

# IMPACT OF REFUGEE'S PRESENCE ON CONFLICTS IN KENYA-SOMALIA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP, KENYA

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**Abstract:** There have been escalating historical tensions between Kenya and Somalia in the recent past ranging between land and sea border disputes and many more. The tensions between the two countries escalated when Kenya sent its troops under the United Nation's AMISOM to restore peace and order in the war-torn Somalia. Over the years, the Kenyan government has raised issues with regards to the perceived insecurity brought about by presence of Somalia refugees in Kenya. This formed the basis for this study to critically assess the influence of refugees' presence on Kenya's relation with Somalia. The study specifically sought to assess the extent of Somali refugees' presence on Kenya's relation with Somalia, to establish the link between existence of refugees and diplomatic relations between Kenya and Somalia, and to suggest the possible approaches. This research was carried out as a descriptive survey where qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The study targeted a population of 217,444 individuals comprising 214,446 Somali refugees residing in Dadaab refugee camp and 3 officials' one from the Government of Kenya Foreign Affairs office, one from Federal republic of Somalia Foreign Affairs and one from UNHCR. The researcher used a mix of proportionate and random sampling to select 384 respondents who were interviewed using questionnaires and guided interviews. At the onset of the research, the researcher piloted the data collection tools over 37 participants from Ifo camp within Dadaab refugee complex where the reliability of the instruments was ascertained with a reliability index of 0.825(82.5%). This ascertained that the research tools were reliable and hence further analysis could be done. The collected data was downloaded from the Kobo platform in Excel format after which it was cleaned to remove outliers. The researcher then coded and fed the data into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. From SPSS, the researcher ran for frequencies and measures of central tendencies. Research findings indicate that Kenya hosts 433,212 registered refugees and 54,476 asylum-seekers. 60% of the refugee population is of Somali origin nearly 80% of them residing in the Dadaab refugee camps. Most of the respondents at 43% (165) believe that the country-of-origin characteristics have highly increased Somali's relationship with Kenya. 44% (167) note that their skills and capacities had increased Somalia's relations with Kenya and 41% (155) believe that the available durable solutions had maintained Somalia's relations with Kenya. The researcher concludes that over half of refugee population in Kenya is of Somali origin and that the diplomatic relationship between Kenya and Somalia places a priority on traditional diplomacy and conflict resolution. In addition, there is a clear linkage between presence of refugees and diplomatic relations between Kenya and Somalia. It is the opinion of the researcher that Kenya considers other avenues of dispute resolutions including possibly using sports as a diplomatic tool to bolster peace among the warring communities in the border or even joint livelihood projects and opportunities. Also, the researcher opines that the two countries should try the available diplomatic means which are better off than legal options since diplomacy allows for the termination of disputes upon voluntary acceptance by both teams.

**Keywords:** Diplomacy, Refugee, Relations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN, 2020) reports that there are 82.4 million refugees and displaced people globally who have fled their countries of residence out of fear of persecution, or as a result of natural calamities. These displaced people seek refuge in safer zones within their countries or in neighboring countries (World Bank, 2011). A larger number of refugees are

concentrated in the least developed countries (UNCHR, 2014). Hosting refugees is seen by these nations as a win for financial, social, and political reasons. The impact of refugees in developing countries has attracted a huge debate among scholars and diplomats since the 1970s.

Prolonged humanitarian emergencies call for huge expenditures by the hosting countries thereby eating into the development of those countries. For instance, the prolonged Kosovo refugee crisis in 1999, costed the host countries a cumulative of approximately US\$52 - 188 million (IMF and World Bank, 1999). This was equally the case with the protracted Albanian and Macedonian refugee crisis which even spurred a call for an amendment of the host countries public debt ceilings to allow for additional funding mechanisms for the humanitarian assistance (World Bank, 1999). Protracted refugee situations sometimes create a commensurate increase in employment for locals as the private sector responds to the increase in demand (Parsons, 2013). On the other hand, regional economies may see economic decline, as in the case of Somalis entering Kenya, because insecurity discourages larger scale and longer-term investment.

