation was also recorded, due to relapse of conflicts people continued to move across borders for safety and security. We can notice from the UNHCR 2022 portal below that most of the countries of origin of refugees are both countries of

plight as well as refugee hosting states. In addition, we also notice that internal conflict not only causes refugees but equal or often much more internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well.

Zambia currently hosts 26% of 400,000 refugees, asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, as well as Angolan and former Rwandan refugees. Angola currently hosts about 57,000 refugees mostly Congolese, minority Rwandans, Liberians, and Sierra Leone. Burundi still hosts 30% of 275,000 refugees mostly from DRC. DRC hosts over 529,000 refugees and asylum-seekers who have fled violence in neighboring countries, mainly the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan. The majority (72%) live outside refugee camps or settlements, and only 3% live in urban areas. Sudan currently hosts 1.1 million refugees, one of the largest refugee populations in Africa 70% from South Sudan. Uganda hosts over 1.5 million refugees mainly from South Sudan. Ethiopia hosts over 823,000 refugees and asylum seekers predominantly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea in 24 refugee camps. Somali hosts 30,000 refugees from Ethiopia and Yemen, 540,000 refugees in Kenya, and 127,000 refugees in Rwanda. Djibouti hosts 23,000 refugees from Ethiopia, Somali and Yemen, while Chad host 569,592 refugees from Sudan.

From the above updated statistics, we can also observe that internal conflicts are still ongoing in different parts of Africa today, thus several states are now faced with thousands if not millions of refugees with protracted cases. Frances Stewart (2008) argues that violent conflict is one of the biggest obstacles for development. She states that seven out of ten violent conflicts are in poor countries and causes massive cost. This includes direct and indirect death, meaning in addition to direct death as a result of conflict, indirect death as a result of war-made famine as production ceases and people starve, as the capacity of people to markets and purchasing power deteriorate the effects are much worse, and forced displacement and refugees are all an obvious result.

If we also observe the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in each of the African states mentioned above, the numbers are much higher than the population size of refugees and makes it challenging for states to prioritize relief responses and durable solution. The countries of asylum are also poor countries with growing population, internal conflict, and instability (Crisp 2001). Yet it is the sole responsibility of the state to protect its citizens displaced with in their own

country, as well as refugees who have crossed borders fleeing conflict and violence from neighboring countries. This is highlighted in the Kampala Convention (2009), the 1951 Refugee convention and later the 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 OAU Refugee convention. This is specifically the case for African states who have signed the conventions including Ethiopia.

Over five years since their plight most of the refugees still find themselves in camps and dependent on humanitarian aid. As most of the conflicts drag on for a long period, it makes the option of repatriation to their country of origin narrow to non-existent. The international community has also failed to bring forward the necessary conflict solutions in conflicting states of Africa in a timely manner, as most of the international community have a colonial past with the continent that rather continue to impose coercive solutions such as peace-keeping troops, which never addressed the root causes such as the colonial past of these states (Achankeng I, 2013).

The African political, economic, and social realities of forced displacement and its reciprocal effect of one state on another posed several threats and raised questions. First refugees were seen as a threat to countries of asylum as armed rebels easily moved across borders with civilians, and also made civilians an easy target for armed conflict. Countries of asylum with large refugee size did not also believe the burden of hosting this large size refugee population was being shared by wealthy countries. Thus, refugees were being considered as economic and social burden. In addition, post-cold war democratization process in some of these African states created an opportunity for politicians to mobilize electoral votes. As a result, in the 1980's and 1990's UNHCR, donors and other stakeholders along with the countries of asylum considered repatriation as more viable option than local integration as asylum to a third country was not an option for the large refugee size (Crisp 2001).

### **2.1.2. Refugees as Threat to National Security**

Hammerstadin (2010) argues that the international community has played a role in framing forced displacement in particular the faith of refugees as a security threat. This phenomenon was also acknowledged by the UN Agency for Refugees the UNHCR which was given the sole mandate by the 1951 convention to provide legal protection to refugees, that is, it had initially

the mandate of ensuring that member states that were signatory to the convention implemented the rules set by the regime. Triola (2015) in her writing explains that the term refugees that was first defined in 1921 League of Nations by the High Commissioner of the League was later known as the international refugee regime. She states that today the international refugee regime is a body of law that surrounds international migration based on safety and persecution. Hammerstadin (2010) makes analysis the discourse of UNHCR that was given to the public via speeches by the UNHCR High commissioners during different period of time as well as the annual global reports to show this role played by the organization. She notes down the below observations: -

*For instance, a statistical analysis of the frequency of the use of the term 'security' in UNHCR's annual Reports to the General Assembly shows a clear trend. From 1970 to 1986 you hardly see the term (average 3.5 times per report). From 1986 to 1987 the mention of 'security' more than trebles, and the average frequency for one Report in the period between 1987 and 1999 is 17.5. The trend continued upwards in the early 2000s, with a peak in 2001 of thirty-eight mentions of security in its different permutations. The average frequency in the years 2000 to 2006 is 21.7, but there is a clear downward trend from 2002 onwards, down to only ten mentions of security in the 2006 report. The word frequency count thus shows a sharp growth in the use of the term 'security' from the late 1980s onwards, with a gentler but clear decline in the new millennium. A similar trend can be found when counting the term 'security' in UNHCR's annual Notes on International Protection over the same period*

Regarding the public speeches made by the UNHCR High commissioner's (HCs) Sadako Ogata who served the organization from 1991-2000, she was the most prominent in highlighting the securitization of forced displacement and refugees. HC Ogata in 1992 International Management Symposium held in St. Gallen, Switzerland made the following remark:

I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to address you about refugees and displaced persons not only because its humanitarian significance, but of its impact on international peace and stability (UNHCR 2001-2021).

The UNCHR since its establishment has evolved through various discourses on refugee protection. Following the end of cold war with the widening of the term security from the realist notion of sovereignty, according to Hammerstadin (2010) refugees were depicted as security threat. This was the case as Western Europe was facing the highest refugee influx at their borders following the fall of the Soviet Union and movement of refugees from the Balkans. The international refugee regime, and the issue of migration, which is influenced by Politicians of states most of them wealthy western countries, was a policy and media issue thus being politicized and securitized. These western states also being UNHCR's donor countries, UNHCR had to share the discourses of these states while also addressing the fear and threat of the poor states in the global south that provide asylum to most refugees of the world that flee conflict and cross borders (Hammerstadin, p.248-252, 2010).

The above stated consideration of refugees as security threat has brought questions from states in the global south. Why do states that host majority of asylum seekers within their borders not share this consideration of refugees as a threat to security, when only 14 percent of those refugees who make it to Europe are considered a threat? Thus, as Crisp (2001) mentions the above as the justification of the consideration of repatriation as reasonable durable solution during the 1990's.

Further, for the global South the issue of burden sharing was not on the same terms as the North. The Western countries, specifically the European Union (EU), which is among the largest donors of UNHCR, was in understanding with UNHCR of their interest in maintaining the hosting of refugees in the countries of asylum. This brought doubt with the States in the South as burden sharing was not initially agreed on as just wealthy countries providing money while the global South provided asylum, but also actually providing asylum to third countries of asylum or resettlement in these countries. This issue was further worsened following the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, that made it easily justifiable for the United States and most of the western countries to make their migration and refugee policies firm, creating a narration of identity politics and further making refugee and migration issues a security issue. (Hammerstadin,2010).

Rutinwa (1999) seconds the above factors as a cause for a changing factor of African refugee policies. He argues that the African refugee situation has evolved from open door policy in the 1960 -1990 to more closed and xenophobic one after the 1990's. Africans had more solidarity in regard to displacement as struggles against colonialism and displacement related to it continued across the continent. The period after 1990's African states saw an increase in forced displacement was considered as source of an internal and external security.

Some refugee hosting countries have encountered serious external relations problems with the countries of origin, which in some cases have led to armed conflagration. Internally, some criminal elements among refugees have caused a multitude of problems to host populations including armed banditry, poaching and other crimes (Rutinwa, 1999, p. 1-2)

The other reasons the author states are environmental damage on the host countries and the lack of burden sharing by the international community.

In the previous chapter Kurimoto (2005), in the case of Gambella refugees from South Sudan has stated that the SPLA was more than welcome by the Derg regime. The soldiers of SPLA were registered refugees that were provided open support to recruit and train their army from the camps. He also stated that the refugee representatives were part of the refugee committee that was put in place to administer the camps, thus having easy access to relief items such as food and water, which were scarce for the host community and even the capital. This armed groups mostly of Dinka and Nuer before their division internally had great powers in Gambella. Through time they SPLA were more violent, looting and raping women and their free and well off life in regard to better access to services such as schools, scholarships, hospitals, water and food created grievance with the Anuak. In 1989, the SPLA burned down the entire Pugnido village of the Anuak because one refugee was killed, and they allegedly believed it was an Anuak who killed him. Over 120 Anuak were killed in the process. This further escalated the grievance and few days later the Anuak militia and the SPLA clashed in Itang killing over 20 Anuak Militia and over 10 SPLA soldiers (Kurimoto, 2005).

### **2.1.3. Refugee Self Reliance and Identity Politics**

Rutinwa (1999) as well as Crisp (2001) in their works state that some African states granted some level of self-reliance activities to refugees within the camp settlements to refugees before the 1990's in Uganda, Tanzania, Lesetho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia. These self-reliance activities included granting land for farming and allowing naturalization. Yet most often some interpreted the 1969 OAU Refugee convention as offering temporary asylum and eventual repatriation (OAU, 1969).

African states continued being conflict ridden and weak in economy, even though most states undertook a democratic reform of their governments. This brought xenophobic phenomena among most African states which ones stood in solidarity and open-door policy with the forcibly displaced. Rutinwa (1999) explains, most countries were going under austerity measures recommended by IMF and the World Bank and were not in a position to provide services to their population, while refugees were able to get those services for free. The issue of resettlement to a third country also contributed to the xenophobic attitude that was caught by Politicians and politicized in their campaigns to mobilize voting crowds. Yet this phenomenon was also occurring in the wealthy countries and the common immigration destinations such as Europe and the United States (Hammerstadin, 2010; Crisp, 2001; Rutinwa, 1999).

Post-colonial Africa continues to be challenged with internal conflict more than external one. Achankeng (2013) argues that post-colonial Africa has colonial base for their internal conflicts that were set in place by colonial powers along ethnic and religious lines. Cohen (1995) seconds this argument and states that the inequalities that was implemented by the colonial powers on these lines have played a major role in the post-colonial conflicts as the inequalities have impacted the state building process. Thus, most African states were not as sympathetic with African refugees in their country as they are now fleeing from a state free of colonialism. (Rutinwa,1999).

The World Bank on a report published in 2022 on inequality in South Africa, that country is the most unequal country in the world with the 10 % of the population owning 80% of the wealth. The report states that the main cause in addition to inherited circumstances such as gender,

location and parental background is race and land ownership. This can be traced back to the period of Apartheid where black people were not allowed to own land by the 1913 Native Land Act (Native Land Act, 1913).

On the contrary, academics from the neo-patrimonial school of thought depict African states as destined for incompetent governance as almost an innate nature, but Thandika Mkandawire (2015) argue otherwise. The easy acceptance by researchers and policymakers of the school's claims that it is the incapability of Africans to lead nations and put in place governance system that is functional, in the absence of empirical evidence suggests that there are strong preconceptions and prejudices about African politics (Mkandawire, 2015). Wai (2012) also argues similarly, neopatrimonialism fails to analyze the independent conceptualization of African state forms and political classes by focusing on universalism and Eurocentric or Weberian state forms. As a result, they incorrectly and problematically interpret African realities. One issue that continues to surface in the various debates as cause for lack of governance and conflict in the contemporary world is Identity Politics. Identity Politics have been systematically and strategically been used by colonial and neo colonial powers in Africa for political gain (Prunier, 2005; Fukuyama, 2018). Since 1946, 64% percent of civil wars fall along ethnic lines. When secessionist wars were removed from the data set, 45% of the wars along the ethnic lines can be interpreted as wars fought to gain power at the Central Government (Denny and Walter, 2014).

Fukuyama, (2018) argues that identity politics has taken a major role in the world politics the second decade of the twenty first century. He states that for the past ten thousand years of human history, human beings had fixed communal identity, most of whom lived in a settled agrarian society. That is, an individual had a set role in his community such as a farmer, a smith, managing household, etc. The individual identity surfaced later in Europe as markets flourished through new technologies, new jobs were created, and cities grew independent. This created different social classes. Religious rules were also under struggle and latter weakened. All this created space for individual to have choice in region and what they do.

Modern concept of identity brings together three phenomena (Fukuyama, 2018). Thymos; distinction between the inner and outer self and dignity is “*a universal aspect of human personality that craves recognition*” (Fukuyama, 2018, p.9), while distinction between the inner and outer self is “*the raising of moral valuation of the inner self over the outer society*”, while dignity is “*due not just to a narrow class of people, but to everyone*”. These phenomena are also described at the different levels of Maslow’s human hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, human beings have five categories of needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization, and higher needs begin to emerge ones the previous needs are fulfilled.

Fukuyama (2018) sums up the modern-day identity division into nationalism and Islamism. He argues both were created in the struggle of the individual self to be recognized, in the struggle for dignity. In the transition from the agrarian life to the modern, broader and diverse world, thus both phenomena appearing in the world stage at similar periods. He states:

They both provide an ideology that explains why people feel lonely and confused, and both peddle in victimhood that lays the blame for an individual’s unhappy situation on groups of outsiders. And they both demand recognition of dignity in restrictive ways: not for all human beings, but for members of a particular national or religious group” (Fukuyama, 2018, p.65.).

Thus, today these identity politics challenges the economic theories of human beings, being capable of making logical decisions that would enhance and benefit their material and physical being. The struggle for the three phenomena of identity clouds the economic needs assumed by Economist:

Economists assume that human beings are motivated by what they label “preferences” or “utilities,” desires for material resources or goods. But they forget about thymos, the part of the soul that desires recognition by others, either as isothymia, recognition as equal in dignity to others, or megalothymia, recognition as superior. A great deal of what we conventionally take to

be economic motivation driven by material needs or desires is in fact a thymotic desire for recognition of one's dignity or status (Fukuyama,2018, p.72).

Europe as well as the USA which are the major immigration destinations have seen the raise of populist movements and xenophobic attitudes in the past decades of this twenty-first century. These parties led by politicians have relevant effect to play on the policy decisions made on immigration in these regions (Rutinwa,1999). These movements vary in association from extremist groups to the moderate ones but one thing they have in common is the view they have for “outsiders” who allegedly are the cause for the failing socio-economic system that has been put in place by the indigenous citizens.

Akinola (2018) on Xenophobia in Africa also traces back the changing nature of the phenomena into violence in the post-colonial years. Xenophobia defined as a deep hatred for immigrants by the nationals of the host country takes different forms. Though it is often used interchangeably with racism, racism is one form of Xenophobia. Xenophobia takes different forms such as racephobia, genophobia, ethnophobia, and foreignphobia. A dynamic of “the others” which creates division in a social grouping of the indigenous and the newcomers. Akinola argues that though this phenomenon is not new, in Africa it has evolved to violent conflict in several states affecting the socio-economic and development of several of the states (Akinola, 2018).

In Ethiopia there are many conflicts that have taken the form of ethnic conflict in recent years. Some scholars (Edmond and Edith, 2007; Berhe, 2001; Shewadeg, 2020) argue that this is as a result of ethnic federalism. Others point to the historical roots that can be traced back to centuries of state making that evolved into feudalist system that based rules on class and ethnicity.

Identity politics along ethnic and religious lines was at the center of the Ethiopian history. Mengisteab, (2007) states “One reason for focusing on ethnicity as a political identity is that Ethiopia's Federal system is crafted largely, although not exclusively, along ethno-linguistic lines and the country's constitution has formally institutionalized ethnic citizenship. A more general reason is that ethnicity in Ethiopia, as in many other African countries, is politicized and groups claiming to represent ethnic entities are major players in political conflicts”.

