Central European Journal of International and Security Studies
Vol. 15, No. 3, 2021, pp. 56-76

DOI: 10.51870/CEJISS.A150303
Research article

Refugee-Related Political Violence in Asia and Africa

Lucie Konečná
Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies, Department of Political Science; ORCiD: 0000-0002-5621-3588, corresponding address: 397816@mail.muni.cz

David Mrva
Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies, Department of Political Science, ORCiD: 0000-0003-2129-9446

Abstract
This work focuses on the analysis of one of the most discussed phenomenon of recent years, the reception of refugees. The authors of this work examine refugee-related political violence, a phenomenon that has not been explored in the last twenty years. The aim is to describe the occurrence of this phenomenon in cases from Asia and Africa. The individual incidents are categorised into six categories of political violence. The authors describe the type of political violence involving refugees for the last 15 years. They also analyse which type of violence is most common. At the same time, they devote to the analysis and description of frequency, intensity and persistence. They compare their findings with similar work that was published in 1998, and they explain why and what changes have occurred in the field of refugee-related political violence over the last 15 years.

Keywords: *Africa, Asia, conflict, refugee, security, violence*

First published online on 17 September 2021, issue published on 17 September 2021

Abbreviations

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States
FNL - The National Forces of Liberation (Forces Nationales de Libération)
ICGLR - International Conference of the Great Lakes Region
LRA - Lord's Resistance Army
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VNSA – Violent Non-State Actor
GTD – Global Terrorism Database
ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IDPs – Internally displaced persons
UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Introduction: Preview of the refugee-related political violence

Currently, more than 70.8 million people are forcibly displaced, of these people, one third are refugees.[1] These people flee not only because of war conflicts, ethnic or religious violence but also because of natural disasters such as droughts or floods. More than half of the forcibly displaced population is relocated within the state, but the other half seek refuge in foreign countries, most of them in neighbouring or geographically close countries. The vast majority of refugee-hosting states are not developed and prosperous states. These are developing countries, which host 86% of the world's refugees. Moreover, the increase in refugees is growing rapidly every year. For instance, from 2016 to the end of 2018, the number increased by almost 4 million. The pressure on refugee-hosting states is growing, the number of refugees is increasing and it is necessary to ensure them decent living conditions and take care of their protection and security. However, these states are often unable to provide for the basic needs of their own population. The situation is, therefore, very complicated. Refugees exert economic, environmental, political and security pressure on the host states. This is confirmed by the Fragile State Index, which includes the influx of refugees and the movement of internally displaced persons into its indicators, which largely weaken the state.

Leaving aside the economic and environmental impacts that appear in the vast majority of cases, political-security impacts are something that poses a direct threat to the lives of refugees but also to the local population. The presence of refugees in the state increases the possibility of political violence. This may be due to several factors. It is very often impossible to distinguish refugees from armed warriors and militias. These armed actors abuse refugee camps and refugee status. They hide in the camps and abuse financial aid. The second factor is that refugees are much more vulnerable and in desperate situations. Desperate

living and economic conditions, together with negative personal experiences, increase the possibility of radicalisation and their involvement in the activities of armed militias. However, it is not clear how big the problem of refugee-related political violence is at present. There are very famous cases from the past; for example, the attacks by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon or the involvement of refugees in the structures of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and their violent activity in Kenyan territory. This includes several cases that are known worldwide. Nevertheless, what does this mean for the global refugee population? In how many cases does refugee-related violence actually occur? There is currently no study to examine this and give a clear answer. In the past, thorough research was conducted by Sarah Kenyon Lischer. She researched refugee-related political violence in Asia and Africa, but the study only works with dates up to 1998. Since that year, no similar research has been conducted. Therefore this study is dealing with the latest cases in the last fifteen years and, like her, it is working with Africa and Asia. This is because the vast majority of the world's refugee population is located on these two continents.

This paper presents latest data in order to analyse the frequency, persistence and type of political violence involving refugees for 2003 to 2018 in Asia and Africa. This also describes to a limited extent the intensity of violence. The analysis reveals trends over the past few years, and the article describes what kind of refugee-related political violence occurs most often, in how many cases the violence actually occurs and how often it occurs. At the same time, it compares the area of Africa and Asia to determine which continent, but also which area within the continent, is most often captured by this phenomenon.

Refugee-related political violence in the literature

A vast majority of the authors describe the impact of receiving refugees on the host community. Most of these studies are case studies or studies involving only a few cases. An example is the work of Grindheim, who, based on a questionnaire survey, examined the impact of refugees on the host state in Kenya.[2] Another example is the work done by Gomez et al., who divided the negative impacts into four categories: economic, political-security, environmental and social.[3] The critical point is that the vast majority of authors who study this issue describe the outbreak of violence and the deterioration of security. However, analysing what kind of violence occurs is no longer part of their studies.

Several quantitative studies focusing on refugee related political violence have been conducted in the past. However, more qualitative case studies have been published. An example of a quantitative study is a survey conducted by Gineste and Savun in 2019. Their research describes that larger refugee populations are associated with higher levels of violence in host states. They de-

scribe several categories of violence associated with refugees. The key is whether violence is directed against refugees or refugees commit violence.[4] These authors conduct a simple statistical analysis to determine which type of violence is most common and where violence occurs most often. However, this survey is problematic for several reasons. The authors mainly worked with data from The US State Department of Human Rights Country reports. The information in these reports does not sufficiently cover events in remote African and Asian states. The main problem is its categorical distribution. There are a number of cases where it cannot be said unilaterally that violence is merely directed against refugees or vice versa. Cases of refugee-related political violence are very complex and complicated social events, and this division is very subjective for a large number of cases and does not cover what often happens in reality. Another example of a quantitative study is the work done by Kreibaum.[5] However, his work does not focus primarily on refugees but on various causes of political violence in Africa. Some cases involve refugee related political violence, but others do not. A quantitative study on refugee violence in East Africa was conducted by Mbiyozo.[6] His research is based on interviewing refugees to see if they are experiencing violence and why. The research itself seeks to reveal the reasons for the radicalisation of refugees.