African nations have in the past half a century generated huge populations of displaced people that have been settled in developing countries (Chimni, 1998). Some of the host countries including Tanzania and Kenya have over the years raised concerns on the burden the protracted refugee populations have had on those countries (Ongpin, 2009). With increased flows of displaced people, stakeholders have established mechanisms to mitigate the impact of the immigrants for host countries, with some calling it a "humanitarian imperative" (Annan, 1998). This for example was the case in Malawian refugee crisis in the 1990's when UNHCR had to set up an emergency development programme to cushion the dwindling development programmes of Malawi that was occasioned by diversion of resources to host refugees (Zetter, 1995). Some of the negative impacts on host countries include deforestation, overstretched local facilities, illicit small arms trafficking and the perpetuation of conflict.

Humanitarian diplomacy, economic diplomacy, national cohesion, and regional integration are emerging concepts designed to address the local impacts of refugee crises around the globe (Bahcekapili and Cetin, 2015). An influx of refugees in a given society can have substantial impacts on the different social structures of life and the economy. Unlike humanitarian diplomacy that is centered on states, economic diplomacy involves private sector actors.

Conventional or traditional diplomacy is attributed to politics whereas humanitarian diplomacy is anchored on the principle of humanitarianism (Minear and Smith, 2007). However, there is some correlation or shared principles and activities between conventional and humanitarian diplomacies since some conventional diplomacies may bring on board humanitarianism (Pease, 2016). Generally, whether conventional or humanitarian diplomacy, the cardinal rule in practice is to avoid risks that might threaten the interest of their states.

However, Humanitarian diplomacy and traditional diplomacy differ in more ways than this. For example, humanitarian diplomacy has an expanded scope unlike traditional diplomacy that is focused on relations between states (ICRC, 2011). Commonalities between the two consist of data collection and analysis as a basis for policy formulation, a negotiation approach that promotes compromise, rather than full consensus among stakeholder, and different approaches to international diplomatic practice.

## 2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The diplomatic relations between Somalia and Kenya have been soaring since independence. UNHCR estimates that more than 100,000 refugees of Somali origin have been forced to flee to Kenya due to Somalia's internal conflict and famine. There have been escalating tensions between Kenya and Somalia in the recent past. These tensions are historical ranging between land and sea border disputes and many more. The tensions between the two countries escalated when Kenya sent its troops under the United Nation's AMISOM to restore peace and order in the wore torn Somalia. Over the years, the Kenyan government has raised issues with regards to the perceived insecurity brought about by presence of Somalia refugees in Kenya. For instance, several attacks by Al-Shabaab operatives in Kenya including the Garissa University attacks have been presumed to be planned within the refugee camps in Dadaab by Al-Shabaab operatives. To that end, the government of Kenya issued an ultimatum for the closure of the Dadaab refugee camps in 2022. These competing claims are genuine strategic interests for both countries.

The government of Kenya views the protracted presence of Somali refugees as a threat to national security and Kenya's core national interest that are paramount to the country's foreign policy. This is because it has caused Kenya to divert both human and material efforts and resources from development to support the refugees. The result of this diversion of resources

and attendant stunting of potential economic development puts further pressure on both sides of the decade's long diplomatic row pertaining to their maritime boundaries to deliver gains for their respective constituencies. This informed this study to critically assess the impact of refugee's presence on conflicts in Kenya-Somalia diplomatic relations in Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya.

### 3. THERETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Theory of Immigration

The study was guided by Lee's (1966) theory of migration. The theory of migration holds that migration is selective and is influenced by pull- push factors. Lee (1966) notes that there are push and pull factors that attract or repel people to a place or from a place respectively leading to migration. At the onset, push factors are centralized at the place of origin and unlike the pull factors, sometimes the push factors are not under control of the migrant and will not necessarily influence where they settle.

The migration of Somali refugees to Kenya and their potential return to Somali is better explained by Lee's theory of migration. The push factors are essentially the persistent conflict marred with droughts and floods. The pull factors include access to protection and social services in Kenya. All these factors tend to influence the decision of the refugees to either seek refuge or asylum in Kenya or in another country.