It is likely that the interaction between the state and identity groups and among identity groups would be more susceptible to conflict in countries where state building and consolidation of national citizenship are less developed, inter-identity relations are unequal and the state is perceived to be partial in its relationship with identity groups (Mengisteab, 2007).

According to ACLED reports 2018 is point of change for the political dynamics of the country. EPRDF transitioned to Prosperity Party (PP) following different resistances from different parts of the country mostly Oromia and Amhara. ACLED reports on the violent trends show that violent events and protests have increased by over 8% in the 6 months since the transition, relative to the 6 months prior (from 388 to 420 events). This has corresponded to an increase of over 48% in the number of reported fatalities from 644 fatalities in the 6 months before the transition to 954 fatalities from April to October. There has been increase in inter-communal conflict in most regions of the country. The reports show the causes as conflict over access to resources and mobilization along ethnic lines are on the rise since 2018.

ACLED reports on Gambella for the period mentioned above shows that the region witnessed civil unrest following arrest of Gambella youth leader, bombing in crowded place by unknown groups causing loss of lives, protests calling for the government to give attention to Gambella during this transition as they claim neglect in regard to other regions.

UNDP study on conflict analysis and mapping conducted in 2020 on Gambella regional state, one of the largest refugee hosting regions in Ethiopia, highlights three areas of concern as causes for conflict in the region: The Ethnic Conflict of the Anuak and Nuer, Host Community- Refugee Conflict, and Cross Border Conflicts. The regional constitution of Gambella that was amended in 2002, states that the base for the constitution is to determine their right to self-determination as provided on the Ethiopian constitution, to free themselves of past discrimination and oppression. The regional constitution starts by determining who the indigenous Gambella people are and who are not, creating the 'us' and 'them' politics around Identity. Thus, making identity politics the center for political struggle, mostly for the dominating two ethnic groups the Anuak and the Nuer.

As socio-economic and political inequality and conflict continue to rise in several African states including Ethiopia for the above stated reasons, encampment and protracted refugee cases continue the continent. Encampment and protracted refugee cases across African states mean that the donor community and UNHCR must continue ‘with care and maintenance’ services. The main donors that contribute billions of dollar budget to UNHCR being ten donors from global North (Hammerstadin, 2010), namely the United States of America, the European Union, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Spain, Norway, France, Denmark and Netherlands, protracted cases are losing donor interest. As multiple emergencies across Africa and the rest of the world continue, it has become challenging to proceed with ‘care and maintenance’ approach as it is of high cost.

Under funding in several refugee operations globally and that of Africa specifically thus required yet another discourse by the international community. Refugee self-reliance, out of camp policy, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). This was not only because of underfunding but also because of the firm policy change in the EU States and the US. It was more and more the interest of these states to contain refugees within their first country of asylum (Hammerstadin, 2010; Rutinwa,1999).

What is self-reliance though? The oxford English dictionary defines it as “reliance on one's own powers and resources rather than those of others” (Oxford Dictionary, 2022). The 2005 UNHCR Handbook on Self-Reliance defines it as:

The social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health, and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance (UNHCR HB, p.1, 2005).

The handbook acknowledges that self-reliance of refugees should be part of the planning even in the emergency at the outset of a refugee crisis. Yet the same handbook also mentions

that out of camp refugees residing in Urban areas are expensive to assist, and may have security implication (UNHCR HB, p.9, 2005). It almost looks like that it is saying that encampment is an easier and manageable way to aid, subject to translation.

#### **2.1.4. CRRF in Africa**

It is debated that self-reliance is defined differently by different actors. Skran and Calabria (2020) summarize various scholarly articles on self-reliance in two categories. The first one being self-reliance as an exit strategy for donors. Here the argument is that the issue is addressed as an economic means to find solution thus focusing on livelihood and refugee entrepreneurship. But what does this really mean? The authors bring the example:

A refugee in Kampala makes use of the right to work to start a business selling vegetables. She makes enough profit to feed her family but cannot afford to send her children to school and must take out steep loans from neighbors for unexpected medical issues. She does not depend on external humanitarian assistance . . . but is she self-reliant? (Skran and Easton-Calabria, p.1,2020)

The Second argument is the one that considers refugees as economic actors. This argument mainly focuses on the legal platform of asylum countries to enable refugees to have the necessary legal base for refugees to work and be included so being an active contributor to the economy in their host country.

The authors highlight that there needs to be linkage between the economic, social, political, and humanitarian interest of all actors. They conclude stating the following point:

Expanding the definition of refugee self-reliance beyond the economic and measuring self-reliance are important parts of an agenda in both academia and practice to make refugee self-reliance achievable as an objective as well as grounded in critical awareness as a concept” (Skran and Easton-Calabria, 2020, p.18).

The Humanitarian- Development- Security nexus started surfacing packaged in the form of the CRRF in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Yet different refugee hosting African

states such as Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia even Ethiopia have been implementing this initiative before it was packaged as the CRRF. Uganda remains one of the African countries with the most progressive refugee law and implementation of the CRRF. Thus, Uganda has been among one of the pilot countries that were selected for the implementation of the CRRF following the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees, which Ethiopia co-hosted on 20 September 2016 in New York along with Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Rwanda and Kenya (UNHCR,2018). Tanzania which is known for their hospitality of Burundian refugees for several decades have withdrawn from being one of the pilot countries despite positive initial interest in the initiative (Fellessen, 2019).

Zambia was among the first countries in the early 2000 that implemented humanitarian-development nexus such as CRRF. In 2001 the Zambia Initiative was launched. The country during the period had over 150,000 Angolan refugees in refugee camps. Its refugee policy has been open door since its independence in 1964, giving refuge to countries under colonial rules fleeing conflict and prosecution. Following independence of most of the African states, while some refugees returned others stayed creating a protracted refugee situation. In early 2000 conflict in the neighboring Angola brought the influx of Angolan refugees a reason for UNHCR to continue its function in supporting the Zambia government in providing protection. The government of Zambia was all for making refugees an active part of the host community contributing to the economy.

This initiative was backed by donors such as the US, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, South Africa, European Commission and the African Development Bank, which was later followed by a field mission of that consisted of their representatives (Marie and Shimo, 2002). According to a 2019 joint report on CRRF implementation in Zambia, the Zambia Initiative benefitted 450,000 persons of which 150,000 were refugees. They were able to produce 154 metric ton of maize that was sold to the World Food Program (UNHCR and GZ, 2019). It is not clear if this had continuity, or a onetime scenario and it is also not clear if this meant that refugees were able to be self-reliant enough to be independent of aid. While reports from 1986 show that Zambians were positive towards refugees considering ethnic kinship they had with them and allowed refugees to live amongst them following the acceptance of local chiefs, a report in 2005 shows

that there are reported signs of xenophobia towards refugees that was addressed by religious leaders in Zambia (Freund and Kalumba, 1986; Darwin 2005; UNHCR and GZ, 2019).

Uganda is one of the leading sample countries for inspiring the CRRF prior the 2016 New York Leaders' Summit. The country hosts refugees from South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. In 2018, it was one of the largest refugee hosting countries in Africa, with over one million refugees. With its most progressive refugee law in the continent, Uganda settled refugees and allocated land for self-reliance of refugees. The settlement model of the country settles refugees in 12 districts that puts into consideration the ethnic and cultural similarities with the host communities. The country has over 100,000 self-relocated urban refugees in Kampala and other secondary cities (Crawford, et.al, 2019).

As mentioned above, most camps and settlements are established in the peripheries, settlements in Uganda are located in underdeveloped peripheries with host communities that are already in dire condition in regard to socio-economic development. Further, Crawford et al, (2019) highlight that relatively self-relocated refugees in Urban areas make a better self-reliance activity and generate better incomes than those in the settlement. This they explain is that they are involved in non-agrarian income generating livelihood activities than the majority of those in the settlements who rely on agriculture. According to research, majority of the refugees produce for their own household consumption rather than for the market, and most of them live under poverty. As the refugee numbers increase, the government is challenged to manage this settlement scheme as land allocated for farming reduced as well as productivity because of lack of support from international finances and funding. The issue of land has eventually also evolved into cause of tension between refugees and host communities as the number of refugees exceed the population size of the host communities (ibid.)

According to International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) 2019 report, though the refugee- host community relationship is positive in Uganda, tension and violent conflicts have been witnessed. This was because of the large refugee population presence that had unmet needs such as food, cash and energy sources such as firewood that urges them to fight for already scarce resources with the host community. Further, despite the attempt of the government to provide land and

necessary inputs for farming to refugees, because of the large population size it was not possible to give land to all, and those who received a plot of land didn't get enough land to enable them to be self-reliant or the land was too rocky with inarable soil. Thus, as an alternative refugees have informally approached host community for employment on their farm for cash, which has helped on the co-existence and interdependency of the groups. Yet the host community that has shared its land with refugees in hopes that it would bring development have not been able to see the expected growth and opportunities, this has created tension and violent attacks especially on women, as the host community believes that they are not being asked for consent (IRRI, 2019; Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019).

Kenya host for most refugees from Somalia and South Sudan, though they have not attended the 2016 Leaders' Summit, they have made pledges of CRRF. The pledges were made to undertake self-reliance and inclusion measures, as well as provide legal status for refugees claiming citizenship through marriage or parentage. Kenya's refuge model is based on encampment and thus movement of refugees is limited to camps. Refugees are seen as security threat especially Somali refugees. This policy contradicts the implementation of the pledges made as it constrains refugees the right to work and earn an income except as incentive workers to NGO's working in the refugee settlement areas. The government prioritizing security and national development agenda that hopes to fill the high youth unemployment of nationals seems reluctant to strongly implement the pledges, instead making several attempts to close Dadaab refugee camp that is located to the Kenya-Somalia border. Though implementation is slow some progresses such as Refugee Education Inclusion Policy over a three-year period developed by the Ministry of Education has been drafted awaiting implementation (Crawford et al. 2019).

According to Research and Evidence Facility (REF) 2020 report, since the CRRF launch in Kenya, refugees and host community have expressed lack of involvement in the process that led to decision making. Meeting and communication booklets are shared after decisions are made just to say that they have been informed. Policy level decisions do not trickle down to the bottom as is, as there are compatibility issues in agendas and priorities between the receiving end and those delivering it. In Dadaab, the largest refugee hosting area in Kenya, the only reason tensions

do not escalate to violence is because most of the refugees are from Somali and have clan and cultural ties with the host Somali Kenyans (REF, 2020).

Rwanda a country which has been hosting refugees since 1996 also have progressive refugee law. The Rwanda National Legislation grants refugees the right to work and freedom of movement, to establish business, hire employee, lease land and own property (Government of Rwanda, 2014; MIDIMAR-UNHCR, 2016). Yet majority of the refugees which are from DRC and Burundi reside in camps. The country is not large enough to provide arable land to refugees and considers urbanizations as the way forward in implementing the CRRF. The government explains urbanization as positive refugee model because the refugees share similar cultures with the host community and thus sees refugees as economic contributors. The country pledged to provide National ID and Conventional Travel documents to refugees and include some number of refugees in the national education system as well as give urban refugees the right to buy national health care insurance. Implementation has been a challenge because of lack of funding from donors and the private sector investors, lack of public awareness of refugee rights and structural complications in the government (Crawford, et al. 2019).

Rwanda have come to an agreement with the government of the United Kingdom (UK) that was announced in April 2022. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has stated to a public media “From today ... anyone entering the UK illegally as well as those who have arrived illegally since January 1 may now be relocated to Rwanda,” Johnson said in a speech on Thursday morning near Dover, in southeastern England, where thousands of refugees and migrants landed on beaches after crossing the English Channel in small boats last year” (Algazeera,2022).

This deal has come to many working on refugee protection such as the UNHCR as a shock. “Rwanda’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Vincent Biruta, said there will be a system in place to screen arriving asylum seekers and migrants from the UK for criminal records and origin. Those from Rwanda’s direct neighbors are not welcome” (The East Africa, 2022). Though Rwanda will receive 160 million USD in funding from UK, these breaches international refugee laws including the 1951 refugee convention the two countries have signed (Beirens and Davidoff-Gore,2022).

Tanzania hosts over 120,000 Burundian refugees and 80,000 refugees from DRC (UNHCR , 2022). The country was part of the 2016 Leaders' Summit and made five pledges; to continue to receive refugees fleeing political conflict and instability, to undertake a review of the 2003 National Refugee Policy and the 1998 Refugee Act in order to ensure their alignment with international instruments and current humanitarian challenges, to continue the process towards naturalization of the remaining cases from the 1972 Burundian caseload, to improve the quality of protection by enhancing access to education and the domestic labor market; and to support the adoption of the Global Compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees and displaced people (Government of Tanzania 2017). On 23 January 2018 the government of Tanzania informed UNHCR that it has withdrawn its implementation of the CRRF (ECHO, 2018). This decision was shared via Note Verbal which further brought an end to the provision of citizenship to Burundian and promoting repatriation of refugees as durable solution. This came as a surprise to the various ministries of the government who have been taking steps in implementing the pledges. The President has later affirmed that the decision is firm (Felleson, 2019).

The country has been welcoming refugees fleeing conflict and prosecution from neighboring countries for over three decades (Kurimoto (2005); Regassa (2007)). These refugees originate from South Sudan, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia. The longest protracted cases of refugees are found in the west of Ethiopia in the Gambella regional state, where refugees are hosted in 7 camps. According to UN News Survey, 31 March 2006, most of these refugees arrived in Ethiopia in 1983 and 1990's.

Ethiopia have also the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), according to UNHCR Ethiopia portal report there are around 4.5 million IDPs in Ethiopia as of 31 March 2022. This number is significantly higher than the refugee population in the country. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre Ethiopia (IDMC), despite several positive political developments in 2018, old conflicts became more entrenched and new conflicts escalated along various state borders in 2019. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM) 71% of the displaced are due to conflict while 29 % are displaced due to flash flood (IOM Report, 15 September 2020).

Ethiopia that has been considered as an exemplary fast growing third world country by the international community, seems to be proving that authoritarian aid backfires (Cheeseman, 2020). According to Cheeseman, despite being Federal Democratic Republic state Ethiopia has been authoritarian, yet in the past two decades it has put great name with Donors such as the EU, USA, UK, International development financiers like the World Bank and IMF, Private investors, in achieving economic growth and for being one of the biggest refugee hosting countries in Africa. This has enabled the rather strict world liberal democracies to work with the Ethiopian Government despite human rights violations and governance problems. Yet economic gaps and ethnic conflicts have been brewing for the country with large youth population that has high rate of unemployment. This in addition to other push factors as deteriorating political and institutional factors, growing ethnic tensions and conflicts, in return has caused thousands of youths to illegally migrate often through dangerous and long routes mostly to Europe (Cheeseman, 2020).

Ethiopia is one of the top recipients of official development assistance from the EU (Inside Development, Ethiopia, 19 January 2021). It was allocated ERUO815 million from the 2014-2020 budgetary period, plus more than ERUO 400 million from the EU Trust Fund for Africa (Inside Development, Ethiopia, 19 January 2021). The EU Trust fund (EUTF) was created on the Valletta Summit on Migration between European and African leaders in Malta on 11 and 12 November 2015, following the European migrant crisis (Szent-Ivany, 2021). This was EU's efforts through the refugee crisis to deflect responsibility and legal obligations away from EU member states and onto transit and origin countries (Castillijo, 2017). In 2016, the EU included Ethiopia on its list of 16 'priority' countries that would be given support to reduce the arrival of migrants and refugees in Europe in return for various incentives like development aid and trade (Tsion, 2020). EUTF's support in Ethiopia focuses on two areas: Socio-economic integration of refugees in Ethiopia (via Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)) and Ethiopian migrants return and reintegration in Ethiopia, so far it has received a total of EURO270.2 million (ibid.).

Following Ethiopia's pledge and acceptance to be considered as a CRRF focus country, the decision was quickly supported by a joint World Bank- UNHCR mission to consider support to refugees and host communities under the IDA-18 refugee sub-window (UNHCR Briefing Note, July 2018). IDA-18 is the World Bank Financing to Support Refugees and their host communities, a development response to forced displacement. Thus, it was not only the EU but the World Bank who has taken on this development approach towards forced displacement and migration issue.