Several authors focus on the description of refugee-related political violence in a particular region. These qualitative studies include the work of Bariagaber, who focuses on the Horn of Africa region.[7] Pini also addressed this issue, trying to affect more African states, but especially those with a large refugee population.[8] Several studies have also been conducted in Asia. Murshid addresses the issue of refugees in South Asia. He describes several aspects, such as national politics and the conditions of refugees, as well as incidents of violence.[9] The work focuses mainly on India and Pakistan. Violence against Rohingya refugees is described in his study Momen.[10] This study focuses on violence in Bangladesh. An extensive study describing several case studies was performed by Loescher et al.[11] This team of authors describes the situation of Somali, Palestinian, Sudanese or Burmese refugees.

Violence in relation to refugees is also described by other authors. For example, in 2006, Salehyan and Gleditsch created a concept according to which refugees are generating civil war in host countries. This occurs with the assistance of four mechanisms. The first mechanism is the proliferation of weapons and the cross-border movement of insurgents. The second mechanism is when refugees provide mobilisation resources for domestic opposition. The third mechanism is when the refugee population changes the country's ethnic balance. The last mechanism is a competition between locals and refugees for employment and natural resources that causes violence.[12]

Lischer conducted a thorough survey of refugee-related political violence in the 1990s. For the purposes of our research, we decided to use her theoretical concept because her approach is the most accurate and thoughtful. This concept is clear, and the division and classification of cases into categories cannot be called into question, as it is in a case of study that was conducted by Gineste and Savun. The categories are clearly and logically delimited. She has created a total of five categories of refugee-related political violence: Attacks between sending state and refugees, Attacks between receiving state and refugees, Ethnic or factual violence among refugees, Internal violence within receiving state, and Interstate war or unilateral intervention.[13] We understand these categories in the same way as Lischer. Based on an analysis of several cases, we decided to create a sixth category. There are new cases of violence that cannot be classified in any of her categories. This is the categorisation we work with:

a. **Attacks between sending state and refugees**
   (The violence occurs between refugees and government of sending state)
b. **Attacks between receiving state and refugees**
   (The violence occurs between refugees and government of receiving state)
c. **Ethnic or factual violence among refugees**
   (The violence occurs between groups of refugees)
d. **Internal violence within receiving state**
   (The violence occurs between refugees and local population of receiving state)
e. **Interstate war or unilateral intervention**
   (Refugees and the government of more than one state are involved in violence)
f. **Attacks between refugees and transnational VNSA**
   (The violence occurs between refugees and transnational VNSA (non-state armed groups operating across several countries, it includes terrorist groups, warlords, militias and insurgency. These actors differ in their goals, organisational structure, or approaches to resources. What they have in common is that they do not represent or are not supported by the state. In this case, their activity extends beyond the borders of one state, and they carry out violent armed activities.))[14]

This study builds on her work since she worked with old data only until 1996. Therefore our goal is to assess whether there has been any change in recent years, what the new trends are and to describe and explain in which part of the world refugee-related political violence occurs most often, and also determine which category is the most prevalent.

Procedures and methods

The aim of this work is to describe the development of refugee-related political violence in the last 15 years. We work with the period from 2003 to 2018. This includes the area of Asia and Africa because the vast majority of events took place in this area. We describe trends in refugee-related political violence and focus on frequency, persistence and, to a limited extent, the intensity of violence. The frequency expresses how many incidents of refugee related political violence took place in a given state during the period under study. The intensity determines the number of victims who died during these incidents. In the vast majority of cases, it is in the order of units. Persistence focuses on whether a particular type of incident persists in a given state. In some cases, one type of incident occurs several times over the years. In these cases, the persistence rate is high. Then we compare all cases through structural comparisons and, based on these comparisons, we create extended typologies/categories. These created categories are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, cover all possibilities and do not overlap.