#### Diplomatic Theory of International Relations

The study's dependent variable was guided by the Diplomatic Theory of International relations postulated by Sharp (2009). Diplomacy is a predominant shaper of international dialogue and relations (Sharp, 2009). Moreover, the diplomatic theory of international relations shapes the politics around the relationships between states while enhancing togetherness. The theorist is convinced that diplomacy is paramount in settling disputes arising between groups and states as well as establishing lasting relationships. There should always be a steady space for diplomacy, whose main purpose is to build bridges between peoples. This theory is found relevant for the proposed study in seeking to establish the diplomatic relations between Kenya and Somalia and as well as identifying the alternative strategies.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive survey as it set to describe the current situation in the relationship between Kenya and Somalia and how this situation was influenced by the presence of Somali refugees in Kenya. The study targeted a population of 218,508 Somali refugees residing in Dadaab refugee camp (UNHCR, 2021) and 3 officials one from the Government of Kenya Foreign Affairs office, one from Federal republic of Somalia Foreign Affairs and one from UNHCR. In order to collect information, the researcher selected as sample of respondents. As opined by Krejcie, Robert, Morgan, Daryle, (1970) that for a population exceeding 100,000 the ideal sample size would be 384. This was then the study sample size and is justified in that it presented the researcher with sufficient information in relations to the study objectives that has been analyzed and generalized for the entire population. The inclusion criteria in this sample were those respondents above the age of 18 only considering the legal implications required to interview minors.

To select the study sample, the researcher adopted systematic simple random sampling where the researcher systematically selected the start point preferably at the center of the Dadaab refugee camp to start the interview. Thereafter, a systematic frequency from either direction was selected to interview the next household representative/member. This continued until the entire camp locations and sections are covered and the sample size achieved.

The researcher adopted the use of questionnaires and interview guides to solicit primary data from the respondents. The researcher designed a questionnaire that was distributed to the refugees to solicit from them quantitative and qualitative primary data. The researcher developed an interview guide that was used to guide the researcher with interviewing the GoK, UNHCR, and the Somali Embassy officials.

The researcher conducted a pilot study over 37 respondents from Ifo 2 camp within Dadaab refugee complex. This pilot was selected as they have the same characteristics as the main population of the study. The findings from the pilot study presented in chapter 4 were used to establish the reliability of the study instruments through the reliability index calculation.

The researcher sought expert opinion from the supervisor and lecturers to establish content and construct validity of the researcher instruments (Creswell, 2013). A sample size of 37 participants from Ifo camp within Dadaab refugee complex was used for pilot testing. The researcher received 26 filled questionnaires which were then subjected to confirmatory factor analysis that yielded a 0.825 reliability index against the required 0.7 (Kothari, 2004).

Upon ensuring reliability and validity of the research instruments, the researcher cleaned the tools and uploaded them on an online data gathering app called Kobo Collect. Thereafter, the researcher recruited two research assistants who were then trained on how to navigate through the online data gathering tools. After the training, the research assistants were issued with identification documents and introductory notes from the researcher who sought them from UNHCR, Ministry of Education and Mount Kenya University. The assistants then would share the offline digital questionnaires with the respondents for them to fill and where the respondents did not have phones, the assistants allowed those respondents to use their phones. The researcher would monitor the questionnaires as they were uploaded and cleaned them to remove outliers and to ensure the data was clean enough for analysis.

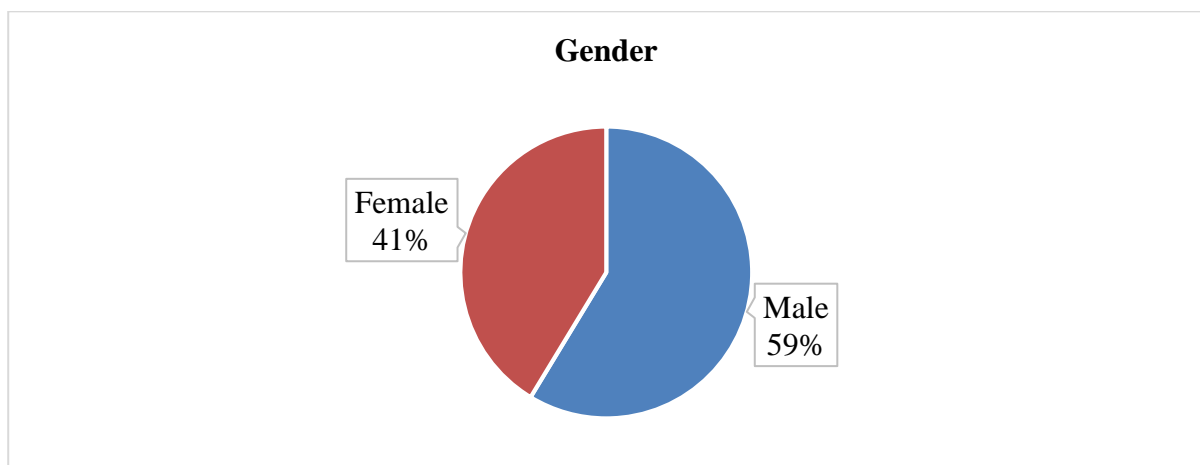
The uploaded data was then exported to excel by the researcher and re-uploaded to SPSS where descriptive analysis was done through running measures of central tendencies (Kothari, 2004). Qualitative data was sorted and analyzed by tracking key attributes and points of discussions.

