

Forum: Disarmament and International Security Committee

Issue # 14-02: Measures to stabilize the situation in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Introduction

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is at such a point that approximately 45,000 people are killed each month and 48 women are raped every hour. There are an estimated amount of around 70 militant groups in the eastern region of the DRC who all are armed. Regardless of the biggest known UN Peacekeeping mission operating in the DRC, with more than nineteen thousand peacekeepers moderating the area, the situation in Congo has been worsening for years. Villages and civilians are terrorized by strong armed rebel or military groups with hopes of seizing the unprotected areas of the DRC and capitalizing from the many important minerals and natural resources Congo has to offer. The atrocious war crimes committed against these innocent civilians has led to approximately 4.1 million people displaced within Congo and around 450,000 refugees.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo started out with rivalries and rebellions that sprung up from political dissatisfaction and corruption. Various countries such as Rwanda and Uganda have been heavily involved in the conflict, especially the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Several rebel groups and foreign troops that have formed or entered Congo do not have a reason to stay any more, as most of the political rivalry and issues have been long in the past.

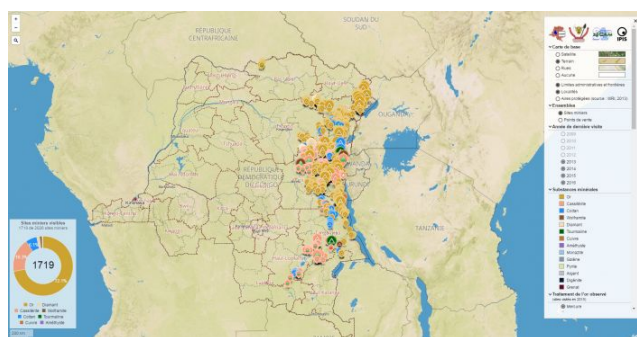
However, the conflict has transcended from being solely political to economic based as well. This is due to the fact that Congo is home to several mines that contain important minerals

such as coltan, wolframite, and cassiterite, which are heavily sought after by the international community. The rebel groups and foreign troops that had originally entered Congo for political reasons are residing in Congo and are mainly targeting this mining areas. Unfortunately, these mines are located near villages where many Congolese people live in, causing the lives of millions of people to be put in danger by these rebel groups and troops. Brutal violence, rape, and abductions are not uncommon due to the stark hunger so many have for controlling the mining areas. Many rebel groups also rely on the mining areas as a way to fund their arms to continue fighting against the political unrest present in this country.

Many countries, especially the United States of America, have stepped in and provided aid to Congo, ranging from sending troops to help fight rebel groups to humanitarian aid. The UN is also heavily involved, as many peacekeepers reside in the areas where there is most conflict to try and minimize any fatal outcomes any riots or clashes may have. Nevertheless, the situation in the DRC is worsening by the day and many villages and their people are terrorized every day and living under inhumane conditions that are often neglected.

Definition of Key Terms

Eastern DRC: the epicenter of the situation in Congo today. It is where most of the rich mines of Congo are found and where there is most violence. It's most important city is the city of Goma, near Lake Kivu, where many of the foreign troops from Uganda and Rwanda, rebel groups, and UN peacekeepers are found.



<https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/interactive-map-artisanal-mining-areas-eastern-dr-congo-2015-update>

FRDC: the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the national army.

LRA: the Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, is one of the many armed groups now residing in Congo. The group has committed several war crimes and crimes against humanity and currently have less than 100 members.

MONUSCO: The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the UN peacekeeping force in Congo which took over the United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) that was present previously. It was originally formed to watch over the peace process after the Second Congo War, but now mostly monitors areas where violence is common and frequent.

DDR/RR: the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement division of MONUSCO, centralizing and focusing on reintegrating ex-combatants of rebel groups into their original society. They encourage militants to abandon their rebel groups and use various communication strategies such as radio transmission and the UN PSYOPS fliers to reach said combatants.