CRRF was officially launched in Ethiopia on 28 November 2017, though the Parliament adopted the refugee proclamation in 2019, and later in 2018 mid-year in five regions hosting refugees, including Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Tigray, Afar and Somali (UNHCR Briefing Note, July 2018). This research focuses on the case study of Gambella regional state which is the largest refugee host in the country.

The CRRF implementation in the above political grounds in Ethiopia has affected the momentum it had before 2018. The Steering Committee (SC) established by different line ministries met a number of times before the pattern faded until it was no more. The SC agreed to meet every month for the first 6 months. The SC included Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Federal Attorney General, Donor Representatives (US and EU), World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, ILO, INGO Rep (ZOA) and NGO Rep (PAPDA). The SC was led by Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) former Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affair (ARRA). National Co-ordination Office (NCO) was established by the Government in January 2018 to ensure the pledges are implemented through a multistakeholder approach. Through engagement on the NCRRS, the SC and NCO were to be adapted to meet the broader objectives of the new strategy (CRRF Ethiopia, 2018).

Gambella represents a complex environment for implementation of the Ethiopian government's Refugee Roadmap and National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS) (Carver, Fana and Naish, 2020). Carver et al. (2020) on their study in the region specifically on the implementation of the CRRF included interviews with refugees, and local government authorities. According to their finding, the population is highly mobile and with fluid connection

to national identity, and with kinship networks across borders. They emphasize that both refugees and host depend on the level of diverse networks they have access to that enables them to be more mobile and have more livelihood opportunity. But for the rest of the population with no such network the struggle to access the available scarce natural resources and livelihood creates tension between the refugees and the host community. In addition, the existing parallel governance of the refugee population and the host community is another cause for grievances. That is, despite positive relations in recent year between the Federally authorized RRS and the regional government, there continues to be lack of strong bridge between the two, with RRS having relatively greater budget to administer than the regional government, service quality gaps within the camp and the host community is wide. Thus, advises on making the CRRF discussions more inclusive of refugees on the pros and cons of development in the region, and for a communication strategy that has the capacity to coordinate all stake holders at micro level.

Resistance is a phenomenon that exists in a state of oppression within a power relation of an oppressor and the oppressed (Gottlieb, 1983). Thus, an individual or group oppressed must have a certain belief of their identity and its features, so that they are aware of these identities that are in danger of threat and existence in the power relation with the oppressor (.ibid). With Ethno-federal system that has given further self-determination rights to ethnic groups, Gambella finds itself in polarized identity politics among its diverse ethnic groups it houses. This identity politics is based on what Volkan (2001) calls ‘Chosen Trauma’, a component of identity politics by large groups to maintain, protect and repair their group identity. This creates power relation among different groups that dominate at different periods of the country and its regional states such as Gambella, that lays the foundation for resistance among one another. We have discussed above on the on the various political changes the Ethiopia has gone through and its impact for Gambella, highlighting the different power relation at different time. This can be seen between the Federal government the regional governments, further among ethnic groups within regions forming different layers of power relation and thus of resistance among one another.

Thus, based on the above, this research aims to understand and find local response, in the form of resistance or otherwise, to projects such as CRRF that are top-down development projects.

## **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

The local response to that of CRRF could be seen in the form of the traveling of norms, the adoption of international norms and resistance to norms.

### **2.2.1. The Traveling and Acceptance of Norms**

Based on the above literature, forced displacement of people continues to grow worldwide. In Africa, intrastate conflicts continue to be the main source of displacement followed by socio-economic deterioration. Millions reside in camps and settlements in Africa for over five years, creating protracted refugee caseloads among already weak and poor nations that host them. As such large movements of forcibly displaced is a cross boundary issue that cannot be managed by one state, it requires international cooperation (New York Declaration, 2016). CRRF as discussed on the introduction has passed through the three phases of norm: norm emergence, norm cascade and internationalization (Finnmore and Skinkkin ,1998). Thus, it has traveled through the three cycles; starting from the refugee regime that support poor nations host large refugee sizes to states hosting them, the norm for CRRF approach then has reached the UN, where it was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016. Ethiopia at the national level has adopted the 2019 refugee proclamation by the House of People's Representatives (Proclamation, 1110/2019).

### **2.2.2. Resistance**

Resistance is defined in regard to various subjects and contexts such as politics, medical, physics, biology and even second world war. What holds a common ground for all is that in each context the term is used to mean to have the capacity to hold-still, to shield from certain imposed change on a certain existing state, to fight back asserted pressures of human or scientific acts or reactions. The process intends to maintain original existence that is being acted on to bring about change to the original existence or state of being of the matter at hand.

In social studies resistance has been studied by various academicians such as the Jewish-American Professor Roger S. Gottlieb, the American Social Scientist James C. Scot, Dr. Vlerie Herbert of Tornonot, the German author Professor Frank Trommler, Dr. Gugulethu Siziba & Dr. Gibson Ncube of University of Zimbabwe and many more. Some of the most researched

resistance movements include the Jewish Resistance, South African Civil Resistance of the Apartheid regime, the Mahatama Ghandi led Indian Resistance against the British Colonialism, the US Resistance against Slavery, the Feminist Resistance to inequality and more. Internally in Ethiopia, there are several historic records of Ethiopian resistance to colonialism and regime change. At this point it is important to refer to Roger S. Gottlieb (1983) on his writing on the Concept of Resistance, that we do not mix ‘civil disobedience’ and ‘resistance’. While resistance can be conceptualized as means to oppression by the oppressed, civil disobedience may not necessarily have this relationship, it can simply be an act of crime.

Resistance is a phenomenon that exists in a state of oppression within a power relation of an oppressor and the oppressed (Gottlieb, 1983). Thus, an individual or group oppressed must have a certain belief of their identity and its features, so that they are aware of these identities that are in danger of threat and existence in the power relation with the oppressor (.ibid). During the time of the Nazi leadership the Jews very existence was threatened, and resistance occurred in various ways; while some took to violent resistance such as the JFO, others took to Tacit resistance, Unconscious or Self-Deceptive Non-resistance. According to Gottlieb (1983), Tacit resistance takes the form of an individual or unorganized resistance that acknowledges the oppression and may not resist in daily manner, while unconscious resistance is acted as opposing or failing to comply with what is put in place by the oppressor due to lack of awareness or misunderstanding or incapability due to fake illness while self-deceptive resistance is when an individual or group believe that they are resisting but are actually are not. (.ibid).

Scott (1989, p.52) seconds the above definition “resistance is virtually always a stratagem deployed by a weaker party in thwarting the claims of an institutional or class opponent who dominates the public exercise of power”. He discusses on the class difference that existed during the Revolution period in Europe and slavery to explain on the various forms of resistance that took place during this period. Scott (1989) emphasizes that most of the resistance by the lower classes or the subordinates took an everyday form of resistance which took the form of individual slugging on daily work, withholding the actual amount of produce from a farm to be taxed, public resistance were a rare incident in the lives of the oppressed as the power relation would only cause much suffering to them.

Non-violent resistance has been common way to show resistance in India during the Resistance led by Mahatma Gandhi (Traboulay, 1997), in South-Africa during the Apartheid regime and in the US during the time of Slavery. Most of these movements have been faced by unbalanced amount of force from the oppressors to be controlled and shut down but with no success. Thousands of lives have been lost in the process of persuading to threaten and discourage such resistance but at the end it slowed if not ceased the oppressors from pursuing their usual ways.

In the modern technology era, resistance has taken over the digital platform where people can express their frustrations to public figures and governments easily. The writing of Siziba and Ncube (2015) is a case in point. The Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who has been in power for over 37 years was under digital wave of meme resistance following his stumbling and fall on a live public television transmission. The man who has been depicted for years as untouchable and empowered by divine power to lead the people in his late nineties collapsed in front of millions of his people proving that he is actually human and not divine, that despite his continuous statement that he is not willing to give his leadership position as he is still capable was proved otherwise. The public took this opportunity to create a satirical meme wave with the collapsing Mugabe to speak up on what normally couldn't be said in public because of his dictatorship. The public including the diaspora took to the momentum to show their frustration of the leadership.

Victoria Carty of Chapman University (2014) also discusses on how resistance has taken the digital medium regarding the Arab Springs. The social movement that finally took social resistance to the digital platform brought the end of the year's long dictatorships in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The movement that started over social media later moved to public peaceful demonstrations that ended with clashes from the government that took the lives of hundreds of people. Thus, from the above two social media/digital movements we can see that modern day resistance has more efficient ways of organizing resistance and challenges governments like non before regarding accountability. It is more challenging to have one way communication and cover up misconducts and corruption, even lack of governance in this modern era as most people have easier way to gather graphic, audio, and visual information, as well as easily share it to

thousands and millions of people in just one click. Thus, making underground resistances much easier and more of a challenge to control by the government or the powerful.

Government and other powerful bodies have come to acknowledge the power of the digital media and put in place various restriction to certain social media pages, yet with the dynamic and fast changing nature of the digital platform the society has shown ways to resist these blockades via Virtual Private Network (VPNs) technology in the case of China and even in states such as Sudan and Ethiopia that saw social uprisals and political changes in the past few years. Some States have completely shut down the internet services all in all as the damage couldn't be controlled and most of all directly threatened their continuation on leadership.

Other resistances include resistance to development. Oliver-Smith (2001) discusses on state monopoly of violence and the global trend towards liberal development projects. That is, in the past 30 years the world has taken wide development projects globally that displaced several indigenous and local communities to build golf clubs, dams, commercial farms etc. These projects have faced resistance by those affected. Oliver-Smith states:

When the local dramas of resistance to resettlement are cast in national debates attracting the attention of national and international NGOs and multilateral and international institutions, they become active participants in a larger global dialogue. In effect, resistance to resettlement is helping to reframe the entire contemporary debate on development, the environment and human rights, a debate that shows considerable signs of expanding and of gaining increasing relevance to both national development and human rights policy as well as international standards (Oliver-Smith, 2001, p.101).

The late Prime Minister of Ethiopia states “In the end, development is a political process first and a socioeconomic process second” (Meles, 2012). This brings socio-economic value gaps in envisioning economic growth and sustainability between policy makers, government and the local people who must bear with the consequences of the decisions made from top. Unless there is an efficient top-down policy implementation approach to development projects that are believed by the government to benefit the state in general, and the people in the long run, the benefits are not felt at the local level. Thus, this often brings resistance at the local level in the

form of leaving cattle to graze on commercial farmlands, setting fire on farms and industries, attacking and looting of development workers etc (class lecture on development at IPSS, Session 6,2021).

From the above readings on resistance, the theory of resistance lays in power relation of the 'Oppressed' and the 'Oppressor'. The power play in any context is crucial to determine and understand if a phenomenon is resistance and if so, what form of resistance it is. According to records on the readings above depending on the context individuals and groups have taken various forms of resistance to the oppressing situation they have found themselves in. The social, economic, political, and cultural epistemology and ontology of society all plays part in the form of resistance an individual or groups undertakes.

Bloomfield and V.Scott (2017) brought together various academics<sup>2</sup> to discuss and author on norm formation and norm contestation. These academics with an expertise on International Relations, International Law, Political Science and Social Studies came together to discuss and author on the various debates on norm literature. The aim of this book compiled and edited by Bloomfield and V.Scott is to cover the gap in the norm literature, which is norm resistance or as Bloomfield calls them norm antipreneurs. The lack of literature on norm antipreneurs inspired this thorough research on how to frame and understand norm resistance.

The key debate on this collection is that norm entrepreneurs and norm antipreneurs come in different forms and power dynamics. In this regards it relates to the resistance theory of oppressor and the oppressed in that there is a power play (Gottlieb, 1983). This means at various incidents a norm entrepreneur may also be a norm antipreneur depending on the strategic advantage the norm poses to the individual or groups. These authors look into resistance to norm diffusion referring to the study of norm cycle by Finnmore and Skinkkin, (1998). As Finnmore and Skinkkin (1998) mention that norms have a sense of righteous and justness set at its core, this basically means that core of human rights laws are embraced in them. Bloomfield and V.Scott (2017), on their book explain that this has Western-liberal views that have undermined

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<sup>2</sup> Kenki Adachi, Clifford Bob, Malcolm Campbell-Verduyn, William Clapton, Frank P. Harvey, Jeffrey S. Lantis, John Mitton, Helen E.S. Nesadurai, Lucia Meilin Oriana, Orli Zahava,

and left norm resistance by antipreneurs less understood. It is emphasized that norms are context based and need to be considered per context to have a clear understanding of who the entrepreneurs are who antipreneurs are as well as their intents. For instance, the Responsibility to Protect R2P, the Gaza Israeli Occupation and the Myanmar natural disasters were considered. Each of these contexts have entrepreneurs who justify the need for the norms and antipreneurs who resist the justification from strategic point of view. As far as the UN Security council is concerned norms such as the R2P are resisted by one or two antipreneurs from strategic point of view via Vetto power (Bloomfield and V.Scott, 2017).

CRRF, Resistance, and Local Acceptance of CRRF are dependent on Securitization of Migration, Funding, Political Stability, Local Context, Identity recognition, Dignity and Fear/threat as independent variable. The CRRF generally as a framework depends on the securitization of migration in global north, funding is also major factor for the implementation phase of the framework and the narrative and understating of each local context it is discussed.

Resistance as discussed from the literatures vary in form and type and highly dependent on individual or group identity that seeks to be recognized, it also seeks dignity and the wish to feel fear free , thus it does not depend on the economic needs in this case. Further resistance exists at different level, the state hosting large refugee population may resist to continue hosting such a large, protracted refugee size considering the lack of support and priorities of the protection regime in the global north. At the regional level and further down resistance exists because of the inequalities in services between refuges and the host, it roots itself in historic violent relationships that has faded the ties between the two contending ethnic groups the Anuak and the Nuer. Administration and funding wise between the Federal and Regional level. Resistance at different level implies the structural resistance as well as the ones that have transformed into violence, between refugees and the host communities, at regional and Federal level.

Local Acceptance of CRRF depend on the availability of funding that would enable actors to undertake activities that would enable them to do more than humanitarian aid. It is also highly dependent on the various actors focused on the parallel system service provision to refugees to have an inclusive Planning and Programing that would benefit the host community as often

stated on instrumental documents, such as the New York Declaration. It also depends on acknowledging the realities on the ground with its sensitivity in narrations from geographical, political, and socio-economical complexities. Context is key in planning and seeking support with feasible timeline for results that are visible and sustainable. This further means depending on the context in this case it is crucial to understand the wish to be recognized and the threats of groups to have local acceptance of projects such as CRRF.

In Gambella region from the literature and humanitarian operations on the region, the conflicts that transformed to violent conflicts at different periods have been along ethnic lines. Though there are five indigenous ethnic groups, the Anuak and the Nuer ethnic groups that make the majority of the demography in the region have been in a position for the struggle for cultural and political significance in Gambella. Both groups having ethnic kinship in South-Sudan as in Ethiopia, and historically the Nuer being the second major population size in South-Sudan next to the Dinka and the Anuak a minority, while in the contrary the Anuak having been the majority in Ethiopia in recent past and the Nuer a minority. This demographic dynamic that has quickly changed after 1980's and the Nuer having grown in population size making the Anuak a minority is a key contention issue.

Further, Gambella located in the peripheries, away from the Capital, the relationship at different period with the Capital, the federal government has also influenced the relationship between the two ethnic groups. They have both had times where one ethnic group dominated the leadership, creating a power relation that opened space for resistance from the other. This has created grievances that was never addressed properly rather took a turn to do what the other has done while they had the upper hand.