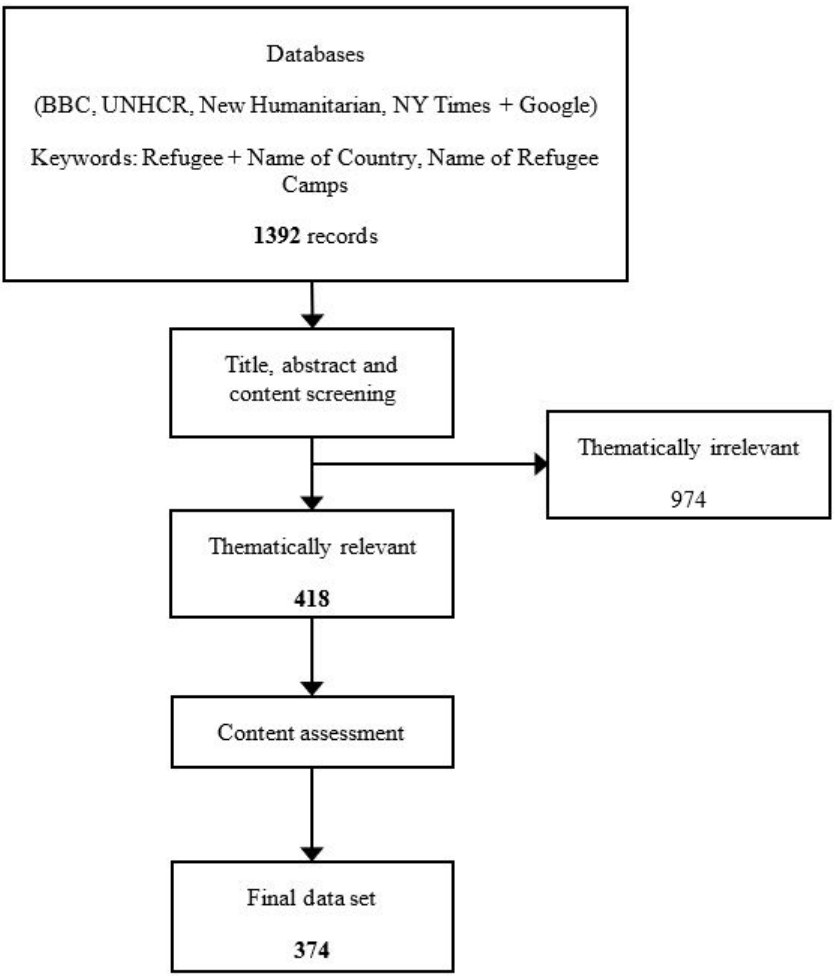
We work with all cases (states) that have a refugee community larger than 2000. This is mainly because data on smaller communities is not available. Moreover, the low number of refugees (less than 2000) in the vast majority does not affect the events in the host state. We proceed chronologically, monitoring each year within each of these states and recording and categorising cases of violence. Consequently, persistence and frequency can be determined. The intensity, in this case, is of secondary importance. We describe it mainly in cases that somehow exceed the average by their scope, while we try to explain these cases. The typology/categorisation itself was described in the previous chapter. This includes a total of six types of refugee-related political violence.

The limits of this work are mainly related to the lack of sources. Small events (according to the number of involved people and the intensity of violence) are often not recorded and reported. We reduce these limits by using several kinds of sources. This includes UNHCR's monthly and annual reports, as well as data available from the Fragile State Index (Fund For Peace), which measures the growth of refugees in the host state, as well as the development of violence. Another important source is the reports from the New Humanitarian (IRIN), which deal with refugee issues in detail. We supplement all these sources with news from the media, especially the BBC and New York Times.

Trends in refugee-related violence in Africa

Refugee-related political violence is a phenomenon that is not currently in decline. The data presented here add new dimensions to the discourse about refugees and security. Few studies have so far dealt with this phenomenon. This

Figure 1. Flow diagram of data acquisition



research is based on a study conducted by Lischer (2001) but introduces a new category. Thus, the categories are expanded to reflect reality. The data shows that this expansion is necessary because this new category, where violent non-state actors perpetrate violence, is widespread. Two-fifths of all cases of refugee-related political violence in Africa fall into the category of Attacks between refugees and transnational VNSA. This is groundbreaking compared to the study of Lischer, and it illustrates a rapid development of the phenomenon. In her study, the most frequent type of violence involved the state. Either sending state or receiving state. However, these new data from 2003-2018 show something else. The most frequent type of violence is violence involving VNSA. On the contrary, violence involving states is not very common as it was in the 1990s. Especially cases

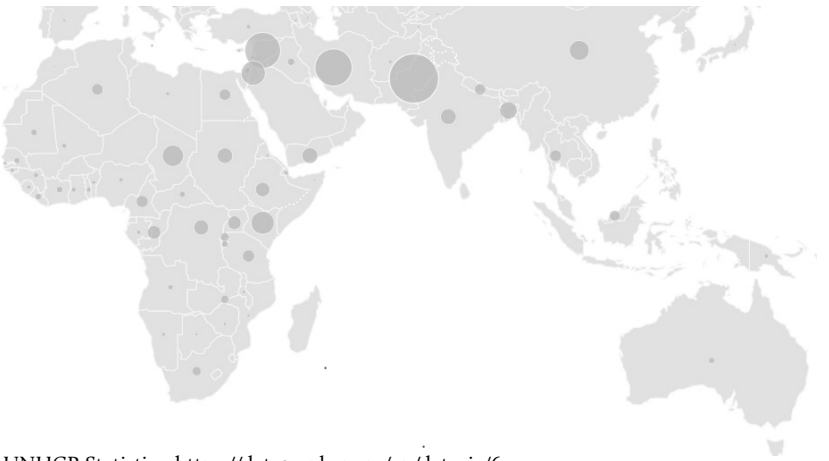
where sending states or governments of several states are involved in violence are sporadic. This can be influenced by a number of factors. Since the 1990s, there has been a rapid decline in interstate wars.[15] These wars are rather exceptional, even in Africa. The vast majority of conflicts are domestic civil wars, which involve government forces and VNSA. The internationalisation of conflict is not very common. Another factor may be that there is an increase in participation in regional organisations such as the African Union, ECOWAS or ICGLR.[16] This increases regional interdependence, belonging and cooperation while increasing security and reducing the risk of an outbreak of interstate war. States already have clear borders for the vast majority of cases, and no new states are created. The shrinkage of the border and territorial disputes is therefore apparent. Other factors may also have an impact, but its description is not relevant for this work.

Our research also generated further findings. The vast majority of African states have a community of refugees in their territory of over 2000. Almost all countries have a higher incidence of refugees. In particular, this concerns 40 African states. Figure no. 2 shows the average number of refugees over the years in individual countries. The size of the red dot indicates the size of the refugee community. The countries with the largest refugee communities are Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. On the other hand, Tunisia, Morocco and Somalia have communities fewer than 2000 refugees.