In order to ensure ethical considerations in the study, the researcher formalized the study by seeking permits from Mount Kenya University, the Ministry of education through the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the selected NGOs. In addition, the researcher ensured that the respondents provided an informed consent before they were interviewed, noting that the purpose of the data collected was for the academic research only and that it would not be shared by any third party without their consent.

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study focused on selected Somali refugees residing in Dadaab. The study examined a sample of 384 respondents. 384 questionnaires were issued and 382 were returned of which 2 were incomplete. This narrowed down to 380 completed questionnaires indicating a response rate of 95%.

Majority of the respondents were male 223 (59%) followed female 157(41%). The findings indicate that there was an almost equal representation of both genders in the sample and thus the findings from this sample could be well a representative of the entire population. The figure below represents the gender of the responded.



Source: Researcher 2022

**Figure 1: Gender of the respondents**

156 (41%) of the respondents were above 50 years, 98 (26%) aged between 41 and 50 years, and the remaining 126(33%) aged between 31-40 years. This indicates that the sample selected represented ages with sufficient knowledge and experience of the research variables in question and thus provided valuable information for this study.

With regards to the length of stay by the respondents in Kenya, 110(29%) had stayed in Kenya for between 11-14 years. This was followed by 89(23%) who had stayed in Kenya for between 7-10 years, 77(20%) said they had stayed in Kenya for between 3-6 years and the remaining 104(27%) had lived in Kenya for less than 2 years. The survey findings indicate that the sample selected had stayed in Kenya for sufficient time to gain experience and had valuable knowledge of the context.

The researcher further sought to describe the sample in terms of their level of education. The findings indicate that 101(27%) respondents indicate that they had never attended any schooling, 65(17%) said that they had attended madrasa classes. Another 55(14%) said that they had attained tertiary education with 90(24%) saying that they had schooled up to primary level and the remaining 69(18%) had reached secondary level of education.

The other attribute of the sample that was sought by the researcher was the employment status of the sampled respondents. The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents at 59% (224) were unemployed and the other 41% (156) said that they were employed.

After establishing the demographic description of the sample, the researcher sought to establish from the respondents their views regarding the research variables. According to Oscar Nabiswa, UNHCR (Protection Unit), Kenya hosts 433,212 registered refugees and 54,476 asylum-seekers, 60% from Somalia with 50% of the entire refugee population being hosted in Dadaab refugee complex. Majority of these refugees have fled Somalia to Kenya as a result of insecurity in Somalia, unfavourable climatic conditions in Somalia and other migrate to Kenya in search of better living conditions and available livelihood opportunities.

*“A refugee in Kenya is in theory able to engage in wage earning employment subject to the same restrictions as are imposed on persons who are not citizens in Kenya. Therefore, they can engage in any form of employment in the private sector either by self-employment which does not require formal authorization or take up paid employment after obtaining a work permit (with Class M work permits as prescribed in the Kenyan Citizenship and Immigration Regulations, 2012, Seventh Schedule are specifically available to refugees). A Class M work permit allows refugee to engage in any occupation, trade, business or profession. In practice very few refugees are able to access work permits in Kenya and engage in informal employment and income generating opportunities.” (Nabiswa Oscar UNHCR\_ 2022).*

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) asserts that the Kenya-Somalia relationship has evolved through three stages marred with conflicts and priorities. The shifta war between 1963 and 1989, followed by the age of war and peace period between 1989 and 2004 and later the age of extremism post 2004 were marred with conflicts in the relationship between these two countries. It is in the later stages in 1989 to 2004 and post 2004 that refugees started trickling in to Dadaab refugee camp and Kenya mediated peace in Somalia.

*“The diplomatic dispute is primarily an internal Somali dispute over federalism, into which Kenya has been inexorably drawn,”* said Mr. Samuel Koikai of Kenya Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

KIPPRA on the other hand has also noted that the diplomatic relationships between Kenya and Somalia have prospects of economic gains. KIPPRA records that it is easier and cheaper for traders in Garissa to source their supplies from Kismayu compared to when they source from Mombasa. It is therefore the opinion of KIPPRA that it would be economically beneficial for Kenya and Somalia to strengthen the linkages between the ports of Kismayu and Mombasa to leverage more business opportunities. Over and above all, KIPPRA notes that there has been a positive trend in trade relationship between Kenya and Somalia.