The ethnic federalism that was later put in place in 1991 did not make the situation easier. It created room for self-determination based on identity creating the 'us' and 'others', indigenous and settled dynamics. Thus, from the diagram we can see that the moderator variables are variables that would affect the independent variables, thus addressing identity politics, the potential of implementing democratic government and peacebuilding process such as national and regional dialogues that would reduce the resistance to development projects such as the

CRRF that would include the host community. The moderator variables are variables that may affect the independent variable. The mediator variables on the other hand link the independent and dependent variables, that is, CRRF is resisted because of the ethnic struggle for political relevance or domination in the region, which further result in various inequalities ranging from wealth distribution to power, as well as access to natural resources and services. From this we can draw the relation between the two variables.

My research thus hopes to understand if these variables are indeed cause for resisting development projects such as the CRRF that come with large economic benefits to the host communities along with refugees.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Research Design, Methods and Data**

The thesis is based on empirical and secondary data, range of literature reviews and interviews of different actors in Gambella region as well as Addis Ababa. It is intended to have a wide range of understanding of the topic from top-down and bottom-up as well as historical, political and socio-economic perspectives. The objective of this section is to clarify the methodology and methods of data collection undertaken to address the gaps in the topic and outline the research structure.

#### **3.1 Research Design and Methodological Approach**

Considering the understanding between the international community and the Ethiopian government on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework at the New York Leaders' Summit in 2016, this thesis sets out to study the subjective understanding of the 9 pledges in particular local integration in societies divided along ethnic lines, such as in Gambella national regional state. The study undertakes a qualitative research method with open ended questions. The literature reviews on forced displacement, refugees and development have shown that even the most progressive countries have had challenges to succeed in "Humanitarian-Development Nexus" approaches considering the overall socio-economic and political stance of the countries hosting majority of the refugees. Considering that Ethiopia is among few countries practicing ethno-federal governance system, such frameworks are perceived in various perspectives by various actors at different level.

I have chosen qualitative research design as it allows me to collect data in the participant's setting and make data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, further it enables me to make interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009). This design is more suitable to address the complexity of the topic in the context of Gambella regional state. Thus, I have traveled to Gambella regional state to collect this data.

### **3.2 Data Collection and Analysis**

To answer the raised research questions, it was important to collect empirical data from different actors and experts such as Heads of government offices and the different constituents of the community in Gambella Town and Itang. The analysis is informed by interviews carried out during a field study in Gambella region in May 2022, as well as desk research on theoretical and empirical studies of available academic and policy documents, related issues that received media coverage as well as observations in my two years of stay in Gambella from 2015-2017. This section will outline and specify the methodological choices behind the collection of data, sampling of interviewees included in the Annex of this thesis, and structure of interviews.

### **3.3 Interview and data collection Method**

The main data is based on 13 interviews of which two were group discussions and 10 were interviews with key informants. The interviews were conducted between 23- 28 May 2022 in Gambella town and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Considering ethical procedures interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study and their willingness to be recorded or preferred notes were taken, thus interviews were recorded, and field notes were taken as per the preference of the interviewees. In-depth interviews were conducted for this study so that interviewees would have the sufficient time to express themselves, their experience, and subjective perspectives. Even though prior observations have been made, it was not enough to provide the subjective social, cultural, economic, and political perspective of the different parts of the society towards burden sharing, inclusion and local integration, thus in-depth interview was appropriate for the study (Creswell, 2009).

The studies on the CRRF launch in Gambella are not much studied considering the complexity of implementing such global development approaches towards refugees and host communities. Most of all Gambella is hosting the biggest refugee hosting region in the country, with protracted cases that date back over 20 years. The secondary data sponsored by UNICEF in the period 2018-2019 in Gambella region in particular Pugnido and Kule Camp in Itang woreda, highlights the basic challenges from informing government policy makers, NGO's and other stakeholders (Carver et al., 2020). The complexity of why such global burden sharing initiatives such as the CRRF needs to be continuously worked on rather than avoided considering the sensitivity of the

issue in the context of Gambella. This research aims to understand the perspective at community level among different stakeholders in the host community in Gambella town and Itang area, at government level as well as INGO's engaged in the region on refugees through in-depth interviews.

The interviewees represented the Anuak, Nuer, Majang and Highlanders who settled in recent times and also who were born and raised in Gambella, from the host communities. The Nuer interviewees further were divided as host communities and refugees from different camps in the Gambella region residing in New Land area in Gambella town. From the government offices, the interview included Finance Bureau, Agriculture Bureau, Investment Bureau, Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) Horn of Africa Bureau in Gambella town. RRS has also expressed their view on the study.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique and frame**

Mindful of the need to have the host community on board to implement the CRRF, I used purposive and snowballing sampling technique to include the host community, refugees, regional and federal government officials as well as NGOs. Thus, I aimed for host community youth leaders from the Anuak and Nuer who are University Graduates and perusing further education in different Universities. Such leaders have trust among their respective youth groups and communities as well as have the power to mobilize and or play significant role in influencing the youth. The interview was one on one with the youth leaders.

Focus group discussion with youth groups in the New Land area, which is Nuer area, consisted of Nuer host community youth and refugees with families residing in the area. While the second Focus group discussion took place in Baro Mado area which is Anuak dominated area were the focus group was mixed with Anuak, Majang and Highlanders. I asked why they do not have a Nuer member and they have informed me that the Nuer youth do not feel safe to come to this side of Gambella town. While the same was recorded for the youth group in New Land area.

The interview with government offices was conducted one on one in their offices and outside of their office at a convenient place and time for them. Most have preferred notes than voice recording of the interviews. These offices are significant for the implementation of inclusion and

integration of refugees with the host community as they hold the mandate to administer the host community.

The interview with different UN and NGOs key informants was conducted one on one, I made the sampling on stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding and livelihood activities. This enables them to respond to the research questions as stakeholders who represent the organizations program delivery activities that are close to development and self-reliance on the ground. This helps me compare the dynamics such activities create in camps and out.

Further, some of the interviewees and people I knew during my stay in Gambella years of stay in Gambella were able to provide me with relevant leads for interview, thus snowballing was also used. The Anonymized details of the interview is included on Annex I of this thesis.

### **3.5 Interview Guide and Structure**

The interview was conducted through semi-structured interview questions that were open-ended. “It is important to design interviews in such a way so that they will yield as much information about the research topic as possible and also don’t abandon the purpose of research” (Bhasin, 2019). Thus, considering the sensitivity of the CRRF in the context of Gambella, this has enabled me to start the interviews in a manner that put into consideration the interviewees comfort to discuss on the matter from their perspective. It has also enabled me to ask follow-up questions that would address the research questions prepared to be addressed through these interviews. The aim was to capture the understanding, attitude and stands of people at different level towards CRRF. As the term CRRF is broad, it was important to clarify what it means for interviewees who do not capture the concept as a framework. While this was the case for interviewees in the community, it was a much familiar concept in government offices and NGO’s. The semi-structured interview questions have enabled me to clarify the questions when needed. Of the 14 interviews, 12 were conducted face-to-face, while 2 were conducted via phone call from Gambella Town to Addis Ababa with the HoREC Official, and to Pugnido with a UN Staff.

The interview guide was developed based on the gaps that were addressed on the literature review and the research topic that aims to study the case of Gambella. In view of the different contexts the CRRF has been piloted, it is essential to approach such studies based on up-to-date primary data that would ensure understandings, attitude and willingness at different level in the

region for solutions in regard to protracted refugee cases. Further, the guide is also to enable researchers, policy makers and all stakeholders interested in durable solutions for refugees have clear understanding of gaps that have been addressed and progresses made and vis-versa since the launch of CRRF in Gambella.

### **3.6 Method of Analysis**

The collected data was audio recorded where interviewees authorized it and interview notes were taken as preferred by the interviews. Considering the sensitivity of the in-depth interview majority of the interviewee's preferred that I take note of the interview rather than audio recording, thus, as per the ethical consideration, I have taken interview notes. Based on the collected audio data and notes, I have triangulated thoroughly the transcribed audio data, which then were coded to form a theme for analysis (Creswell, 2009).

The in-depth interview pros and cons were also put into consideration. That is, even though quality information may be collected from high-level government officials, as they may give politically correct answers it was also important to include the local community respective and select preferred setting to have a candid discussion on the overarching perspective on CRRF implementation. The data was analyzed thematically, through a process of coding as discussed below. An example of the thematic approach and the coding based on themes is presented in annex 1 of this thesis.

### **3.7 Thematic Analysis and Coding Process**

In consideration of the top-down nature of the CRRF communication from the Global level by States and then later internally, it was key to consider government officials who are in a position to know the topic, as well as have the general preview of how the launch of CRRF took place in Ethiopia, specifically in Gambella region. The launch and the pledges by the Government of Ethiopia that led to the adoption of new 2019 Refugee Proclamation, which is intended to give refugees more rights in achieving the pledges, is the commitment on the side of the Ethiopia Government to reach out to refugee hosting areas for the implementation. Though it is a federal government level commitment its implementation is highly dependent on the regional government buy-in, which further means the buy-in should also trickle down to the general population that the inclusion and integration is intended to take place with. Thus, it was essential

to have in-depth interview with the regional government officials to understand the latest socio-economic and political perspective they hold to address the issue in a way that would benefit the host community.

The local community in Gambella town live in separated locations from one another divided along ethnic lines. During my current stay for the data collection the situation was more or less the same from what I have already understood before. That is the Nuer live in Nuer area or zone in an area named New Land, while the Anuak live mostly around an area named Baro-Mado meaning across the Baro river, they also live in majority Highlander areas such as the main shopping area and also place named Gonder Sefer. Thus, as movement of the society also depended in this separation in town it was important to go the different areas to have the in-depth interview with the different groups. I selected my samples based on their acceptance in within their ethnic groups and societies to be selected as their representative. My key informant from the Anuak is a young man who is a university lecturer, youth representative and currently working on a local initiative that centers on youth mental health and rehabilitation. My key informant from the Nuer is a young man who is working in an NGO and an MA candidate in Gambella University, he has been part of the launch of CRRF in Gambella and has the overview of the perspective of the Nuer youth on the topic.

The other key informants hold relevant positions in their society as well as in the NGO's they work-in, they have clear know-how of the framework, and the society, as a professional, as well as a person belonging to one of the identity groups. They work on projects that relate to peacebuilding and livelihood and was relevant to understand how they implement these projects considering the reality on the ground, which is the undeniable and visible division of the Anuak and the Nuer.

It was also essential to have in-depth interview with International Non-Profit Organization, the UN staffs in particular, Ethiopians who directly work with refugees and host community, as well as, have been residents in Gambella for over 9 years as assigned by their particular UN entity from the "highlands" and have clear understanding of refugee-host community dynamics. While two of the interviews with the UN staff took place face to face in Gambella town, the other one took place via phone call from Gambella Town to Pugnido, an Anuak village 120 km from Gambella town with the oldest refugees residing in two camps Pugnido 1 and Pugnido 2.

HoREC was of an interest and sampled in the interview as they have undergone an all experts research on land use with the regional government in Gambella, also endorsed by the Federal government. It is to understand if refugees who exceed the population size of the host community are included in the process of the research on land use or if the environmental damage of such large refugee size on the region was studied.

The in-depth interview was then coded, “Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). It involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labelling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (called an in vivo term)” (Creswell, 2009, p.173).

Thus, terms that have been repeatedly used by interviewees to express their perspective of CRRF implementation in Gambella region will be thoroughly studied and interpreted into themes that can be then put into analytic categories that the research is attempting to address.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

I have been made sure that I have clarified who I am, where I am from and the aim of my research. I have asked each interviewee if they would allow me to audio record them or take note. In which case the majority have requested that I take note. Most of the interviewees have asked if my paper will be published and the anonymity of their identity, which I have assured them that their identity is anonymous and codes are used for that purpose, in regard to publishing my findings I have assured them that I would inform them in advance and share a draft if the opportunity arises (Creswell, 2009).

Considering there were limitations to movement of the Anuak and the Nuer into explicitly divided areas also sometimes called zones in Gambella town as is in most of the regional state structure, I have taken Bajaj trips to the area of their request at a time suitable for them.

## **Chapter four**

### **4. Data Presentation**

The aim of this chapter is to present the collected data and make analysis to understand the latest perspective on CRRF in context of Gambella region at different levels. In light of the historical socio-economic, cultural and political relationship between the two indigenous ethnic groups the Anuak and the Nuer among the remaining three indigenous ethnic groups the Majang, the Opo and Komo, it is essential to understand if time has resolved the concerns, insecurities and struggles between the two groups to implement such a wide inclusive humanitarian-development project such as the CRRF that would bring refugees and host community together for economic benefits.

Further, the analysis based on the available data aims to understand the gap for the CRRF implementation if any, to recognize and study possible opportunities for solution that could benefit all in Gambella.

#### **4.1 CRRF activities in the Gambella Region**

Based on the above analytical interest this analysis will attempt to answer the following questions

- a. How is CRRF understood in Gambella?
- b. What is the local response to CRRF? How are these responses manifested?
- c. How are the local responses addressed by authorities in the regional, Federal and International level?
- d. What is the way forward towards implementing CRRF in Gambella?

#### **4.2 Local Response to CRRF in the Gambella Region Perspectives on CRRF**

##### **4.2.1 Local Response by INGOs and CSOs**

The INGO and CSOs operating in Gambella are aware of the CRRF. Few of the INGOs are attempting to implement some part of the CRRF in their livelihood activities in the camps, yet not so much in reality. For instance, a small farming pilot project in Nguniel Camp mostly

focused on corn production, is an activity that is intended for refugees residing in the camp. If there are left over items such as water pump or plastic sheets for shelter activities in the camp, that may be given to the surrounding host community members. This is not a significant life changing contribution to the host community but only of support to few individual host community members residing around the camp. It has to be noted there is no record of what these leftovers may amount to or their impact on the lives of the few host community who may have access to them.

In the interviews with UNHCR staff member on the ground, (Interviewee)<sup>3</sup> who has worked in most of the camps during his over nine years' service on registration and food distribution acknowledged that CRRF especially inclusion and integration are priority for UNHCR. He believes it is an agenda that the UN agencies are determined to mainstream despite the realities on the ground. How will the two contradicting interests go together will remain to be a challenge as resistance is there. The realities he said are that the refugees are great in number, they are larger than the host community, they have strong ties with the host community and most of them have already integrated with the Nuer host community even holding two identities, Ethiopian and refugees, and it is common that during food distribution that most of refugee number in the camps is high while in regular days not so much as the population moves to their friends and relatives in the host community. These are very sensitive issues that the humanitarian agencies as well as the government counterpart puts a blind eye too. Yet it is among the key conflict triggering factors between the Anuak and the Nuer, as the Nuer population continues to grow while the Anuak feel like they are being pushed out of their land forcibly. The establishment of the large refugee camps by the Federal Government is also understood in the context of their land being taken away from them without will and compensation. They did not have a say. He states, "not sure if the UN agencies or the government even want to hear of why the CRRF will not work in the context of Gambella, making the issue sensitive and uncomfortable for most to touch."

(Interviewee)<sup>4</sup> from Pugnido explains that inclusion and integration is very challenging, he explains that the refugees from the two ethnic groups Anuak and Nuer are placed in two separate

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<sup>3</sup> (Interview, registration staff Gambella, UNHCR,23 May 2022)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> (Interview, registration staff Pugnido, UNHCR,23 May 2022)

camps, while the Anuak refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for over 20 years have integrated with the Anuak host community. These refugees have integrated in every aspect; settlement, socio-economically at far as the village can offer to the host community. Pugnido is an Anuak zone, that is, a refugee camp located in Anuak host community, he explains that they do return for food distribution to collect their rations. While the Nuer refugees are strictly in camp due to the existing tension between the two ethnic groups. He said there were few livelihood activities that were attempted for refugees to generate income and the return was not as expected successful. He gave me an example of a livelihood activity that was attempted with the refugees but did not work: “refugees were provided with livestock such as goats to breed and sale in the market to earn income, yet the goats were sold immediately after they received them for cash” (Interviewee)<sup>4</sup>. In my visit to Terfam market area in Itang woreda, as well as the Gambella town main market area (called Openo/Atkilt Tera), it is evident that plastic sheeting’s, oil, jerrycan’s from refugee camps are available in the open market as refugees’ sale them for cash.