UN PSYOPS Fliers: A Psychological Operation in which flyers are sent out into areas of the Congolese jungles where many rebel groups are found, informing them on how they can safely escape and arrive to MONUSCO camps where they can be then relocated and reintegrated into their society.

Congolese minerals: Cassiterite, wolframite, and coltan are the most important minerals found in Congo. They are heavily sought after by the international community, as they are fundamental in the production of smartphones, jet engines, airbags, and other products. The mining camps of these minerals are highly dangerous, as many rebel groups and foreign troops attempt to gain control over them in hopes of gaining profit.

Hutu: an ethnic majority group in Central Africa. They are believed to have arrived in Central Africa between 500 and 1,000 BCE, and were mostly agricultural. Although they are a majority, the Hutus have been ruled over by the Tutsis for centuries because of their economic differences,

as the Tutsis were known for having more wealth than the Hutus.

Tutsi: an ethnic minority group in Central Africa. They are believed to have arrived in Central Africa around 400 years ago. Unlike the Hutus, the Tutsis were cattle-herders, allowing them to be wealthier than the Hutus. Although the two ethnic groups have their economic differences, they do not differ much in regards to culture, language, and beliefs.

General Overview

Importance of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

The famous 1994 Rwandan Genocide can be considered as the most “clear-cut” genocide since the Holocaust. The long-going conflict between the two ethnic groups of the Hutus and Tutsis broke out. A three-year long civil war between the majority Hutu government (the Rwandese National Movement for Democracy and Development or the MRNDD) and the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) had taken its final steps to agreement with The Arusha Accord, signed in August of 1993. It had stated that a transitional government where to be called upon, along with a UN overseeing period. Unfortunately, the mandates in the accord could not be settled through negotiations and tensions remained at a high.

However, things took a real turn when the plane of the then Hutu president of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana, was shot down on April 6, 1994. This led to a mass increase of street violence and resistance and a power vacuum in the government, in which the Hutus started targeting the Tutsis. However, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), with its bases in Uganda, fought against the Hutus and eventually were able to cross the border and take over Rwanda with the help of their leader, Paul Kagame. This led to more than one million Rwandans, mostly Hutus, fleeing from Rwanda to their neighbors in what was then known as Zaire, which is now modern day DRC. □

The mass number of refugees arriving in DRC stirred up conflict which sparked the Alliance of Democratic Forces (AFDL) in Congo which was a coalition of Ugandan, Rwandan,

and Burundian forces, to begin killing the refugees as an act forced by Kagame to hold the Hutus accountable for their uprisings against the Rwandan Tutsis. On May 29th of 1997, the leader of AFDL, Laurent Kabila, was sworn into power and renamed Zaire as the new Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The impact that the Rwandan Genocide had on the conflict in Congo can still be seen today starting with the manipulation and control of Paul Kagame over the actions taken against the Hutus in Zaire after their flee. Paul Kagame had been working with the AFDL to attack and kill the Hutus that were seeking refuge in Zaire since having him intervene would infringe on Zaire's sovereignty. With all of the support the AFDL was receiving from the allied countries, Kabila was able to rebel and overthrow Zaire's president, Mobutu Sese Seko, and become the country's newly found leader. This is considered to be the First Congo War. Unfortunately, Kabila was not much of a better leader than Zaire's previous dictator. Kabila was accused of serious human rights violations, such as arresting those who opposed him. His poor leadership qualities and constant failed attempts of promoting a democratic country drove Congo into a deeper chaos and even led to the Second Congo War.

First and Second Congo Wars

The First and Second Congo Wars are considered by many scholars to be one extended conflict, lasting from 1996 to 2003. As previously mentioned, the First Congo War occurred when the AFDL invaded Congo and Laurent Kabila overthrew President Mobutu and renamed Zaire as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Nevertheless, tensions would later rise as Kabila allowed for many Rwandan officers and troops that had aided his rebellion to become high-ranking officials in the new Congolese army. However, the Congolese people did not react positively to this, as many of the Rwandan soldiers were disliked and opposed, leaving Kabila in a difficult stance between his people, his allies, and the overall international community. To end this tension, he then decided to expel all foreign troops from the DRC and finally, announcing in a radio transmission that he had cut his alliance with the Rwandans. This is where the Second Congo War began, with Rwanda invading the DRC in August 2, 1998. Rwanda was mostly concerned over the persistent violence against the

Tutsis residing in eastern Congo. To fight against this, the Rwandan government assembled a rebel group in Congo called the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD).

