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The Role of the United Nations and East African Governments in Voluntary Repatriation

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Oral Presentation O10.3

**THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND EAST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS
IN VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION**

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During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 1.8 million people fled the country to seek refuge in neighboring countries such as Uganda. Aid and relief to refugees still living in the camps is provided by non-governmental and international organizations, which work together to facilitate the return of Rwandans to their home country. This presentation, based on data collected through participant observation and interviews in Rwandan refugee camps in Uganda, investigates the mechanisms through which refugee rights are attended to or neglected during repatriation. The research suggests that many refugees do not want to return to Rwanda, and their fears and needs are overlooked by the institutions that claim to be helping them. Through the work of these institutions voluntary repatriation becomes a forced process. This research offers an important analysis of the current status of Rwandan refugees and of the people and organizations who are placed in their charge.