NGOs that work on refugees have sectoral working groups to compliment service delivery to camps and avoid duplication of efforts. In Gambella as most INGOs follow this working trend, they have sufficient information from their particular donors which are also part of the international community as well as those NGOs they engage with, especially key protection lead agency such as UNHCR one of the prominent of CRRF. From my interview with key informants from INGOs they had clear understanding of the framework, I was more interested in those who worked on self-reliance, but I have learned from my interaction with the key informants that as part of their self-reliance activity they also have a peacebuilding activity to enable the success of self-reliance activities.

Mercy-Corps an INGO that works on self-reliance for instance also undertakes peacebuilding activities by sensitizing refugees and host. From my interview with a staff member of the INGO, how the peacebuilding activities are done, it is done separate for the ethnic groups considering the local context. In an interview with staff (Interviewee)<sup>5</sup> on CRRF states “when CRRF was launched in Gambella, there was resistance, especially the 2019 proclamation was a problem as there was no prior consultations done with the public or even at parliament representative’s

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<sup>5</sup> (Interview, Mercy Corps Staff, Gambella, 26 May 2022)

level.” He elaborated that Gambella is marginalized in basic services such as education, health and agricultural support. Agriculture needs to be modernized. Lots of work is required on the host community first, he highlighted that despite Gambella’s green wealth and water resources, thousands face food insecurity and starvation annually. He said that Mercy Corps is working on enhancing refugee saving by providing incoming generating activities as they have distress in access to cash. This is also in hope that it will support in the conservation of the environment which refugees find a viable solution to cash by collecting firewood for sale from the surrounding forest.

UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF - implemented by MoF, RRS, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and Regional Bureaus of Finance and Economic Cooperation, Justice, Security and Administration, and the University of Gambella launched Community Safety and Access to Justice Project (CSAJ) in 2018 (UNHCR Pledge Report, 2019). This project was intended to establish a Peace Committee inclusive of refugees and host community as well as relevant government stakeholders. According to interviewees with UNHCR and INGO staff’s there have been two days workshops on peacebuilding that was organized as part of this project in 2021. According to a presentation made on the workshop by UNHCR Head of Sub-Office on the workshop, what this project has achieved is Improved Community Policing, Judges, Prosecutes, RCC Members Capacities in camps, Training on human rights, refugee protection, family laws, property laws, and ADR mechanisms organized to capacitate formal and informal justice actors in camps, yet the structure of the peace committee as initially planned is not mentioned and from my engagement with the host community, there isn’t any relevant such structure that is known or acknowledged that was mentioned by any of the key informants on the peace efforts.

I have observed from the discussions with INGOs that most of the self-reliance or also called livelihood projects are short term with a year or two years phase. Further, the implementations are highly dependent on available funding and implemented in traditional NGO way, that is, more focused that the budget goes to a particular activity expected to be spent-on so that annual or quarterly reports of the INGOs are compliant to their planning and reports disregarding the sustainability of the projects. Thus, most self-reliance projects chances of surviving without aid of the NGO’s are low to non-existent. Even though there is no sufficient solid data available on

work skill mapping of refugees it is assumed that farming is a potential sector for livelihoods and some INGOs have brought tractors to plow available land within the camps for farming because of available funds they have. They have also installed fuel pumps for small scale water irrigation schemes for farming (Interviewee 26 May 2022)<sup>6</sup>. When I asked what the contribution of the refugees was on this interview, if the NGO brought tractors to plow, I was informed that the refugees planted the provided seeds. It is the sole aim of the CRRF to ensure a strategy that the humanitarian aid system in place compliments the development of recipients so sustainability is ensured, thus planning should be emphasized in skill mapping, training and placing durable machineries that can work via other energy source such as solar or wind. Investing in such technologies is essential if the aim is to achieve sustainability. These obviously do not come cheap but are worthy investments for all concerned. (Interviewee, 26 May 2022)<sup>6</sup> has also shared concerns regarding work ethics witnessed in the host community. He states “in an effort to establish self-reliance in fishery as Gambella is rich with fish, a certain host community was targeted for this activity. The group were provided with electric generators to run deep freezers to freeze their fishes in and for the NGO to secure restaurants and markets to buy from them.

Following this agreement, the refrigerator was installed and so was the electric generator that runs via fuel. As per the agreement when the NGO focal person returned to monitor the progress, the fridge was unplugged for mobile phones to be charged and fridge was cooling water instead of fish for the personal use of the fishing group while the fishers sat down to chew khat” though these situations are key for the failing of such activities it is also self-evident that necessary local needs analysis of the context is missing from the NGO side. That it is wrong to assume that because a group can fish, they want to fish for a living, it is the same as saying because one can write he/she can be a writer. Working is a skill to be developed through time, attitude change is a process that needs time, it is as much the responsibility of the NGO to ensure that purpose of the activities is guided until a solid foundation is made and skills are developed.

#### **4.2.2 Local Response of Federal Government**

The term Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework as often called CRRF is familiar to most interviewees in Government offices on Federal and Regional level.

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<sup>6</sup> (Interview, ZoA Staff Gambella, 26 May 2022)

The Federal Government under the refugee proclamation has given the former Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) the current Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) as the government authority to work with UNHCR- the UN Refugee Agency to manage and provide protection to refugees in Ethiopia. While this authority has been widened to include Internally Displaced People (IDPs) as well at the end of 2021. I will not touch on that for this research. From the in-depth interview RRS is committed in achieving the pledges and the main concern remains that the international community have not met their end of the bargain in the burden sharing to address the large refugee population size that Ethiopia has been generously hosting, as in the context of Gambella (Interviewee, 28 May 2022).<sup>7</sup> According to the (Interviewee)<sup>7</sup> “local integration is not the problem, the problem is that the international community is not committing to the agreed upon support for hosting such a large refugee size”, the key informant further elaborated that it is a huge task for the government to implement the pledges without the necessary financial support.

The international community that provides funding to UNHCR from the collected secondary data is highly inclined to protracted refugee cases in being self-reliant and contained within their first country of asylum. This is the case because of the internal political evolution within their own countries, towards migration and migrants to identity politics being polarized, the extreme of this scenario can be the UK-Rwanda asylum deal (14 July Aljazeera; 20 May CNN; 19 Dec Africa News, 2022). This deal allows the UK government to export refugees who have arrived the UK illegally, with the objective to discourage migrants. Rwanda on the other hand has shown no interest to open its border to forcibly displaced in its neighboring countries as part of this deal, complicating forced displacement and breaching international laws such as the 1951 refugee convention. It is evident as well that the “care and maintenance” approach to protracted refugee cases will not be a sustainable approach either. Thus, making the CRRF a durable solution that may benefit all.

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<sup>7</sup> (Interview, RRS DG, Addis Ababa, 28 May 2022).

### 4.2.3 Local Response of Regional Government

In my engagement with the regional government in Gambella I was able to interview Head of Finance Bureau, Head of Agriculture Bureau, Head of Investment Bureau, and Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) Horn of Africa Bureau in Gambella town. The officials are familiar with CRRF and its aim. The common issue that was shared by all was that CRRF did not have sufficient consultation or meet against local interest, with concerned in Gambella.

Most of them engage with the UN agencies, INGOs and the Federal government in regard to refugee inclusion in basic services especially health. (Interviewee 26 May 2022) <sup>8</sup>“Gambella is large and enough for all, it has natural wealth of land suitable for various types of farming and production, rivers that flow year to year. The problem is governance and budget shortages”. He stated that the annual budget does not put into consideration the large refugee population size it hosts. He gave the example of the one and only Gambella Hospital that provides health services to host community as well as refugees. Refugees who require treatment are referred from the camp health posts to Gambella hospital, the hospital is already in constraint of medical equipment’s, power shortage, and space for admitted patients etc. He highlighted that challenges in ensuring basic services in Gambella with the financial constraints the region faces.

“I have heard of CRRF, the issue of local integration is a controversial one that RRS need to consult with the community” (Interviewee)<sup>8</sup>

Interviewee<sup>9</sup> explained that the DRDIP Phase 1 has been implemented for the past 4 years directly benefiting the host community. This project is funded by the World Bank, implementing 125 sub projects, focused on infrastructure building such as schools, roads, access to water and health. It further ensured capacity building in government structures in a bottom-up approach, with 17,000 host community benefiting from it. 85% of the funding has gone to implementation cost. The Head has stated that Phase 2 of the DRDIP is intended to have refugees as direct beneficiaries as the Phase 1 had them as indirect beneficiaries.

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<sup>8</sup> (Interview, HBoF, 26 May 2022)

<sup>9</sup> (Interview, HoDRDIP, 25 May 2022)

#### 4.2.4 Local Response of Host Communities

In my interview with the host community, I was able to interview Anuak Youth Leader, who is also a lecturer in the University and further leads a local NGO on youth mental and behavioral change. The other representative was a Nuer Youth leader who holds a Masters degree and currently works at an INGO in Gambella. I also met with a Nuer refugee who also identifies as an Ethiopian residing in Gambella town. I also had engagements in the New Land area with refugees/ residents who identify as both.

During these interviews, except for the Nuer Youth who works in the INGO, most of them were not familiar with the term CRRF. The Anuak Youth Leader (AYL) said “he knows what it is but was not familiar with the term CRRF” (Interviewee, 25 May 2022)<sup>10</sup>.

Gambella is marginalize on basic services I would like to start with the term ‘Burden Sharing’, most of the humanitarian INGO responses in Gambella are not 50/50, the Civil Society Authorities in Gambella is not functional, it is not active as the positions in CSA is given based on political alliance of individuals randomly, so they do not have the capacity to follow up on INGOs operating in Gambella. When I first heard of “Burden Sharing”, I heard that the government has put in place a new proclamation that the host community will share 50 percent of what comes for the refugees, so the host community becomes indirect beneficiaries, but this has never been implemented in Gambella region.

This was seconded by the Nuer Youth Leader (Interviewee,25 May 2022)<sup>11</sup>, “Yes, I was part of the CRRF launch in Gambella, I recall that Anuak representatives walked out to the meeting hall because they were not pleased with the launch. I think it is a good framework, he said there is no problem from the Nuer side on this, but the only problem is that, since that launch ceremony, he mentioned until now, that the host community has not been beneficiary as promised. Nothing has reached the host community, so it is not being implemented”.

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<sup>10</sup> (Interview, Anuak Youth Leader, Baro Mado, Gambella, 25 May 2022)

<sup>11</sup> (Interview, Nuer Youth Leader, New Land, Gambella,25 May 2022)

The Youth Group (Interviewee, 26 May 2022)<sup>12</sup> in the host community, confirm that they have never heard of the initiative. These are youths in high schools and those who have completed grade 12, in the age range of 18-23 years of age.

#### **4.2.5 Local Response of Refugees**

The Nuer Youth Groups (Interviewees)<sup>13</sup> interviewed in New Land comprised of refugees residing in different camps visiting family and friends in New Land for a short period or permanently residing with them. They have confirmed that they have not heard of the term CRRF. Even when it was elaborated, they were not familiar with it. But they said some of them are part of peace committee in camps to support in conflict resolution when disputes arise.

### **4.3 Cooperation and Resistance to Local Integration**

From the gathered perspectives on CRRF at different levels, one that has come as the most sensitive is the local integration of refugees. Refugee population of the size in Gambella, exceeding the population size of the host community, makes the context unique and challenging. Studies have shown that refugees have witnessed their contribution to the economies of their hosts and third countries of settlement with the enabling policies put in place (Pederse, 2016). So why then is local integration of refugees not seen as an economic benefit to tap into, rather as a threat in the context of Gambella?

First it is important to clarify what integration means. Integration in the context of this research as I understood it through the various literatures above is to integrate the refugee population with the national system for basic services. This means, instead of having parallel system in the camps and to provide refugees with the freedom of movement, work and access to basic services. This further means that refugees will be able to have more options and choices on their life and eventually be free of aid as they adapt to the host community way of living.

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<sup>12</sup> (Interview, Youth Focus Group with Host Community, Baro Mado, Gambella, 26 May 2022)

<sup>13</sup> (Interview, Nuer Youth Group, New Land, Gambella, 24 May 2022)

### **4.3.1 INGOs**

INGO presence in Gambella to respond to the refugee protection response is strong. These INGOs have are relatively organized and have Task Forces that brings them together to coordinate delivery in the camps. Thus, relationships are built on common ground and relationships are relatively strong. Yet their relationship with the host community and the platform to include host community in their delivery is not reflected considering refugees being priority. Most of the INGOs have relatively stronger human resources that are composed of a majority national staff who are part of the local community or are very much familiar. Thus, it can be said the INGOs have members who live with the local host community and understand the realities on the ground. Nevertheless, it is business as usual, as interest of INGOs and plannings are focused on particular targets, delivery is focused as well, with less flexibility.

In conclusion INGOs, have a way of functioning and delivery. Though they work towards delivering the CRRF ideally, realistically they operate in often usual ways of reaching out target, which in this case are refugees. And efforts such as workshops and trainings have not been to go back deliver what are often discussed to the bottom of society if host communities are ever included. It is not that the realities on the ground, the resistances, grievances, every day relationships of ethnic groups, are not understood but not addressed as they are often political or sensitive, and it is easier to deliver on familiar, safe targets.

### **4.3.2 Federal Government**

The Federal government, RRS, on the other hand does not see local integration as an identity issue rather as a problem of lack of financial commitment from the international communities and donors. RRS DG(Interviewee)<sup>7</sup> states “the problem is not local integration; the problem is that the international community not keeping their end of the bargain in the burden sharing understanding that has brought the CRRF in motion”.

### **4.3.3 Regional Government**

From the interviews the Heads of the Regional Bureau of Agriculture, Finance and Investment the concept of local integration with the current realities of Gambella is non-existent unless

horizontal integration is considered. That is, Nuer refugees with the host community Nuer and the Anuak refugees with host community Anuak. It is interesting that the interviewees did not consider the possibilities of first having proper integration among host community Anuak and Nuer. Further, if refugees are to work within the camp it may be feasible but will be contested to consider out of camp integration at the moment as it only means complete takeover of the host community.

The regional officials on the other hand understand the need from the UN agencies on advancing the CRRF especially in regard to livelihood and economic benefits; One of the regional officials stated, “we have been approached by staffs from UN Agencies in regard to economic inclusion and livelihood projects that are unrealistic, it looks to me more like actions are taken by the staff to advance their career with their reports and efforts, rather than delivering tangible results.”

On a similar note, HoBF argues,

Work has to first be done on the host community before talking about refugees, we have been discussing with the UN agencies the need to build hospitals as currently the regional government is sharing the Gambella Hospital, the only large government hospital in the region for referrals of refugees, thus sharing the scarce resources available.

While he acknowledged some that the UN agencies donated a vehicle or recently one generator, it is not enough compared to the ratio of service demand to provision. One of the regional Official stated, “We understand that the UN is pushing for farming land that would enable both refugees and host community to farm, and recently we have allocated land, but it is for the host community”. In contrast it was my understanding from the UN officials that the land was provided for both refugees and host community to farm together for a contract farmer the organization intends to bring to the region to invest on commercial farms.

#### **4.3.4 Host Communities**

The host community, the Anuak and the Nuer have strong opinions about the inclusion and integration segment of the CRRF. The Anuak Youth Leader states “Why does Gambella of all

the other regions of the country have to share the burden of integrating and including the large populations size of South Sudanese refugees? Burden sharing should also be seen in regard to sharing in country sharing, the other parts of the country sharing on this responsibility” further “RRS has not been able to control the refugee population, they have been pushing the Anuak off their land, thus, the Anuak will always look at the Nuer with uncertainty and threat”. On the other hand, The Nuer Youth recalls that on the first launch of the CRRF in Gambella, especially in Pugnido some Anuak walked out of the meeting that was being chaired by RRS and UNHCR. He believes that the Nuer host community have no problem with the framework; in fact, they see it as positive and progressive. He states:

The problem with CRRF is with the Anuak, the Nuer host community does not have any protest refugee inclusion if the international community provides the necessary contribution to benefit the host as well. If the government left it to the people, we would have handled it better and it wouldn't have been an issue (Interviewee)<sup>11</sup>

From the above two interviewees it is possible to analyze that the perspectives of the youth from the Anuak and Nuer contradicts each other. While the Anuak believe that their culture, their identity is under threat for having such a large population size of refugees which are a majority Nuer, the Nuer believe that if it was not for the Anuak the implementation should not have been so challenging. The one thing they both agree on though is that since the launch of the CRRF there has not been anything tangible done for the host community by all actors providing service to the refugees.