The size of the refugee community affects the occurrence of violent incidents in the national territory. This is not a purely linear relationship. However, our research shows that if the refugee population in a country is extensive, with more than 100,000 individuals, the chances of violence are higher. Specifically, this chance is almost four times higher than in states that have a small refugee community. These figures apply to the area of Africa. There are several examples. Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau or Malawi have a very small refugee community, and no refugee-related political violence has occurred in these states. On the other hand, there are cases that violate these rules. For example, Egypt has a high refugee population, and no refugee-related political violence has been reported. Conversely, Benin and Ghana have a small community of refugees, and violence has occurred. It should be noted that the frequency, persistence and intensity were much lower than in cases with high refugee communities such as Uganda, DRC or Cameroon.

The vast majority of African refugee camps have poor security conditions. Many of the camps are overcrowded, and the capacity is several times exceeded. Examples are refugee camps Dadaab and Kakuma in Kenya or Yida camp in South Sudan.[17] Poor security conditions persist in 2/3 of all refugee camps in Africa. This includes, for example, violent assaults, rapes or stealing. This daily crime and these acts of violence are often not recorded or recorded just occasionally. Therefore it is not possible to work with all these kinds of cases. Some

Figure 2. The size of the refugee community



Source: UNHCR Statistics, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/6

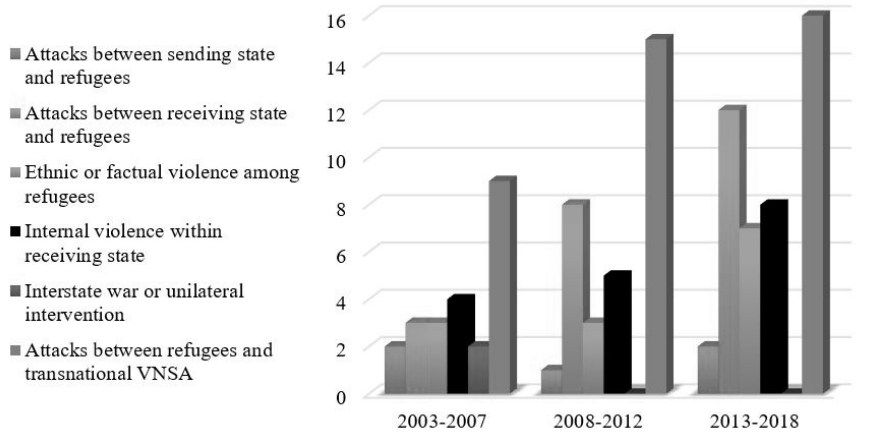
of these cases would be categorised as Ethnic or factual violence among refugees. Some of these violent events cannot be categorised as political violence. Data on all these cases is not available. This means that these attacks are most common in practice, but records are missing. These are cases of violence between individuals, which are often not reported. That is why we cannot work with it, and we work only with greater violence.

The highest frequency and persistence of violence is mainly in the states of the Great Lakes region and East Africa. To be more specific, the highest persistence of violence is in DRC, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. In Kenya and Uganda, this represents VNSA attacks, but in Ethiopia, it is Internal violence within the receiving state, and in Kenya, it is Ethnic or factual violence among refugees. The case of South Sudan is specific because it involves two types of violence, among refugees and among refugees and the local community. Conversely, minor violence has been reported in the region of South Africa. No case has been reported in Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe or Botswana. Only one case has been reported in Zambia and one in South Africa. In the following two graphs, individual types of violence are recorded over three time periods of five years. The second graph shows the countries with the highest levels of violence, ranked by frequency. Countries where no incidence of refugee-related political violence was reported were not used in the graph.

Trends within each category

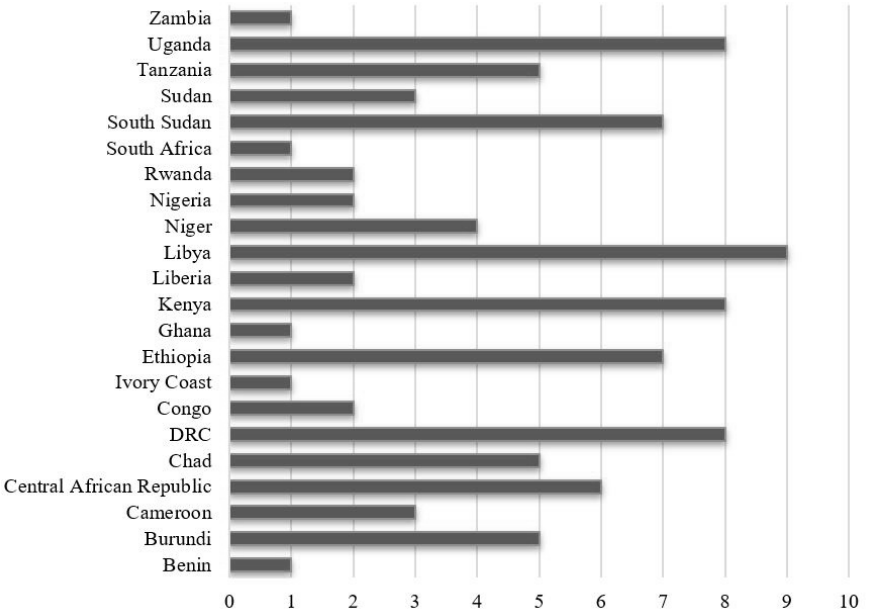
The first category (Attacks between sending state and refugees) includes only five incidents of violence. This is interesting as there has generally been a decline in violence involving state actors compared to Lischer's study. There was