The rebel group was intent on capturing the nation's capital, Kinshasa, as a way of immediately getting to Kabila. The attack they were planning on carrying out would have been a success, if it were not for Kabila's foreign aid. Troops from Angola and Zimbabwe were sent over to defend Kabila and the DRC for economical and political reasons respectively. Correspondingly, soldiers and arms were also handed over for aid from countries such as Namibia, the Sudan, Chad, and Libya. With this large amount of foreign backing, Kabila was able to prevent the Rwandan troops from gaining control over the capital and ease the conflict. Nonetheless, the DRC would continue to be in a constant state of chaos and severity in the following years as it still does today.

Rise of the M23 Rebellion

As years passed, more and more rebel groups and foreign troops would enter Congo, mostly with hopes of gaining control over the rich mineral mines in the eastern parts of Congo. The M23 rebel group is one of the most notorious armed rebel groups that operates in Congo. The name of the rebel group originates from a peace agreement the militants had signed with the Congolese government in March 23, 2009. This was when the soldiers were fighting in a group called the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), who many ended up being moved over to the Congolese army, the FARDC. As many other rebel groups, the militants are mostly from the Tutsi ethnic group and hold many strong ties with the Tutsis in Rwanda. The rebellion sprung up in April of 2012, when the rebels claimed that the pay and circumstances in which they were in while serving the Congolese army were not favorable, which was agreed upon in their peace agreement.

Moreover, at the present time, the leader of the CNDP, Bosco Ntaganda, had fled to the US embassy in Rwanda and was later sent to the International Criminal Court in the Hague for the various alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity he had committed in the northeastern part of Congo between 2002 and 2003. Unfortunately, the M23 group is also known for committing heinous war crimes such as the involuntary recruitment of child soldiers, rape,

and executions.

The Rwandan government has been accused several times by the Congolese army and UN investigators of supporting and sending aid to said rebel group, however, they have denied doing so many times. In spite of this, many question this statement as they believe it would have not been possible for Ntaganda to cross the Rwandan border and reach the US embassy in Kigali without the help of the Rwandan government.

During November 6th of 2013, the M23 rebels were attacked by Congolese government forces and the next day, the leaders of M23 issued a document that stated the end of their rebellion and their push towards solving their issues politically. The leader of M23, Sultani Makenga, officially surrendered himself along with 1,500 other M23 rebels in Uganda, where they were later held in Kisoro. Peace declarations were officially signed between the Congolese government and M23 in December 12th of 2013, however its legal accountability is questioned by the international community.

Involvement of Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army

The Lord's Resistance Army, led by the notorious Joseph Kony, is one of the most brutal armed groups present in Central Africa today. Although they are not as active as they used to be, there are still serious attacks conducted against innocent civilians carried out until this day. The LRA is mostly known for its continuous use of children as child soldiers or sex slaves, with over 67,000 minors abducted by the LRA in the past 30 years. After being kicked out of their bases in northern Uganda in 2005, the LRA has since then taken refuge in the dense jungles of the DRC, focusing around the stretch between Dungu and Bangadi.

The LRA had a blowup of popularity in 2012, when an online campaign called Kony 2012 shed light on the atrocities of their actions. The US has also stepped in, by sending many of their own troops into Congo to try and fight this rebel group and stop Joseph Kony. However, now that they managed to bring the group down to less than 100 members, they have withdrawn their support, allowing for activity in the LRA to increase since.