The host community Anuak and Nuer live under dire conditions around the camps and in Gambella town. To put the local context in consideration in the case of host communities it is useful to refer to the available data to basic services in Gambella. According to 2007 Population and Housing Census, for 307,096 population size, what could be defined as housing and was counted for the region was 63,692 of which over 48,000 are constructed with mud and wood. From the 63,692 housing only 912 have water taps for clean water inside their homes, 826 water taps in common private shared compounds, 15,840 community water taps. According to the CSA (2007) majority of the houses do not have toiled while the around 4,769 shared pit latrines were

recorded. Basic services such as Health, WASH and Energy as well as Food Security are still gaps. It is also my personal observation that even though people in Gambella might have water taps, water shortage is evident and is very common to see donkey's carrying water filled jerrycan's to houses (Observation 2018- 2017; 2022).

According to the Regional Government officials interviewed acknowledge that Gambella despite its rich natural resources; 27 types of land types that can be used for different production such as agriculture, fishery and lot more, it is still one of the most marginalized regions. As INGO Staff stated above, "Every year large rural population of the region is under severe poverty." Basic service provision the host is extremely low, while Head of Finance Bureau on the interview stated that irresponsible governance is one reason, he also emphasized the low annual budget for the region is not inclusive of the huge burden of hosting refugees in the region. He further stated:

Before the 2018 change of government, Bureaus had to go for two three months without paying staff salary, this was even grave for public schools at they had to close in the middle of school years due to lack of finance to pay teacher's salary. Then how would the region be in a position to integrate a large refugee population more than the host population? (Interviewee)<sup>8</sup>

One of the regional officials stated, "Gambella is very large in surface area, it is enough for all but there is a lot of work to be done before talking about refugees".

I was also able to understand that there is conflict between how refugees are taken in general, that is, the Anuak Youth Leader and one of the regional officials mentioned that refugees are threat in that they are also armed and their easy 'pendulum like' movement along the borders pose threat to the Anuak and also the region in general; Humanitarian-development-Security nexus. They emphasized that the federal government, most of all RRS have put a blind eye to these dynamics. In contrast, the Nuer host community have a confidence of having the upper hand on the situation in Gambella as they make the majority and are in a better position to also integrate refugees which are majority Nuer.

As stated above in the interview with the Nuer Youth he explained “if there was no meddling of the federal government and if regions had the genuine power of self-determination, all this conflict would have been resolved”. When I asked him what he means by meddling he referred to the federal government influencing assignment of officials in the regional office. It is to be recalled that before the transition in 2018, the Regional President was Mr. Gatluak Tut a Nuer who is accused by the Anuak of being a refugee himself. Following the transition and reform of EPRDF, President Gatluak resigned and President Omod Ujulu an Anuak was elected President of Gambella region. Thus, considering Nuer being the majority it is only evident it would have been a Nuer president as he would secure majority vote. But it was also highlighted by the Anuak Youth Leader above that government office official’s assignment is political rather than qualification for the position.

The local community on the other hand, has made it clear that the condition on the ground is not ripe to go to the implementation phase of integration. It also is clear that the Federal Government is also aware of the reality on the ground. According to the Nuer Youth (Interviewee)<sup>11</sup>, if it was not for the Federal government, they would have managed the situation well. From his statement it is to mean that the Nuer already having made the majority of the two ethnic groups and historically having assimilative culture have already won, even by the book of the self-determination, it is too obvious according to him that integration has always been there between the camps and the Nuer host community. Such views are held by most of the regional government officials.

According to the Anuak Youth Leader (Interviewee)<sup>10</sup> “With the pace the Nuer in the camp are already integrating with the Nuer host community, there is no guarantee that they will not steal the rest of the Anuak land as they have been allowed to do so, so far” He adds that “it is very hard for the Anuak to trust them and consider them as not posing threat, because we the Anuak have been traumatized by them”.

This was further emphasized by the FDG 1 discussion (Interview)<sup>13</sup>, were most of the group members have refugee ID as well as local ID. The strong tie and integration of the refugees in camp residing in New Land is not an unusual situation. Another Nuer youth who is currently in

the process of starting up a local NGO has informed me that he came to Gambella when he was 8 years old from South Sudan and then went back to South Sudan, where he traveled with his family to Uganda also as refugee and finished high school and University in Uganda, returned currently to Gambella where he is living with his wife also a refugee in a rented house at the outskirts of Gambella town.

FDG 2 (Interview)<sup>12</sup> which includes youth of Anuak, Majang and Highlanders easily mingling together, When I arrived at the youth center to interview them, I noticed a group of youth being trained dancing. They said the Nuer are also welcomed to join their youth group, but they cannot come to this side of the town (Baro Mado) as they do not feel safe. While most of the Highlander youths seemed to not know why or what exactly the cause for the conflicts between the two groups is, they have been informed by their parents and care takers that it has been there since they could remember. Sutume Tolera a college midwifery student who was part of the group said “They attend class together in private colleges in one class, but friendships are often limited between their own ethnic groups”. It also seemed from the movement trends in town, highlanders have better relation to the other ethnic groups as well as the Majang compared to the relationship between the Anuak and Nuer, who are always alert. Even in the occasions such relations are developed for instance in the UN agencies and NGO’s where both groups work together, when tensions build and violence sparks both groups quickly must retreat to their respective side (Interviewee,<sup>3</sup>).

From the above we can conclude that it is certain that CRRF is a concept that has top-down approach. These further has made the relations between the regional and the federal government, the regional government and the local host community very tense. It has built up on the existing tensions of the region provoking host community grievance further. From the secondary data on the reports that have been generated on the GCR/CRRF in Ethiopia, the reports are extremely vague and donor oriented, in a sense that would show positive efforts made. This is a concern in that the report should be if not actual at least close to the reality of the context to inform donors of the high need for support to bring feasible durable solution for all. Further it is very clear that the issue of refugees is political, and the approach of humanitarian actors and donors with blind eye to the peace component of the CRRF makes efforts short lived.

### 4.3.5 Refugees

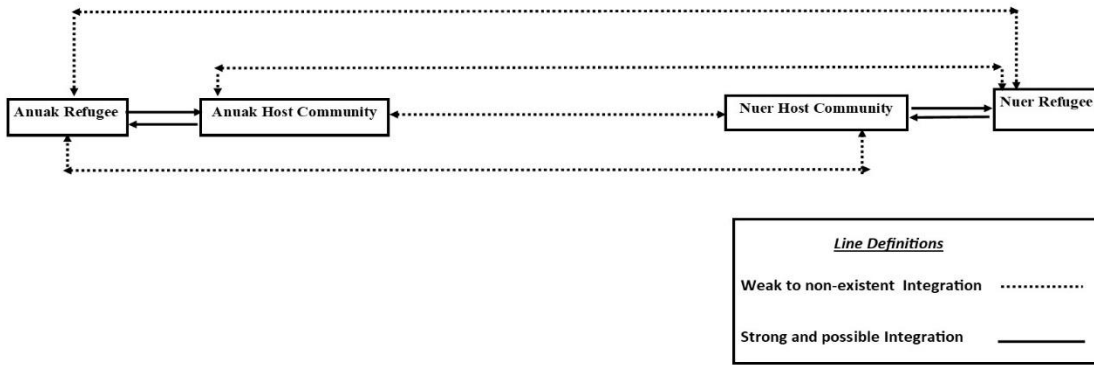
Refugees that I interviewed in New Land area (Nuer Zone in Gambella Town) from different camps in Itang residing with family members and friends in the host outside of the camp have not heard of CRRF or the initiative. Yet they have informed me that they can easily move to and from the camps to join their family and friends in the host. They have stated that it will not be difficult for them to integrate. It was interesting that even their hosts do not see the dilemma in their situation as recognizing themselves as South Sudanese and Ethiopian. For instance, one of the host to the refugees in a conversation was saying “that she will be going to South Sudan side to visit her family in the coming days”, this also reminded me of a colleague I worked with who openly used to tell me of his engagement with his family and friends in South Sudan but recognizes as need be as Ethiopian or Sudanese.

All the refugees I met and interviewed in New Land are Nuer. During my visit to Terpham market, I was able to speak to some Nuer refugees who stated that they are willing to go out of camps to make a living, they did not see the problem with the host community. I was wondering if their encounter has only been with Nuer host community as Terpham has majority Nuer host presence, the rest being Anuak and Highlanders, yet after my time in New Land I was able to understand that the Nuer are highly mobile and easily move back and forth from camps to the city as well as to South Sudan to visit family across the border.

As far as the Anuak and the Nuer refugees are concerned, the humanitarian-development-security nexus is evident. What looks feasible currently is what I would call Horizontal integration. Horizontal integration is when integration of the same ethnic group from two different countries can only integrate with their corresponding ethnic group, with lesser option of integration between the different ethnic groups because of historical grievance, which has evolved to political, economic and identity struggles, see figure 2 below. Thus, making horizontal integration the immediate applicable option in regard to integration. For the Nuer I have come to understand the issue was not strange at all, as they have already easily integrated with the host Nuer, the issue was not as threatening as to the Anuak host, who find it to be an

existential threat. But from my Key informant in Pugnido, the Anuak refugees have also easily integrated with the Anuak host community in Pugnido, Pugnido being an Anuak Zone.

**Horizontal Integration – Identity**



**Figure 2- Horizontal Integration Diagram for Identity**

The following chapter will divide the above presented data into two thematic topics to further make analysis. The above data has been organized from the raw data that was collected. Further reading through the data to manually code it (Annex I) to enable the alignment of themes to the case study and research questions. These themes are further interpreted to ensure validating the accuracy of the information (Creswell, 2009).

## **Chapter Five**

### **5. Data Analysis**

#### **5.1 Local Resistance and Justification**

This chapter will undertake thematic analysis of the above discussions and collected data. It will triangulate the gathered data, taking us on how CRRF became a global norm, following internationalization how it trickled down from policy level in Ethiopia to the bottom, in refugee hosting areas and the local response.

The world continues to witness forced displacement with major causes being war and violent conflict to climate change induced natural disasters. This has been argued by Duffield (2010) as well as Mangala (2010) highlights the contemporary international security threats, uncontrolled and unregistered mass movements, conflict, terrorism and climate change. This paradigm shift from addressing security from state centric to human security has brought the humanitarian-development-security nexus to address the biopolitics of the global south.

The world has over 103 million forcibly displaced persons as of mid-2022 (UNHCR,2022). The 2015 refugee crisis following the war in Syria, left 1.3 million refugees seeking refuge in Europe. Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, South Sudan are in a protracted civil war that has caused millions to flee, the war in Ukrain has also resulted in millions of people taking refuge in Europe. Refugees also risked their lives to reach European borders by road and through boat from various African countries.

Africa has faced several coups, civil wars, and violent conflicts in various of her countries including Ethiopia in recent years. This continues to impact the capacity of people and states to boost their economy, further catalyzing the poverty level of the poor. As a result, many are forced to flee because of active war and conflict or seeking economic opportunities in the global North. The closest continent to Africa being Europe, most flee their homes through dangerous and illegal routes, taking high risk with their lives. This has raised concerns among European states, coupled with war on terrorism following the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US. The EU as

part of the refugee protection regime has been influencing policies and decision making in containing refugees in countries of first asylum state, peace keeping efforts in conflict affected regions and more. European states have also been witnessing economic and political changes that brought anti-immigrant groups and nationalist that capitalized on the security and identity politics the situation presented.

The 2016 New York declaration is an effort that encompasses all the above dynamics as well as the overall protracted refugee situation in the global South. Yet it's obvious priorities in light of the above is to contain refugees from further moving to the global north. Referring to how refugees and uncontrolled movements are securitized it makes efforts by the global north more than just a humanitarian-development nexus rather a humanitarian-development-security nexus.

While the refugee protection regime acknowledges the rise of forced displacement and that most people fleeing their homes are being hosted in camps and settlements in already poor nations around the world, it was not enough to provide protection in camps and settlements. People need freedom of movement, work and dignity where they can work and produce wealth of their own, contributing to the economy of a state. Yet the country of asylums in Africa for instance are weak states themselves facing socio-economic and political constraints to enable them to absorb large refugee population. And this has been a cause for further 'illegal movements' through human traffickers for people attempting to reach the European borders. As ongoing conflicts of the country of origin of asylum seekers continue to drag on, voluntary repatriation also continues to be grim, thus the need for alternative durable solution, humanitarian-development approach. Yet this large refugee population sizes being hosted and the continued movement of uncontrolled mass movements pose similar threat to the global south hosting them. Thus, making it again a humanitarian-development-security nexus, with an emphasis on human security.

Humanitarian priorities have also continued to change drastically in recent years with multiple emergencies around the world. This has made supporting protracted refugee cases challenging as funding constraints widened. The New York Declaration thus is a legal instrument that establishes the bases for UN member states to find durable solution in the country of asylum in addition to repatriation, and resettlement to third asylum country. Yet with the liberal

development system in place and the change of paradigm on international security focusing on migration and mass influxes, the resettlement to third asylum country also very narrow compared to the refugee population size being hosted in camps in Africa.

Humanitarian- Development approach enables protracted cases to be integrated to national system of first asylum states with an opportunity to freedom of movement and self-reliance. Yet as mentioned in Duffield's (2010) argument self-reliance is an emergency itself. Citizens of the host countries are in dire need of economic gain and self-reliance that they take the deadly routes to flee to the global North.

It is also important at this point to discuss the meaning of integration as understood by the global North. The global north, the US and UK including other European countries, have had migration policy that can be traced back to 1600's (Baxter and Nowrasteh, 2021). The migration policies and debates have constantly changed and continue to change as favorable for the states. It is evident though from Baxter and Nowrasteh (2021) that all policies have been based on national interest and identity for these states, thus we cannot disregard these issues and focus it on human security debates only. Since the 1600's the immigration policies of the global North have morphed through colonial era to post-colonial era. For instance, the first naturalization law of the United States of America (USA) in 1790 for an adult white male and female who lived in the USA for 2 years of period, while the United Kingdom (UK) gave British nationality in 1948 for UK and Colonies. Thus, most of the Western states have had an established policy and mechanism to identify, investigate and sort out immigrants for naturalization, work and resident permit or education.

In Africa, following independence in 1950's, most of the states have gone into state making phase, reestablishing their borders and struggle for identity recognition. The pre-colonial system has left authoritarian leadership and division along ethnic and religious lines in the states. Democratic governance was never put in place by any of the colonial powers in Africa during their colonial years, though it was naturally expected of African states to implement democratic governance and liberal economy soon after independence. This not only disregards the years of oppression the states endured but also the grounds for such expectations from the global North.

While most states went into civil wars soon after causing refugee influx, others were in dual situation where they are both source of people fleeing conflicts while hosting refugees from other neighboring countries, eg, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, DRC. Eurocentric approaches and solutions such as democracy, election, good governance was prescribed as solution. Yet conflicts continued to relapse and refugee crisis spread across the continent. Institutions and systems of migration that would identify, sort and provide corresponding permits are not in place as the states are not yet stable enough to have migration and refugee agenda on their table as priority. Most of all migration and integration in conflict prone areas or states that are recovering from conflict is not simply about having the right system in place but also about the dynamics of states that are the origins of asylum and the host state and further host community and refugees. For instance, in Gambella region because a refugee has a work permit does not mean they can work in peace in the region as other underlying issues have not been addressed. Thus, it would be deceiving to believe that global norms and Eurocentric solutions can work in different African contexts all the same.