*“Somalia has since freedom dismissed the frontier borders even after the OAU announcement. The quest for the 'More noteworthy Somalia' and the excusal of the frontier borders has prompted Somali's commitment to clashes with its neighbors. The principal plan of the post-autonomy Republic of Somalia was to join the Somali ethnic gathering that had been isolated by state borders”.* Says Said a security attaché at the Somali embassy in Kenya.

Research findings indicate that majority of the respondents at 27% (101) strongly agreed and another (18%) 69 agreed that the security situations are conducive for them to return, (14%) 55 were in doubt, (17%) 65 were not in agreement and the remaining (24%) 90 strongly disagreed. This was interpreted to mean that the respondents with an average response of 2.93 on the provided Likert scale had mixed views on whether the security situations are conducive for them to return.

Further, the findings indicate that 126 (33%) respondents were uncertain if there are upcoming opportunities for returnees to engage in livelihood, 86 (23%) agreed with this statement as another 56 (15%) strongly agreed. There were 43 (11%) who disagreed and 69 (18%) who strongly disagreed with this statement. On average the response was 2.96 on the provided likert scale indicating that on average the respondents were undecided on whether there are upcoming livelihood opportunities for them in the event they returned to Somalia.



The respondents were asked on whether they agreed or disagreed on the provided likert scale whether the political situation is stabilizing in Somalia. 165 (43%) strongly agreed followed by 134 (35%) who agreed and 28 (7%) who said they were not certain. 27 (7%) and 26 (7%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. On average the respondents agreed.

On whether the cost of living has improved in Somalia, research findings also indicate that majority of the respondents at 167 (44%) agreed and another 103 (27%) strongly agreed that the cost of living has improved in Somalia, 64 (17%) were in doubt, 19 (5%) strongly disagreed and 27 (5%) disagreed.

Lastly, the findings indicate that 155 (41%) respondents were uncertain if they would not experience any culture shock when they return to Somalia, 86 (23%) agreed with this statement as another 44 (23%) strongly agreed. There were 40 (11%) who disagreed and 55 (14%) who strongly disagreed with this statement. On average the response was 2.96 on the provided likert scale indicating that on average the respondents were undecided on whether uncertain if they would not experience any culture shock when they return to Somalia.

Using the Likert scale of one to five (1=strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3= Uncertain 4 =Agree 5=Strongly Agree), the respondents recorded the extent to which the statements in question apply to their experiences in Kenya and the findings are presented in table.

**Table 1: Refugees experiences in Kenya**

		SD	D	U	A	SA	T
I have earned vocational skills training that have helped me earn livelihood in the camp	F	180	65	48	50	37	380
	%	47%	17%	13%	13%	10%	100%
I am able to develop my own business in the camp	F	71	82	48	110	69	380
	%	19%	22%	13%	29%	18%	100%
The government policy does not allow us to invest outside the camp	F	90	33	30	90	137	380
	%	24%	9%	8%	24%	36%	100%
Refugees are barred from moving outside the camp	F	0	43	53	122	162	380
	%	0%	11%	14%	32%	43%	100%
With bared movement, we are not able to employ our skills and capacities to improve the country	F	39	115	59	81	86	380
	%	10%	30%	16%	21%	23%	100%

**Source: Researcher 2022**

In addition, the research findings indicate that majority of the respondents 180 (47%) strongly disagreed and another 65 (17%) disagreed that they have earned vocational skills training that have helped them earn livelihood in the camp, 48 (13%) were in doubt, 50 (13%) agreed and the remaining 37 (10%) strongly agreed. This was interpreted to mean that the respondents have not earned vocational skills training that have helped them earn livelihood in the camp.

Further, the findings indicate that 110 (29%) respondents acknowledged that they are able to develop their own business in the camp, 69 (18%) strongly agreed with this statement as another 48 (13%) remained neutral. There were 82 (22%) who disagreed and 71 (19%) who strongly disagreed with this statement.

The respondents were asked on whether they agreed or disagreed on the provided likert scale if the government policy does not allow us to invest outside the camp. 137 (36%) strongly agreed followed by 90 (24%) who agreed and 30 (8%) who said they were not certain. 33 (9%) and 90 (24%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. On average the respondents were in agreement.

