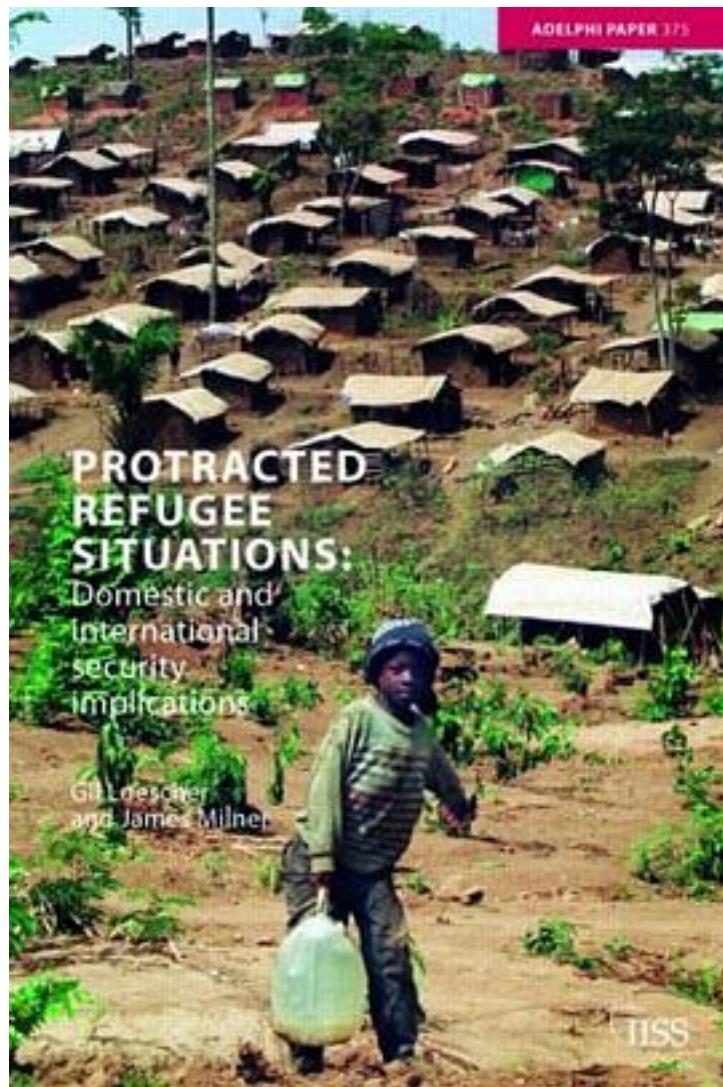


# Security Implications of Protracted Refugee Populations



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Protracted refugee populations not only constitute over 70 per cent of the world's refugees but are also a principal source of many of the irregular movements of people around the world today. The long-term presence of refugee populations in much of the developing world has come to be seen by many host states in these regions as a source of insecurity. In response, host governments have enacted policies of containing refugees in isolated and insecure camps, have prevented the arrival of additional refugees and, in extreme cases, have engaged in forcible repatriation. Not surprisingly, these refugee populations are also increasingly perceived as possible sources of insecurity for Western states. Refugee camps are sometimes breeding grounds for international terrorism and rebel movements. These groups often exploit the presence of refugees to engage in activities that destabilise not only host states but also entire regions. The paper focuses on long-term refugee populations in Sub-Saharan Africa - including Somalis in the Horn and East Africa, Liberians in West Africa, Burundians in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa - and in South and Southeast Asia - including the Bhutanese in Nepal and the Burmese refugees in Thailand. These and other cases demonstrate that protracted refugee situations can result in both 'direct' security consequences (resulting from the spill-over of conflicts and the militarisation of refugee camps) and 'indirect' security consequences (resulting from ethnic and inter-communal tensions within the host countries) for host states and countries of origin in conflict-prone regions. The project will highlight both these security concerns relating to chronic refugee populations and propose a framework of possible remedies for resolving and mitigating at least some aspects of the phenomenon.

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