CRRF is a concept that has top-down Humanitarian-Development approach. The aim is to have sustainable economic development that would benefit refugees as well as the host community that generously is hosting them. The design of the framework puts in place a cooperative sense of burden sharing between the global North and the South. Yet while economist argue that economic theories would be sufficient to overcome poverty considering human beings as rational beings, it is not always the case when identity politics comes into play.

Current political trends around the world including in the global North have been experiencing political rally based on identity; and ‘indigenous VS immigrants’ by groups and political party leaders for political, economic and social gain. Self-determination and groups right, though basic human rights issues, have been politicized over the years that people have been witnessed to be irrational and critical about recognition and acceptance. Fukuyuma (2018) raises the example of terrorists who take their own lives, they do not have any economic gain out of taking their own lives it is a desire and commitment to identity that drives them to act so.

In a country such as Ethiopia where governance is based on ethnic identity, the struggle for recognition and acceptance plays a major role as it determines who gets to rule as a majority and who gets to get ruled. Indeed, the concept of democracy is majority rules and minority rights, yet not all democracies are indeed democracy. For instance, the May 24, 2015, Ethiopian election is a case in point of the kind of democracy the country had in place. Arriola and Lynons (2016) on the 2015 Ethiopian election state that EPRDF, the long ruling coalition party have won every seat in the parliament, they state:

For the first time since the EPRDF's rise to power in 1991, not one opposition or independent parliamentarian will sit in the 547-seat House of Peoples' Representatives.

This shift represents a hardening of authoritarian rule in Ethiopia.

Considering the level of democracy practiced and the rule of law recorded in the past two decades, which Cheeseman (2020) also calls authoritarian, has created so much inequality and injustice that resistance from one group or the other has been unavoidable as ethnic tensions get ripe. From various literatures (Berhe, 2001; Tefera, 2019; Cheeseman, 2020; Arriola and Lyons, 2016), EPRDF was dominated by Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), a Tigray ethnic group leadership. From the literatures mentioned we gather power and wealth was not distributed equally among the various ethnic groups in the country. Gambella has also felt the effect of this accordingly. Dereje (2011) narrates the recent decade political struggles and relationship of Gambella with the federal government in short below:

The Derg regime was considered as the time that saw Nuer political dominance, which was also the period that saw the establishment of the Gambella Peoples Liberation Movement (GPLM) that took to arms struggle against the Derg regime. GPLM joined force with TPLF and other regional armed forces to form the EPRDF. Thus, when EPRDF came to power in 1991 the GPLM which was an Anuak movement dominated the political representation and arena in the region. The Anuak have interpreted the hold of power by the GPLM and the placement of one of their own in the office of the president as a symbolic confirmation of their ownership rights over Gambella and thus a validation of their claim to indigenous status

(Dereje,2011, P.149, 2011). GPLM resisted the disarmament processes that EPRDF put in place as part of formation of the federal system, further during these high days of GPLM, there were atrocities against the Nuer ethnic groups. Thus, the EPRDF brought to play the Nuer based Gambella People Democratic Unity Party (GPDUP), forming a new ruling front called the Gambella Peoples Democratic Front (GPDF) (Dereje, 2011, P.156-157,). Thus, making the power play between the two ethnic groups tense.

In the case of CRRF implementation in Gambella Regional State, the same is true. That is, a historical encounter of the Anuak and the Nuer continued to evolve as Volkan (2001) called ‘Chosen Trauma’ by activists of ethnic groups further being politicized after 1991, making relationships between the two more challenging. The politicized and reshaped history to justify self-determination as way forward to democratic and civilized solution to ethnic groups, have created grievances that were exaggerated to completely disregarding the historical context that situations occurred; a human rights question based on grievance. This has helped politicians and ethnic group elites to gain momentum in mobilizing groups easily. As platforms for open debates and discussions are limited to non-existent, tensions have ripped enough to evolve to violent conflict.

The tension between the Anuak and the Nuer have also been on who is indigenous to Gambella based on settlement history. As the Anuak have settled first in the area as mentioned on the literature above, they consider the Nuer as the newcomers who are taking over the Anuak land. With the quick change in demographics and the Anuak who were ones a majority becoming second to the Nuer population, tensions have built as struggles for political, social and natural resources became more violent. The culture of retaliation is a common threat they both share making clashes violent and bloody.

In this situation, the civil war in South Sudan was adding salt to a wound. It was cause for millions to flee their homes in South Sudan seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Gambella hosts large population of refugees from South Sudan with a majority of ethnic Nuer, residing in 7 camps. The latest refugee influx in 2014 that has resulted from the civil war has resulted in

hundreds of thousand arriving in Gambella seeking protection and safety. With the Nuer assimilative culture and having ethnic kinship with the host Nuer community, integration was not difficult. While why the government did not put a functioning identity and registration system in place needs further studies, several refugees have acquired Ethiopian ID cards and have gotten the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. That is, while the prima facie system was put in place to determine new arrivals in reception centers most have registered as refugees to receive protection and services as well as managed to get Ethiopian ID cards from Kebele's, the local administrative offices. This has been a cause for further conflict and grievance with the Anuak host community. During my meetings with the Nuer community and key informants in New Land and beyond in Gambella, including Nuer staff members employed in NGOs, they have confirmed that they have both identities. What amazed me is that they do not see any contradiction in the situation or worries in acknowledging both identities.

From the various reports on CRRF pledges on Gambella, it is not clear how integration is addressed when the report states that certain number of refugees are attending school with the host community. It is logical that donors and stakeholders know the achievements of fundings thus far made for the continuation of support, yet a consideration of what integration in the context of Gambella region implies must also be clearly addressed with its complexity in the report. This will inform on the complex situations that States such as Ethiopia are generously welcoming refugees, highlighting the short comings in implementing CRRF in some contexts such as Gambella.

The existing integration of Nuer refugees with the Nuer host has already created suspicion by the Anuak who believe that the government as well as humanitarian actors who they believe should be neutral, are giving a blind eye too. This is on top of an addressed grievances that have gone from generation to generation, and unresolved conflicts in South Sudan. The international community as well as donors do not seem to understand the integration that is currently taking place is horizontal integration. It is also important to have updated data on services and continuous relationship with the regional authorities to base the distress of such a large refugee population size with that of the host community. For instance, do the host community get 15 liter of clean water per person per day? Which is the minimum standard a person is expected to have

per day in emergency setting in camps. Are the host community connected to the national power grid in this region? What is the source of energy for the host community? Because while the humanitarian service delivery has minimum standards and requirements to fulfil for its service provision in camps, the fact that the host community might not have such access to services is also a source of grievance and conflict. How will CRRF include host community without having the realities of the host, how will CRRF approach be able to reach the host communities on needs bases if they are not included on programs and reports?

Gambella regional state though very rich with natural resources such as forestry and diverse range of land that can be put to produce sufficiently, the region and the people are still underdeveloped. Bahiru (1987) stated the region saw efforts for establishment of trade port from 1905-1935, with potential that could almost compete with Djibouti port. The major trade commodity being coffee and ivory back in the days. Yet ever since such efforts of commerce and development have stagnated. Relative infrastructure was witnessed during the Derg Regime including the building of the great Baro bridge and roads. But it was short lived. Fast forward to present day, basic services such as clean water, power, hospitals, and schools are not provided to the people. Government institutes face difficulty to make ends meet and address basic services and infrastructure needs. According to my key informant the Head of Regional Bureau of Finance (Gambella, 2022), the government bureau's, salary for government employees at least is being paid monthly now, since the government change in 2018, blaming the pre-2018 regional government for failure to administer. He states "Yes, development is highly welcomed, and the regional government is cooperative to investors, saying that security is not an issue if there is an interest", yet investors that I was able to speak to through snow balling, have informed me that there are looting of farms that they have invested on.

The region is highly populated with young people above 15 years of age and with poor quality of education and high unemployment rate, most youth are easily becoming victims of substance abuse and petty theft. The Head of the Regional Finance Bureau explained this situation "you cannot blame the youth for being engaged in petty theft and other criminal activity as they do not have much to do". He further stated, "we administer the region with annual budget allocated to the host community without regards to the high refugee population we host; it is not easy".

CRRF is a development project that comes with benefits for refugees and host community. It aims to bring millions of dollar investment from the World Bank through the IDA-18 window that targets refugees as well as host community. The Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) in the Horn of Africa is such project by the World Bank, it has a coordinator in Gambella. According to the Coordinator, the phase one of the project has focused on the host community infrastructure establishment; roads, water, health posts, the project has been much needed in the region. He stated on the interview that the project has reached out to 17,000 host community, for the past four years. Phase two is going to include refugees in the region in the coming year. The coordinator has been diplomatic in his response on how they intend to include refugees. CRRF implementation in Ethiopia is clear in the inclusion of refugee to host on job opportunities which is 30/70, hoping investment organizations would invest on job creation such as an Industrial Park as originally intended. While the private sector is seen as a potential area to be tapped into, the international community yet must take the lead in moving this initiative forward.

It is also key to understand that most of the humanitarian agencies are very much humanitarian aid professionals rather than private sector and for profit initiatives. The Private sector and the business world that is intended to cooperate in the humanitarian arena require a clear strategy and legal basis to enable inclusion of refugees in the work force. It also is very important to have clear target of which Private sector actors Humanitarian agencies and the international communities are focusing on. Is the focus on Private sector in the global north or those in the global South including the existing ones operating in the country of asylum? Or both? Though all are for profit companies from million to billion dollar industries, the context they work in is also different. That is, in the global north, if a multimillion dollar company donates funding to support a humanitarian cause, it is still part of a business strategy for the companies, drawing more business. While this may work for business in Ethiopia and other African countries to some extent, the impact and benefit is not as much in poor nations as is in the global north. This further means that for most business investment is first assessed in terms of profit. And most humanitarian aid organizations are quiet challenged to go to the table with this in mind, there is a huge difference in asking for donation and for partnership that benefits investors with profits. For

investors and private sector their existence depends on the profits of their products and services, as is the existence of Humanitarian aid based on donations.

In light of the above it is also worth to mention the justification for either the government or private sectors operating in poor nations to include refugees in their agenda. In a nation with high youth population and high unemployment rate, large IDP's, why should the employer or the government care about the CRRF? What would convince the private sector to work with humanitarian actor in areas such as Gambella, what is in it for them? The reaches of the region are intact for years on without any benefits to the state or the region, the oldest refugees have resided in the region for over 25 years in Gambella camps, the majority that have arrived in 2014 are still in camps, so how will the refugee presence versus development be measured in such regions, what would incentivize investors to the region?

While it is crucial for the international community to ensure that such development initiatives have the necessary financial backup, it is as crucial to include the peace and security component. It must be at the center of CRRF to be context based and thus need to have less rigid fundings to implement necessary actions such as peacebuilding within the region as well as across border from the conflict states in South Sudan. While there are initiatives at regional level such as the IGAD initiative on South Sudan, it is at high government level. In a context where groups are divided along ethnic lines, and decisions have been made from top government level, CRRF is perceived not as a potential economic opportunity for the region by most. It has been highlighted by most of the key informants that there has not been any consultation before and after the launch with the host community and relevant regional authorities.

Refugee issues are political issues that cannot be framed as only a humanitarian crisis. While humanitarian actors have malleable stand on being neutral or not in complex situations, it is evident that funding states, as well as hosting states, have interests and politics cannot be avoided. While neutrality is also subject to several things such as actors involved in the situation and their view on the actions and decisions being taken by the humanitarian actors. Further humanitarian actors being the first to be on the frontlines of humanitarian crisis delivering emergency relief services, they have clear understanding of emergency and protracted situations.

In finding durable solutions for protracted cases, it is expected of humanitarian actors to have reliable data source that would enable decision making not only for the direct target groups but also hosting community and state. As it is now evident that focusing only on refugee target group and creating parallel service provision system, in protracted cases is not just a humanitarian crisis/ situation, but highly political as well. Especially in complex situation such as Gambella, the latest refugee emergency influx being in 2014, it is an alarm that humanitarian actors are still highly engaged in delivering emergency CRIs and food distributions and more. This clouds the focus on any significant durable solution for the mass let alone integration.

For the Nuer as it is welcomed easily than the Anuak who find it as direct threat to their existence in the region, economic benefits that come in such package as the CRRF create worries for those threatened by such a high refugee presence. What is more threatening is that not just the CRRF though, according to my key informants, it is that the federal government has not been able to manage the refugee out of camp management. The Nuer refugees have mingled easily with the host Nuer community and even have been issued local ID cards. Thus, creating grievance as to the clear intention of the federal government. The regional government on the other hand continue to exchange upper hand in leadership between the Anuak and Nuer. I was able to observe most of the high level government officials in the Bureaus currently are Anuak. And this according to my key informant the Nuer youth is because of the meddling of the Federal Government, this has been seconded by the Anuak youth leader. The Anuak youth leader states “RRS lost control of refugee management” when he points out to the uncontrolled settlement of the Nuer in region.

According to RRS DG, the Federal government on the other hand, since the government reform in 2018, it is taking on progressive way forward towards digitizing refugee registration and plan to put a digital ID system that would enable authorities to recognize dual ID holders in cooperation with the regional government. This requires large financing to invest on the required infrastructure and human resources in the region. Yet, how the regional government with a struggle for power between the Anuak and the Nuer elite would address this to their advantage is yet to be seen. This implies the need for a common accepted negotiator and facilitator to bring all stakeholders for continuous dialogue in peacebuilding and development.

## **5.2 Government and IGO's Action towards local response**

The role of humanitarian actors is clear, they are support to the national and regional efforts to address socio-economic and required lifesaving activities in line with the liberal way of development such as the SDG. Their work is complimentary to the efforts of the government to address needs of the people in conditions of underdevelopment. The 10 years National Development plan which is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in addressing poverty and sustainable development is core to way forward in the discussion of inclusion and integration. Currently the Federal Government, RRS is occupied in administering the 'care and maintenance' approach to over 350,000 South Sudanese refugees in camps in Gambella, that is a population size of one regional state. While some researchers note that the parallel governance system, as one of the problems for the obstacles in the implementation of the CRRF in refugee hosting areas, stating that the Regional Government should be the core government authority to administer refugees in its own region, in the context of Gambella where the regional government struggles for power along ethnic lines, and the regional government is in an ongoing strong institution building, makes these perspectives unrealistic. Capacity building of the regional government needs attention for such strong conclusions to be made.

It is also important to note that the instability of South Sudan that has spilled over to neighboring countries, and the surrounding open borders shared with the country make movement for armed groups and arms smuggling a threat for the country. In this context, with an open door policy of Ethiopia for refugees, pendulum movement of refugees to and from conflict ridden South Sudan through different entry points require attention of the Federal government as a matter of national security. The demography change in Gambella has made the Nuer ethnic group a majority and they remain the second majority population in South Sudan next to the dominating Dinka ethnic group. The conflict in Gambella also as records show continue to get violent and bloody. This implies an alarming trend of resolving problems with violent clashes and retaliations by both ethnic groups. These trends will not be changed into resolving issues in peaceful means in a short period without continuous efforts and investment in peacebuilding and development. Thus, it is an area that the UN, NGO's as well as the Federal and regional government need to prioritize and make Gambella conducive for development growth and transformation.

NGO's working with UN agencies as implementing or operational partners in Gambella region face similar challenges regarding funding shortages for protracted refugee cases. With continued food ration cuts and need for cash in the camps, the NGOs are aware of the need for livelihood and economic activities, they also are aware of the CRRF. They have clear understanding of the realities on the ground, thus if they support the host community, they do it in a way that does not agitate each divided groups, for instance they cannot disregard that the division and tensions of the groups does not exist. Thus, if they support an Anuak host community they go to their villages or zones to do so and the same for the Nuer host community.

Thus, the Government and NGOs are working in a complex local context where the refugee population size is more than that of the local population who are already in unresolved ethnic conflict. It is important that they have clear understanding of the local political and economic dynamics to have a certain level of peace and order that would enable them to deliver services. While there are attempts to incorporate peacebuilding trainings into livelihood activities by NGOs, the work is not sufficient and in-depth.