Figure 3. Type of refugee-related political violence in Africa (2003-2018)



Source: authors' own graph, data from BBC, UNHCR, New Humanitarian, NY Times

Figure 4. Frequency of refugee-related political violence by state (2003-2018)



Source: authors' own graph, data from BBC, UNHCR, New Humanitarian, NY Times

also a rapid decline in the second category (Attacks between receiving state and refugees), but this includes more cases, a total of 23. The decline in the first category was mainly due to the decline in interstate wars. National governments are reluctant to engage in conflicts and violence outside their territory (see pre-

vious chapter). On the other hand, refugees are often perceived as a threat. Refugee camps very often serve as a base for attack planning and recruitment of members for VNSA. An example is LRA activity in DRC or the Central African Republic. The group forcibly recruited members and attacked refugee camps across several countries. The situation is similar in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, where the terrorist group Al-Shabaab operates. However, unlike the LRA, recruitment of Al-Shabaab members is primarily voluntary, influenced primarily by the prospect of financial gains. Therefore, receiving states are willing to take advantage of physical violence against refugees. Most of these 'B' cases involve violent clashes between refugees and the police or military of the receiving state, who try to control and reduce the number of refugees, often at the cost of violating human rights and international conventions. 'A' cases of violence are more interesting, as the armed forces of one state extend outside their territory. This strategy is often used by the Sudanese army, which bombs refugee camps in South Sudan, or by the governments of Burundi and Rwanda, who try to get rid of political dissent in refugee camps.[18] This type of violence tends to be the most intense and, in practice, has claimed the most significant number of victims.

Ethnic or factual violence among refugees is present in most refugee camps in Africa. However, records of this violence are often missing. Thirteen cases have been reported in total, but we believe that, in fact, this category is the most prevalent. Unfortunately, this kind of violence is often overlooked, and the world media does not pay as much attention to it as in the cases of state involvement or VNSA. Examples when large-scale violence occurs (several people have died or it involves hundreds to thousands of individuals) are mostly recorded. Examples are disputes in Mtabila and Myovosi refugee camps (Tanzatina) among Hutu and Tutsi refugees during the year 2003.[19] Other examples are recent events (2018) from Ethiopia, where different ethnic groups were fighting each other in the Dollo Ado camp. It can be said about this category that violence is most persistent because different ethnic groups are forced to stay together in the camp for a long time. They often have different cultures, religions and customs. In addition, groups that compete in the home country often compete with each other in refugee camps as well.

Internal violence within the receiving state most often involves disputes between refugees and the local farmers over land and cattle. These cases are very frequent in East Africa, where livelihood is challenging because there are deforestation and frequent droughts. A total of 17 incidents were reported in this category. Interstate war or unilateral intervention, on the other hand, are very exceptional. We reported only two cases. Both are related to the second civil war in the DRC when the governments of Burundi and Rwanda sent troops to this territory and, like many other African states, joined the conflict.

The most frequent type of refugee-related political violence is the last category – Attacks between refugees and transnational VNSA. Interestingly, the persistence and intensity of this type of violence vary significantly from case to case. We noticed a total of 40 cases of attacks between refugees and transnational VNSA. In some of these cases, violence was very intense. An example is the LRA's attacks on DRC refugee camps. In the overwhelming majority of these cases, the attacks were ruthless and the violence intense, resulting in several dozen victims. The bloodiest attack ever is the FNL attack in Burundi. The Burundi Hutu rebel faction attacked refugees near the Congolese border, saying that its fighters were pursuing Burundian soldiers who fled to the camp from a nearby military position. The camp sheltered ethnic Tutsi refugees from Congo known as the Banyamulenge who fled the violence in North Kivu. More than 180 refugees died during this attack.[20] On the other hand, VNSA attacks in Kenya or Niger were less intense.

Trends in refugee-related violence in Asia

Between 2003 and 2018, thirty-four Asian countries hosted more than 2000 refugees. However, the number of refugees was not constant, and many of these countries did not have a substantial refugee community during most of those years. For example, Russia was mainly unaffected by refugees, until 2014 when the Ukraine Crisis started. Of all the states with a substantial refugee community, only ten states had reported the presence of refugee-related political violence, and only three countries experienced refugee-related political violence in five years or more.

Eighteen Asian countries hosted more than 2000 refugees in 2018. The largest refugee communities could be found in the Middle East due to the Palestinian refugees residing there. The most extensive number of refugees resided in Jordan, which hosted over two million Palestinians registered with UNWRA and an additional 700,000 non-Palestinian refugees registered with UNHCR. Political violence affected only those countries that had a population of over 100,000.

Relatively small refugee communities in Central or East Asia were not linked to refugee violence. However, even large refugee populations in some countries were not affected by political violence, despite hosting over 100,000. This includes states in South East Asia but also Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This indicates that the size of the refugee population had some impact, but other factors were involved, too. The absence of violence in some countries in Asia could be seen as surprising due to the bad condition in many refugee camps. For example, the dire conditions for refugees from Myanmar in the Umpiem Mai camp in Thailand in 2012, for example, led to a fire that destroyed almost half of the camp.[21]

The above mentioned indicates that the size of the refugee community is not sufficient or the only factor that influences the probability of violence. In fact, we observed violence mostly in countries that are hosting refugees that are in a protracted situation. This type of refugee community can become what Lisher calls a state-in-exile, a coherent militant community exploited by violent actors for its operations.[22] Moreover, even some countries that hosted many refugees in the protracted situation did not experience refugee-related violence frequently. For example, Jordan had a community of Palestinian refugees of more than two million but was exposed to just one case of violence in 2016. We found that refugee-related political violence was absent in South-East and East Asia, which was not always the case before 2003. Large populations of Rohingya refugees that fled from Myanmar did not lead to violence in Thailand or China.