Although they are more inactive than they used to be, the LRA continues to hide in the

dense jungles of the DRC and are mostly trying to survive and raid villages for food.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo does not seem to be working towards bettering the conditions for its people. This is due to the fact that many of Congo's corrupt government officials are the ones who own and operate the rich minefields that provide them with wealthy minerals, allowing for room for massive profit. The living conditions in these minefields are inhumane, as rape and murder are not an uncommon occurrence. The efforts made by Congo's president, Joseph Kabila, to stay in power has led to Congo not having an election since 2006. This does not give the opportunity for the people of Congo to choose the ruler they are able to vote for, for their country, making it difficult for hopeful future and not quite living up to the country's democratic name.

Republic of Rwanda

The Republic in Rwanda has been involved in the situation in DRC almost since the beginning of the conflict. The mass rush of Hutu refugees fleeing from Rwanda after the Rwandan genocide of 1994 into Congo has worsened the conflict, especially since Congo had then proceeded to target these refugees for invading their territory. More recently, Rwanda and its military has invaded Congo three times in the past decade justifying this action by claiming it is for the sake and protection of their people and borders. They claim they are "threatened" by the ex-Hutu government officials (ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises) and those who form part of the genocidal Interahamwe militia who now reside in Congo. However, Congo is stating that these Rwandan officials are only trying to gain control over the mineral mining areas in Congo. Apart from Rwanda's military troops, Rwandan rebel groups are also invading Congo. Most of the Rwandan rebels involved in the 1994 genocide have been killed. The present rebels who are in Congo were not involved in the genocide, they are just simply against the Rwandan government. Most are part of a movement called Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) who plan on reintegrating themselves in Rwanda no matter the consequences.

The other rebel groups are independent armed groups who usually terrorize Congolese villages through assault, rape, and theft. However, a few number of them have actually transitioned into the communities in Congo and now farm or trade with the Congolese people.

The United States

The United States of America is heavily involved in the issue of the DRC. They have provided aid for the citizens of DRC such as security assistance, development aid, and humanitarian aid. They are known for providing the most financial aid for the UN peacekeeping corporation dedicated to the situation in DRC called MONUSCO. Since the US is a veto-power in the UNSC, they help form the mandates produced by MONUSCO to favor the citizens of the DRC. The United States has the situation in Congo as a very high priority because of their involvement in the Great Lakes region, something that the US is very interested in. The State Department has stated that they are [“focused on helping the country become a nation that is stable and democratic, at peace with its neighbors, extends state authority across its territory, and provides for the basic needs of its citizens.”](#)

Republic of Uganda

The Ugandan government has denied any accusations of their involvement in the violence present in DRC, however evidence points against this. The UN has accused Uganda of providing support for the rebels in DRC, specifically the M23 rebels. The notorious warlord of the Lord Resistance Army in Uganda, Joseph Kony, has been reported to have recently fled to the DRC to hide from the US and Ugandan military who are trying to localize him. One of Uganda's main export is a mineral called coltan which contributes to a large portion of the country's GDP. Uganda does not have any coltan mines in their territory. This brings the impression that Uganda is stealing this coltan from mines in Congo and exporting them from their own country, making them part of the capitalist conflict in Congo. Uganda has also been involved in previous years in the Second Congo War as they targeted by the coalition created by Congo

China

China's involvement in the conflict in DRC is strictly economic. China is intent, along with other western powers, on controlling the rich mineral minefields in Congo. However, the DRC is also reliant on China for their help in building up and renewing the severe lack of infrastructure in their country.