## **Chapter Six**

### **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, CRRF is understood differently by the host community Anuak and Nuer, refugees, humanitarian actors, regional and federal government and international actors also called the refugee protection regime. It is a global norm that has been endorsed by states including Ethiopia, at the New York Leaders' Summit in 2016. Since then, it has been states responsibility to give the framework a legal base in their respective countries. The CRRF in Ethiopia was adopted by the House of Peoples Representatives on the 2019 refugee proclamation. While this was celebrated by the international protection regime, the UN and RRS as one of the most progressive refugee proclamations Ethiopia ever had, it was not the case in Gambella highest refugee population hosting region. For Federal government it meant good international relations and high potential for further grants and loans from the international communities and private sectors such as the World Bank.

As states look into their citizens, putting human security at the heart of it, it is crucial to acknowledge all states rich or poor have similar concerns. Thus, it is important to come to consensus first that CRRF is a humanitarian-development-security nexus rather than just humanitarian-development nexus. This promotes frank burden sharing of the plight of refugees. All human security threats that are building up in the global North including identity politics, power and wealth inequalities are all catalyzed by the continued uncontrolled mass movements of people fleeing conflict, prosecution, and weak economies. All the above are also felt more by the global South.

The local diffusion of the CRRF, a global norm was launched in refugee hosting regions through the leadership of RRS and UNHCR in Ethiopia. The two bodies are the refugee protection mandated offices internationally by the 1951 convention for UNHCR and locally by the federal government of Ethiopia for RRS. From the interviews conducted in Gambella regions, key informants who attended the launching ceremony confirmed that Anuak representatives who attended the launch walked out of the meeting, showing their protest about the CRRF. It is also confirmed that Anuak representatives attempted to organize a protest on the refugee

proclamation in Addis Ababa, which was quickly silenced by the government before it attracted the needed attention.

In the engagement with the Anuak key informant, who is also Anuak Youth Leader in Gambella, the framework did not have any preparation or consultation with the people. The Anuak find it as an existential threat with the Nuer forcefully dominating and taking over the Anuak land. The Nuer are not trusted by the Anuak as peaceful neighbors and always seen with alert and suspicion. This he said is the cognitive construction of the Anuak through years of encounter with the Nuer. This was also seconded by one of the Regional Officials, that the Nuer with their easy pendulum movement across the Ethiopia-South Sudan borders, are violent and security threats, bringing illegal arms to Ethiopia. Further the reason why Gambella must also be host for such a large population size of South Sudanese refugees is also a question. Why is not burden sharing applied with in Ethiopia, among regions that do not host refugees? Why should this be the responsibility of Gambella? Thus, challenging the burden sharing justification of the CRRF logic in the local context.

The Nuer host communities' do not have a problem with the concept. Their question on the contrary is that the CRRF implementation has not still benefited the host community. From the collected data the Nuer do not seem to have worries on integration of refugees to the social system like the Anuak. In fact, horizontal integration has been happening for a while now that it is not a surprise to find Nuers with dual identity of Ethiopian and South Sudanese. The Nuer are aware they make the majority. They believe that CRRF would not have been an issue if the governance and leadership was left to them, independent of Federal government intrusion.

The ethnic groups, the Anuak and Nuer existing across the border in neighboring South-Sudan, refugees residing in camps in Gambella, Ethiopia, have ethnic kinship with their specific host communities, thus making horizontal local integration acceptable. Horizontal local integration for this research defined as integration between the host community and refugees of the same ethnic group, that is, Anuak host community with Anuak refugee and Nuer host community with Nuer refugees. Thus, based on the data collected and the analysis, integration is feasible only with their specific ethnic group currently, for this reason it is important that UN agencies and

INGOs do not disregard the specific context in their reports including on the meaning of integration.

From the GCR report, regarding Gambella, the success story high light is the education sector, yet it is vague and not inclusive of the realities on the ground, for instance, when reports are made as host communities attending school with the refugees, it is important to clarify who are included ethnicity wise if gaps are to be captured for further support and solution. Stakeholders should clarify what inclusion and integration strategies are in the contexts like Gambella so financial support is worked on accordingly and targets are clear. Until these realities are addressed concepts such as CRRF will continue to face resistance at the different level as the regional government is also constructed of the very contesting indigenous ethnic groups conflicting on the ground. Harmonization is key.

Integration is including host community in UN and INGO annual or multiyear budget planning. It is crucial that host communities need to buy-in the presence of refugees benefits them too. This would further pave way for discussions of inclusion in national systems such as schools, health cares, energy and more. As far as encampment is in place and parallel services are in place, it would be an entry point to include host communities in plannings and programming, that visible supports are delivered addressing some of the gaps between the host community and refugees.

My study couldn't cover in-depth on how the issue of the Nuer community who hold dual identity, as refugee and Ethiopian as well, are to be addressed, as it is one major issue for the escalated tension in the region, also an area that the Federal Government cannot overlook any further. Reference to minutes taken on the draft 2019 refuge proclamation discussions between legislation committee and RRS (then ARRA) authorities, RRS ensures the committee that all refugees are digitally registered by Immigration Nationality and Vital Events Agency (INVEA; that is fingerprints of all refugees is recorded (1 and 9 January,2019). Further RRS also confirms that all necessary consultations have been done. We can see that these statements contradict with that of the host community and regional government officials in Gambella region. Though moving forward, the biometrics registration system may be able to address this matter, the

capacity of the infrastructure and technology in government institutions in Gambella is weak to non-existing in this regard. Thus, this may be an area of further research.

With the ongoing funding gaps for protracted refugee cases and food ration cuts, unresolved civil war in South Sudan, the urgency of CRRF is evident. For Ethiopia ethnic conflicts are at its peak considering the number of internally displaced persons as a result of civil war and ethnic conflicts as a result of known and unknown armed groups random mass killing in different parts of the country, ongoing development efforts of the government with the GERD that has been controversial and tense in the regional complexes with the advancement to proxy war, COVID-19 global pandemic, drought and Al-Shabab insurgency in the Somalia region of the country, Ethiopia faces multifaceted challenges. Despite these challenges the country continues to have open door policy for refugees. CRRF humanitarian-development-security nexus cannot ensure the desired international security if it is not seen for what it is and for what Ethiopia a country with various challenges is generously providing, protection to refugees. The spill over and destabilizing effect of conflicts and mass movements continue to be witnessed not only in Ethiopia but in all parts of the world going through similar condition. Thus, the international security continues to be in similar alarming insecurity circle.

It is also very crucial to make reports and context narrations that are inclusive of the realities of the host community and the region into consideration. The findings show that how reports are packaged and communicated by humanitarian actors in the region lack inclusion of host community realities. If CRRF is to be discussed, and inclusion to national systems and livelihood opportunities are to be entertained, it is crucial to put into reports in what kind of local realities we are entertaining these short comings. For instance, are services sufficiently provided for the host community, is livelihood and economic inclusion addressed in the host community by the government? The answer is no, the governance system has questions of inequality in leadership and economic opportunities, service provisions are weak, and communities are divided along ethnic lines. In what basis of trust and understanding are these conflicting parties expected to live and work together, welcome refugees that are majority Nuer in the national system that are already getting better services than they are. Thus, cause for local resistance of such initiatives by the federal government whose burdens for welcoming such a large population size of refugees

are not shared, regional government that is not getting much out of hosting such a large population size of refugees sharing the scarce resources with the poor host community, regional ethnic dynamics that is threatened by the Nuer domination, may fuel existing tension.

It is also noted from the collected data and desk reviews that CRRF lacks inclusion of host communities in planning and budgeting. Humanitarian actors who have endorsed the mainstreaming and implementation of CRRF, undertake planning and budgeting cycles for annual or multiyear strategies, annually. For humanitarian actors that work on protection of refugees in Gambella specifically, but also Ethiopia in general, inclusion of host communities from the beginning of targeting and assessments and planning until budgeting would be an entry for inclusion and burden sharing in such areas. The bridge between the parallel systems existing between refugee service delivery and host community may be strengthened and gaps narrowed. It is worth showing an effort that may bring credibility and trust to the host communities in regard to their believe of being left out, while refugees got relatively better services.

The other issue that was constantly raised by most of the interviewees is the lack of consultation and communication from top-down. The platform for free and secure discussion that opens doors to address grievances, and solution top-down and bottom-up is a challenge. Currently there are attempts on peaceful-coexistence efforts in Gambella by humanitarian actors. Yet business as usual, that focuses on approaches of few days' workshops that bring key government leaders and available mix of ethnic group participants, to discuss on the issue does not seem to convince most. For starters though current government officials in government offices maybe easy to get to attend, targeting the attendance of influential and credible representatives of the ethnic groups require trust and credibility. From the collected data and what I was also able to understand from the local dynamics, trust and credibility between the different actors in Gambella region is weak. There is no quick fix to years of ethnic conflict and political struggles, it is also clear that attitudes and behavioral change are key dynamics in this process. Thus, it is crucial to understand that CRRF, with its aim to inclusion need to include diversity and the above mentioned dynamics by the protection regime.

The other observation also is that the local markets and investments in the region that could catalyze development are weak. The region needs economic boost. Lessons learnt from the pre-2018 land acquisition by the federal government for large scale foreign and local investors to undergo commercial farming and the scandals that followed have not brought the expected development to the region. Though several local investors took loan from Development Bank of Ethiopia to clear out indigenous forests in Gambella for farmland most have only been able to clear out the forest that would be the first step for feasibility of loans in millions of birrs, ones they received this loan most did not proceed with the next step of production and later while some declared bankruptcy others were able to take loans twice. This report of failed investment in the region come following an investigation made by the office of the Prime Minister Hailemariam, according to a public media article, following allegations of mismanagement of loans and favoritism (Fortune, VOL 17, 2016). It is crucial to understand, accept and discuss way forward on why former incentives put in place for commercial farms failed and did not benefit the region befo.

The two foreign investors on agriculture the Indian company Karaturi Global Limited and Saudi Star Agricultural Development PLC are the two large scale agricultural investments in Gambella region. Yet according to the Anuak Survival Organization (ASO) 2019 online article, Karaturi Global is contested investor by the Association who claim to have close base in Gambella. The company according to the organization has failed in much of their investments in Africa. In Gambella specifically, have resulted in deforestation of indigenous trees as forests got cleared, and several indigenous people got displaced without any compensation or return to the region. It is highlighted that necessary consultations have not been performed in advance that included the regional authorities as well as the people of Gambella.

The above are indicators of lack of synergy between the Federal Government, the regional government, and the people of Gambella. Investments attempted so far have not brought significant development to the region and the people. It would only be appropriate to do lessons learnt and do necessary consultation in advance of launching development projects. The launch of CRRF, according to the data collected, shows that necessary consultations were not made with all stakeholders in the region including the people of Gambella. This trend is a concern moving forward, as initiatives and projects continue to lack common ground for understanding and

common goal to be achieved. Without the much needed synergy with all stakeholders, implementation and progress continue to be unsynchronized. This further results in lack of buy-in by one or more groups on the ground creating peaceful as well as violent resistance from the start.

Therefore, it must be understood by the refugee protection regimes, mandated UN and government and INGO stakeholders, that global norms such as CRRF in complex situations require different approaches. Different approaches require concrete data of the intended populations, that is refugees as well as host communities. While development is taken as long term process, efforts that don't bare some fruits if not more after the first three years, need to be reassessed quickly. The inability to do so will linger making the development efforts such as the CRRF, misunderstood effort that brought suspicion and added salt to existing tensions. While some countries and contexts maybe in a position to better implement CRRF pledges more than others, for instance, within the same country Ethiopia, the case of Somalian refugees in Melkadida and Dollo Ado are more integrated and, in a position, to discuss development works that benefit both refugees and the host community, than in Gambella where the issue is like hot boiled potato that no one wants to cut into. Yet it is the responsibility of the international protection regime to indeed share the burden and invest on Ethiopia and as well as the rest of Africa.

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## Annex I

Please see below anonymized details of the interview:

### **Key Informant Interview**

Interview Code	Date	Location	Description
KII 1	23/05/2022	Gambella Town	UN Official
KII 2	23/05/2022	Gambella Town	UN Staff
KII 3	23/05/2022	Pugnido, Gambella	UN Staff
KII 4	26/05/2022	Gambella Town	NGO Staff
KII 5	26/05/2022	Gambella Town	NGO Staff
KII 6	24/05/2022	Addis Ababa	HOREC Official
KII 7	25/05/2022	Gambella Town	Anuak Youth Leader/ Lecturer
KII 8	26/05/2022	Gambella Town	Nuer Youth
KII 9	25/05/2022	Gambella Town	DRDIP
KII 10	26/05/2022	Gambella Town	Regional Official
KII 11	27/05/2022	Gambella Town	Regional Official
KII 13	27/05/2022	Gambella Town	Regional Official
KII 14	28/05/2022	Addis Ababa	RRS Official

## Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Code	Date	Location	Description
FGD 1	24/05/2022	New Land, Gambella Town	Nuer Youth Group
FGD 2	26/05/2022	Gambella Town	Youth Group (Anywa, Majang and Highlander)

## Annex II

<u>THEME 1</u>
<u>Perspective on CRRF in Gambella Region</u>
<u>Federal Government/RRS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acknowledges the CRRF pledges as burden sharing and durable solution initiative</li> <li>- Understand the context in Gambella</li> <li>- Expects the international community to commit to their end of the bargain in the burden sharing to implement CRRF in contexts such as Gambella</li> </ul>
<u>International Community/ INGOs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have clear understanding of the CRRF</li> <li>- Not clear on the realities and context of Gambella regarding CRRF implementation</li> </ul>
<u>NGOs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have clear understanding of the CRRF</li> <li>- Understand windows for CRRF related program funding in Gambella</li> <li>- Implement mostly with in refugee camps with some attempts to include the host community in getting assistance</li> <li>- Short term projects with unforeseeable continuation without humanitarian support</li> </ul>
<u>Regional Government</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have clear understanding of the CRRF and consider the local integration option as controversial</li> <li>- The refugee population size on the already limited financial resource of the region</li> </ul>

<p>and under development view it as a heavy weight on the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Believe lack of consultation on CRRF</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Host Communities</u></p>		
<p><u>Anuak</u></p>	<p><u>Nuer</u></p>	<p><u>Highlander and others</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aware of the initiative with special emphasis to Local Integration</li> <li>- Consider the amended proclamation as specifically made for Gambella</li> <li>- Viewed as threat against the Anywaa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aware of the initiative</li> <li>- Considered as a solution</li> <li>- No discontent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not significant in the tension</li> </ul>
<p><u>Refugees</u></p>		
<p><u>Anuak</u></p>	<p><u>Nuer</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not familiar with the initiative</li> <li>- Anuak refugees have integrated with Anuak host community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not familiar with the initiative</li> <li>- Nuer refugees have integrated with Nuer host community</li> </ul>	

<p><u>THEME 2</u></p>
<p><u>Resistance to Local Integration</u></p>
<p><u>Federal Government/RRS</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no resistance to local integration only the lack of support by the international community to create the necessary consultation, economic benefit to both host community and refugees.</li> </ul>
<p><u>International Community/ INGOs</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is better understanding of CRRF and local integration since 2017 in the region and sees farming as a potential entry point in the near future.</li> </ul>

<u>NGOs</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See it as an entry point for livelihood programs and together with peacebuilding activities</li> </ul>		
<u>Regional Government</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not a feasible priority in the immediate future, the Anuak and Nuer dynamics cannot be ignored.</li> <li>- Much attention and work need to be done first on the host community to have the capacity to absorb such large size of refugee population.</li> </ul>		
<u>Host Communities</u>		
<u>Anuak</u>	<u>Nuer</u>	<u>Highlander and others</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Viewed as unwillingly taking Anuak land</li> <li>- Why don't the large refugee population be shared with other regions of Ethiopia such as Oromia, Amhara and etc. Why is such an option not in place?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No major objection as it benefits both host community and refugees.</li> <li>- If the governance was left to the people, integration would not be so challenging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neutral</li> </ul>
<u>Refugees</u>		
<u>Anuak</u>	<u>Nuer</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easily integrate with Anuak host community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easily integrate with the Nuer host community</li> </ul>	