The attacks between receiving state and refugees (category B) was the most observed type (15 times). This can be primarily attributed to the terrorist groups operating in the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq) and using the refugee camps as safe havens to conduct terrorist attacks in the host countries and consequently the security forces of the host states intervening in the refugee camps. However, this type of violence can also be observed in Pakistan, Yemen, Bangladesh and, to a lesser degree, in India. Contrary, interstate war or unilateral intervention was observed only once when in 2017, a Saudi military helicopter mistook a boat with Somali refugees in Yemen territorial waters for Houthi rebels and killed 42 people.[23]

The highest frequency and persistence of violence were both reported in – Israel/Palestine. High frequency and persistence were also observed in Syria and Lebanon. All three countries hosted Palestinian refugees, and most of the reported violence was related to the Palestinian community. The most frequent violence was related to fighting between Israel Defense Forces and militant elements within Palestine, mainly in the Gaza Strip.

The rise in intensity of violence can be seen after 2011. In Syria, we did not see any violence before 2011. This finding highlights that the Syrian civil war was a pivotal moment. The rise in violence can be partially attributed to jihadist groups that operated within the refugee camps in Syria. On the other hand, Jordan had just one case of refugee-related violence in 2016, despite the sizeable Palestinian community that resided there. Jordan can also be considered as one of the most stable countries in the region. This indicates that the overall stability of a receiving country can lower the probability of violence related to refugees despite hosting a large refugee community.

VNSAs activity in refugee camps in Asia was not only limited to attacks on refugees. Refugee camps in Syria and Jordan were targeted by ISIS for recruiting new members. Hamas and its affiliates were using refugee facilities in the

Gaza Strip and West Bank as safe havens and bases for its operations. The Taliban was also recruiting new members within the Afghani refugee community in Pakistan. According to the Global Terrorism Database, there were 62 attacks committed by the Taliban from 2005 to 2017 in Pakistan.[24] Pakistani authorities blame refugees for most of these attacks.[25] The intensity of violence was high also in Pakistan, where large security operations within the refugee camps had been conducted. The protracted situation of Afghan refugees combined with the fact that the Taliban was operating among refugees complicated the relationship between the Pakistan state and Afghan refugees.[26] On other occasions, the dire conditions and forced closure of the Jalozai refugee camp led to the use of violence by Pakistan security forces in 2008.[27]

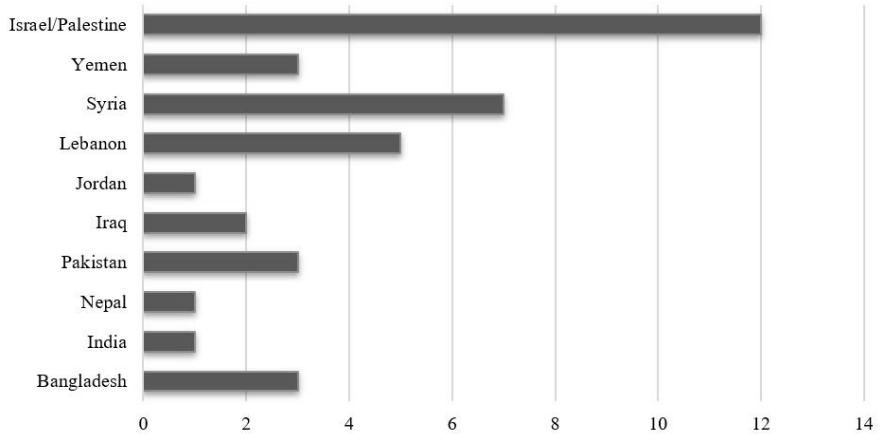
Trends within each category

The only case where type A violence occurred is Israel, where attacks between Israeli security forces and Palestinian refugees (primarily located in the Gaza Strip) were reported almost every year. This type, although rare, is also persistent and intensive, but that can be attributed to a unique situation in Israel and Palestine. Many cases of this violence can be categorised as refugee-related. More than 70% of the population in Gaza are refugees. Militants have been using refugee facilities as bases for many of their operations. Israel sometimes specifically targeted particular areas used by militants in Gaza's refugee camps.[28]

Type B (attacks between receiving state and refugees) was the most frequent type of violence observed in Asia. We counted fifteen instances when this type of violence occurred. This type of violence typically occurred in Pakistan, Syria and Lebanon. Violence between the government of the receiving state and refugees is strongly linked to the protracted situation on the refugees, and the probability of this type of violence can rise over time. This type of violence was the most intense due to the destructiveness and scale of many cases of this violence in Syria and Lebanon. Type B violence was also the second most persistent type of violence, only topped by the persistent conflict between Israel and Palestine (type A). The protracted situation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh did lead to this type of violence in the past but did not manifest as strongly during our timeframe. There were reports of this type of violence occurring in 2009 and 2010 during clashes between police and Rohingya.