On if refugees are barred from moving outside the camp, the research findings indicate that majority of the respondents at 162 (43%) strongly agreed and another 122 (32%) agreed. 53 (14%) were in doubt and the remaining 43 (11%) disagreed.

The findings further indicate that 115 (30%) respondents disagreed and 39 (10%) strongly disagreed that with bared movement, they are not able to employ their skills and capacities to improve the country. 86 (23%) strongly agreed with this statement as another 81 (21%) agreed. There were 59 (16%) were uncertain with this statement.

**Table 2: The link(s) between existence of refugees and relations between Kenya and Somalia**

		Highly decreased	Decreased	Maintained	Increased	Highly increased	Total
How would you rate the influence of your country-of-origin characteristics on her relationship with Kenya?	F	26	27	28	134	165	380
	%	7%	7%	7%	35%	43%	100%
How would you rate the effect of your skills and capacities on your country of origin's relations with Kenya?	F	19	27	64	167	103	380
	%	5%	7%	17%	44%	27%	100%
How would you rate the influence of available durable solutions to your Country of origin's relations with Kenya?	F	40	55	155	86	44	380
	%	11%	14%	41%	23%	12%	100%

**Source: Researcher 2022**

The survey findings presented in table above indicates that a majority of the respondents at 43% (165) believe that the country-of-origin characteristics have highly increased Somali's relationship with Kenya. Another 35% (134) indicated that the characteristics had increased the relationship as 7% (28) said that the characteristic had maintained the relationship. The remaining 7% (27) and 7% (26) said these characteristics had decreased and highly decreased the relationship of Somalia with Kenya respectively.

When asked how they would rate the effect of their skills and capacities on Somalia's relations with Kenya, 44% (167) and 27% (103) said that their skills and capacities had respectively increased and highly increased Somalia's relationship with Kenya. 17% (64) reported that their skills and capacities had maintained the relationship between Kenya and Somalia, 7% (27) said it had decreased and 5% (19) said it had highly decreased.

Lastly, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which available durable solutions affected Somalia's relations with Kenya. 41% (155) said that the available solutions had maintained the relationship between Kenya and Somalia, 23% (86) said it had increased and 12% (44) reported that it had highly increased. 14% (55) observed that the available durable solutions had decreased the relationship between Somalia and Kenya and 11% (40) recorded that the solutions had highly decreased the relationship.

Above findings concur with findings by Lozi (2013) that the effect of displaced people on unemployment rates and sustenance costs is certain. In addition, the findings are consistent with findings by Brynen (2007) who proposed that because most Palestinians with refugee status reside in camps, the economic effect on both overall poverty rates and economic development are negligible. This lack of observable impact may come down to the fact that camp residents command lower salaries, poorer wellbeing, and educational attainment levels than those outside the camps thus reducing their economic role overall. In any case, camp-based refugees have better access to services providing for their basic needs because of UNHCR-funded humanitarian assistance, again reducing the direct economic impact of refugees residing in camps.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In light to above findings, the researcher concludes:

- Over half of refugee population in Kenya is of Somali origin.
- The diplomatic relationship between Kenya and Somalia places a priority on traditional diplomacy and conflict resolution.
- There is a clear linkage between presence of refugees and diplomatic relations between Kenya and Somalia

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions above, the researcher seeks to suggest the following possible approaches to resolve the conflicts between Kenya and Somalia.

In view of the perceived and real threats on the security of Kenya presented by Al-Shabaab armed operatives and other criminal elements, it is the duty of Kenya to protect its citizens. Despite constructing a border fence between Somalia and

Kenya, though this deters insurgents, this may not be sustainable and fully impactful. It is therefore the opinion of the researcher that Kenya considers other avenues of dispute resolutions including possibly using sports as a diplomatic tool to bolster peace among the warring communities in the border or even joint livelihood projects and opportunities.

Regarding the Indian Ocean border dispute, the Law of the Sea (LOS) Convention could come in handy in settling the dispute through exchange, great workplaces, intercession, worldwide commission of request, mollification, intervention, legal settlement (mediation) other than resorting to going to ICJ as has happened recently. It is therefore the opinion of the researcher that the two countries should try the available diplomatic means which are better off than legal options since diplomacy allows for the termination of disputes upon voluntary acceptance by both teams (Kratochwil 1985).

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