Timeline

Date	Description of event
1908	Belgium's Leopold II completely annexes the Congo Free State and creates a colony under his rule, despite Congolese riots and protests. Several Congolese people were killed.
1960 - June	Congo officially independicizes and grants authority to Patrice Lumumba as prime minister and Joseph Kasavubu as president.
1965-1971	Lumumba and Kasavubu are overthrown by a coup led by Joseph Mobutu, who later renamed the Congo Free State as Zaire.
1991	Riots in Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, arise against Mobutu and his unfair political decisions.
1994	The Rwandan Genocide between the Tutsis and Hutus occurs, causing thousands of Tutsi refugees to flee into Zaire.
1997	Tutsi rebels and other rebels against Mobutu, with help from Rwanda, take over Kinshasa and overthrow Mobutu. Zaire is renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces in Congo (AFDL), Laurent Kabila, is named president.
1996-1997	The First Congo War occurs, in which thousands of Rwandan refugees are murdered for fleeing and seeking asylum in Congo.
1998-2002	The Second Congo War occurs. This time, the anti-Kabila rebels fight against the government for expelling the Rwandans out of DRC. Rwanda invades Congo and a coalition is formed by the DRC with Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe against Uganda and Burundi, who were supporting Rwanda at the time.

1999	The Lusaka Peace Agreement was signed by Angola, the DRC, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, all who participated in the First Congo War, followed by MLC and RCD rebel groups. However, the peace treaty proved to be unsuccessful since the terms were not met.
2000	A two-year transitional period is put in action which was overseen by the largest UN Peacekeeping force that was ever formed to monitor the ceasefire.
2001	Laurent Kabila is shot by one of his child-soldier bodyguards and his son, Joseph Kabila, takes his place.
2001 - May	The conflict migrates to eastern Congo, where most of the mineral rich mines are located. Rebel groups and militias begin to control these mines to gain profit from the minerals they provide, making the gravity of the conflict to one of capitalism and profit.
2002 - July	DRC and Rwanda sign a peace treaty in which they agree for Rwanda to withdraw their troops from eastern Congo in exchange that Congo disarms and incarcerates the Hutus who were held responsible for the Rwandan genocide of 1994.
2006 - July	The first ever Congo elections since the 1960's were held in Congo and the son of Laurent Kabila, Joseph Kabila, who was already in power, won the popular vote.
2008 - April	Congolese army troops who were previously allied with the Rwandan Hutu militias attack against them which leaves thousands of people displaced.
2009 - June	Ex-vice president, Jean-Pierre Bemba, is put in trial in the International Criminal Court for committing crimes against humanity, such as murder, rape, and pillaging, in the 2002-2003 Central African Republic Operation.
2012 - April	The M23 rebellion took place in North Kivu in which members of the M23 rebel group fought against the government. This conflict took place for over a year and ended on November of 2013, where over a thousand were murdered.
2017 - December	The situation in DRC is labeled as a "mega-crisis" with approximately 1.7 million people forced to leave the country every year, making it the most

affected conflict in regards to people displaced.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations has been immensely involved in the situation in the DRC, with their operations such as MONUC in the past and now MONUSCO, not mentioning the largest UN peacekeeping operation known to history. The UN provides a huge amount of humanitarian aid and support for the forces in Congo. However, it must be noted that the UN peacekeepers have also been accused in the past of raping and demanding sexual offerings from women in exchange of aid, something that has been thoroughly investigated.

- Resolution 1279 (1999) UNSC
 - “Established the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)”
- Resolution 1445 (2002) UNSC
 - “Welcomed the signing of peace agreements with Democratic Republic of the Congo’s neighbours and further expanded the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”
- Resolution 1493 (2003) UNSC
 - “Imposed an arms embargo.”
- Resolution 1565 (2004) UNSC
 - “Renewed the MONUC mandate and requested the Secretary-General investigate allegations of sexual exploitation by UN peacekeeping personnel and to take preventive measures.”
- Resolution 1671 (2006) UNSC
 - “Authorised the deployment of EU forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the elections.”
- Resolution 1804 (2008) UNSC
 - “Demanded that all members of Rwandan armed groups operating in eastern DRC lay down their arms, called upon the DRC and Rwanda to implement commitments under the Nairobi communiqué, and asked states to cooperate with

the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.”

- Resolution 2076 (2012) UNSC
 - “The Council condemned the M23’s actions and external support given to the group and expressed its intention to consider additional targeted sanctions against the leadership of the M23 and those providing it with external support.”