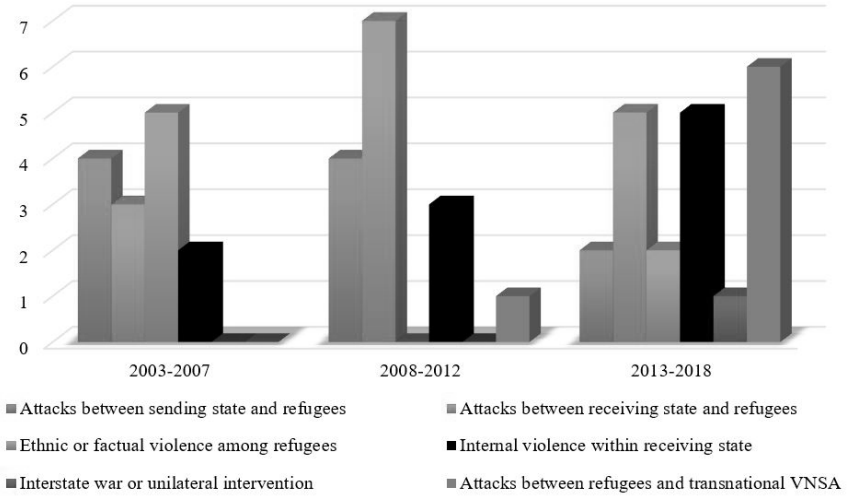
Factional violence (type C) was reported only in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, where militant groups fought over control of refugee camps. We counted seven instances in total. It includes Fatah, Fatah al-Intifada and Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon and the Islamic State and al-Qaeda and Palestinian militias such as the Sons of Yarmouk Movement in Syria. Support of these militants within the refugee community was usually weak, but the

Figure 5. Frequency of refugee-related political violence in Asia by state (2003-2018)



Source: authors' own graph, data from BBC, UNHCR, New Humanitarian, NY Times

Figure 6. Type of refugee-related political violence in Asia (2003-2018)



Source: authors' own graph, data from BBC, UNHCR, New Humanitarian, NY Times

peaceful elements in the refugee community, even if in the majority, lacked the power to properly defend against the influence of violent groups. For example, Fatah al-Islam gained its influence in Nahr al-Bared due to the sympathy among Salafi imams but was not popular among the majority of refugees accommodated in the camp.[29] Type D (internal violence within receiving state) was mainly concentrated also in the Middle Eastern countries. Namely Syria, Israel but also Lebanon, where there was a wave of violent attacks against refugees perpetrated by locals in 2011.[30]

An interstate or unilateral intervention (type E) related to violence towards refugees was observed only in 2017 when Saudi Arabian forces attacked the boat of Somali refugees fleeing Yemen, probably mistaking them for Yemeni rebels.[31] The F type attributes to the highest growth in incidences over time. Here, for eight years, this type of violence was observed in Asia. This development can be attributed almost exclusively to al-Qaeda (or its affiliates) and ISIS operating within the refugee community in Syria. These Jihadist groups were using refugee camps as hideouts and bases. However, at the same time, fighting over control with anti-jihadist militant groups formed by Palestinian refugees, namely The Sons of Yarmouk Movement. Nonetheless, refugee camps were not the primary target of VNSA violence in Asia, and we can conclude that VNSAs targeted mostly local civilian or government targets and not specifically refugees. The fact that refugee camps were used as hideouts for VNSAs makes them more likely to become a terrorist safe haven than the target of a terrorist attack. It has to be noted that the militarisation of refugee camps is nothing new nor limited to the Middle East. For example, Murshid reports tendencies of usually peaceful Rohingya to militarise refugee camps in Bangladesh partially as an answer to mistreatment by Bangladeshi authorities which can in effect create tensions inside the community or towards the receiving state.[32] This phenomenon did not, however, display itself during the selected timeframe.

Comparison of Africa and Asia

At the end of 2018, Africa was hosting more than six million refugees, while Asia, including Turkey, hosted almost ten million plus another five million Palestinians. We found that from 2003 to 2018, violence was twice more frequent in Africa than in Asia. We counted 100 cases in Africa and only 50 in Asia. Even though there are more refugees in Asia, we observe that countries were less affected by violence in Asia. In Africa, the refugee population was more evenly spread out. In Asia, large refugee communities were located in fewer countries. This explains the difference in violence frequency. In Asia, we observed more protracted conflicts. Namely in Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel/Palestine. Although in Africa, the number of protracted conflicts was lower (just Somalia and Sudan), the overall situation on the continent was more unstable, and the instability affected more countries than in Asia. Therefore, despite the overall lower intensity of conflicts in Africa, the frequency of refugee-related violence was higher compared to Asia.

The most frequent type of violence in Africa was type F – violence between refugees and transnational VNSA. We observed 40 cases over the examined period. This was caused mainly by the weakness of national states that were unable to secure their borders and did not have proper control over their territory. In Asia, the most frequent type was the violence between refugees and the gov-

ernment of receiving state, which was reported 15 times. This can be explained by the lack of willingness to bear the responsibility and provide protection to refugees that led to crackdowns on refugees and also real risks posed by the fact that, in some countries, VNSAs, especially jihadist groups, operated within the refugee community.

In some countries in Africa, e.g., the DRC or Angola, the problem of VNSA violence was worsened by the fact that both refugee camps and natural resources were located on the periphery, where VNSAs usually operate. Violent groups then used the opportunity to attack, recruit or enslave refugees. In Africa, ethnicity was an often essential part of these conflicts. VNSAs were attacking refugees also on ethnic grounds. In Asia, this type of violence was less frequent. Only seven cases were reported. However, an increase in this type of violence in recent years can be discovered. In Asia, these cases were linked to jihadist groups, mainly in relation to the Syrian civil war. These attacks were usually caused by fights over control in refugee camps, and refugees were primarily not targeted by insurgents. Nevertheless, in some instances, camps became hideouts or bases for terrorist groups and their recruitment on both continents.

In Africa, some groups such as LRA and FNL specifically targeted refugee camps and committed terrorist attacks, while in Asia, this was much less frequent. This difference can be explained by the different characteristics of some non-state actors operating on both continents. The nationalist ideology and ethnic exclusiveness of FNL meant that it was more likely to continue to persecute refugees abroad, unlike ISIS or Al-Shabaab, which were ideologically and religiously motivated without being ethnically exclusive. These groups can profit by infiltrating the refugee community, spreading propaganda and recruiting new members rather than attacking the refugees.

On both continents, we can observe that the size of the refugee community has an effect on the probability of refugee-related violence. Although primarily in Asia, it seems that the link is not as clear, with some countries, e.g., Turkey or China, not being affected by refugee-related violence, despite having large refugee populations. Instead, the combination of protracted situations of large refugee communities in relatively weak or unstable states seems to be strongly linked to refugee-related violence in Asia. In Asia, countries tend to have better control over their territory compared to Africa, where weakness seems to be more widespread. According to Böhmelt et al. (2018), the risk of refugee conflict depends partially on the capacity of the state to manage security on its territory, which can explain different observations regarding the link between the number of refugee populations and the risk of violence in Asia and Africa.[33] For example, developed authoritarian countries such as China have the capacity

to manage the refugee population, while in countries like Turkey and Egypt, the refugees can integrate more easily due to better economic opportunities and cultural closeness to the receiving state. That can also mediate the risk of conflict.

Nevertheless, on both continents, the intensity of violence was concentrated in specific regions and was less prominent in other areas. African Great Lakes region and East Africa were the most affected in Africa. In Asia, specifically, Syria, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine had the highest frequency and intensity of violence, with significantly Palestine refugees affected. The fact that most of the violence was limited to just a small number of states, especially in Asia, is consistent with Lischer's finding that refugee-related violence is usually connected to specific states.[34] In Africa, the violence was spread to more countries and more communities because of a higher number of weak or failing states that did not correctly control their territory and lack the capacity to manage risks related to the influx of refugees.

In both Africa and Asia, the violence between sending state and refugees was rare. Unlike in Africa, the violence involving the state of origin was not reported in Asia, with the exception of Israel/Palestine, where the situation is quite specific. In Asia, the refugee community usually did not pose a challenge to the country of origin. Therefore, the sending state lacked the motivation to intervene outside of its own territory. In the case of Afghanistan, we could argue that the Afghan refugees in Pakistan constituted a challenge for the government in Kabul because it harbored Taliban militants. In Africa, the number of state cross-border violence remained low. Also, that further indicates that this type of violence is no longer prominent compared to Lischer's study.

We observed the trend of less intrastate conflict and higher involvement by VNSAs on both continents. This can be partially explained by the fact that most of the countries have more clearly defined territory and neighboring states are thus less motivated to intervene outside of their borders. The continuing weakness of many states, political and social instability, porous and long borders, and natural resources located on the periphery combined with ethnic diversity and deteriorating environmental conditions lead to the rise of VNSAs. In Asia, this was manifested by the rise of the insurgency in the Middle East. This trend is likely to continue because of the ongoing instability within the countries currently affected by this type of violence. Compared to Lischer's study, interstate war or unilateral intervention were almost non-existent in Africa and Asia. This finding is consistent with a broader trend of decrease in intrastate conflicts, and it further highlights the shift from state-led violence towards non-state actors becoming one of the defining forces in today's conflicts.

Conclusion

This study explores the topic of refugee-related political violence in Asia and Africa in a fifteen-year period from 2003 to 2018. Based on the available data, it is concluded that the phenomenon of refugee-related political violence underwent rapid changes during this period. The number of refugees increased significantly, and armed conflicts, as well as refugee-related violence, considerably changed its character. Because of these changes, Lischer's framework had to be revised by including the role of VNSAs into the research structure in order to analyse the new environment properly. These changes were not reflected by any other studies. Therefore we had to introduce a new type of political violence – attacks between refugees and transnational VNSAs.

We observed that in Africa, violence was twice as frequent compared to Asia. While Africa had fewer refugees, large refugee populations were spread to more countries. African countries are weaker and usually do not have the capacity to manage the influx of refugees properly. In Asia, the number of countries that hosted large populations of refugees was lower and fewer countries were affected by violence. The overall instability and weakness of states in Africa have become a factor in the rise of violence related to VNSAs. The most frequent type of violence in Africa was the violence between VNSA and refugees, while in Asia, the most cases of violence occurred between the receiving state and refugees. In Asia, VNSAs were not involved in violence against refugees as often, but this type of violence becomes more frequent over time. The violence between the receiving state and refugees was the most frequent type in Asian countries. It usually occurred when the receiving state saw refugees as a threat or was unwilling to bear the responsibility for the refugee community residing in its territory.

The occurrence of refugee-related political violence was usually linked to the size of the refugee population, the time and protracted situation of this population and the capacity of the receiving state to manage the influx of refugees. We found that in Africa, the probability of refugee-related violence was four times higher when the refugee population was above 100,000 individuals. In Asia, the only countries that experienced violence were those with a large population of refugees, but some countries were able to avoid violence despite large numbers of refugees due to a higher capacity to manage the risks related to the refugee community.

The fact that the instability in Asia and Africa is likely to continue in the following years makes it improbable that the rate of refugee-related political violence will decline any time soon. Some of the most destructive acts of violence against refugees were committed by the receiving state, which is alarming, and this illustrates that the refugee population itself is more likely to be a victim of

violence in the receiving state than a source of instability. On the other hand, the states affected by an influx of refugees have to be willing to invest in capacities to manage flows of forced migration and prevent possible violence caused directly or indirectly by refugees. Special care should be taken to prevent the creation of isolated communities stuck in a protracted situation with no perspective to change. These, in addition to the size of the refugee population, are the most influential factors determining the probability of refugee-related violence.

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