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been many attempts, both local and international, that have been made in the past to try and solve the issues prevalent in the DRC. Many have focused around one area or targeted certain divisions of the conflict but unfortunately, none have been sufficient enough to completely eradicate the issue. One of the most famous attempts is the Lusaka peace agreement, which was signed on July 10th of 1999 with the hopes of ending the Second Congo War. This agreement entailed a ceasefire along with releasing prisoners of war and the monitoring by a UN peacekeeping force. Regrettably, some of the demands of the agreement were not met, resulting in more conflict and rebellion.

Moreover, the US is also widely known for its involvement and help in the attempt to solve the conflict issue in the DRC. The US has sent several troops, especially to areas where the LRA were present, to target and track the leaders of these rebel groups and eventually eradicate them. This attempt had worked for a while and even managed to bring down the number of militants in the LRA to less than 100. However, because of this, the US decided to retract their troops and many were concerned that this would allow for activity in the LRA to spring up again, which it did, as there were many reports of abductions of children in Congo during the end of 2017.

The UN’s operation, MONUSCO, has also made several attempts to target the rebel groups in the DRC. They have focused on providing an accepting environment for these rebel militants to come home to, as one of the biggest issues that keep them from leaving the rebel groups is the belief that they would be rejected and killed in their homes, something that is commonly told by rebel leaders. To combat this, MONUSCO has used PSYOPS fliers and radio broadcasts to reach these militants in hopes of them surrendering their lives of violence. They

have several camps set up and even offer to provide a way home, especially for the militants who come from Rwanda or Uganda. This has proved to be effective, however this is still a lot more to be done as there are several active rebel groups still present in the DRC today.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEaTQMI5AA&t=1067s>

Possible Solutions

In order to effectively tackle the issues surrounding the conflicts in the eastern region of the DRC, the solution must be able to cover all aspects ranging from current issues to sustainable solution. However, a proper solution would most likely be composed of many calls to action that target different areas of the conflict, such as the funding of rebel groups and the political turmoil in the country.

Many of the rebel groups that reside in Congo are able to get funds for arms and other destructive means through taking control over Congo's mines. Moreover, many corrupt government officials and foreign troops also try to manipulate and abuse their power to earn profit from selling these high-demand minerals. One thing that can be done to prevent these groups from gaining profit is to implement a sort of system that differentiates legitimized mines and their minerals, allowing for the international community to only buy from mines that are rightfully owned and controlled. Furthermore, many governments, such as Rwanda and Sudan, have been accused of supporting rebel groups in Congo. The process in which this aid is being received should be targeted and abolished.

Another main issue in the conflict in Congo is that since it is so densely packed with jungles, trying to find the rebel groups that seek refuge in these jungles is very difficult. Something that can be done, is to have other countries support and aid Congo with their tracking implementations that have worked for them as an easier way to target big rebel group leaders and eradicating them.

Finally, there has to be something done about the fact that the DRC has not held an election since 2006. Most of the civilians in the DRC are unhappy with the work of Joseph

Kabila, who is the current president, and many opposition leaders have risen with the hopes of taking over. However, without holding elections, this would never be possible for them. Congo should live up to its democratic name and finally give its people the chance to rightfully declare their leader once again.

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8

Appendix or Appendices

- I. An almost hour-long detailed documentary about the involvement of the LRA and M23 rebels in the DRC.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEaTQMI5AA&t=99s>
- II. A long, but detailed explanation of the documentary above with various pictures and explanations of certain areas experiencing constant violence in the DRC.
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/nnemm8/the-vice-guide-to-congo-1
- III. A detailed research paper from the University of North Texas about some background and the development of the issue at hand.
https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc93810/m1/1/high_res_d/R40108_2011Sep01.pdf
- IV. A brief and constantly updated analysis on the situation in Congo with several alerts and

relevant news articles.

<https://www.cfr.org/interactives/global-conflict-tracker#!/conflict/violence-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo>