

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO:

Returns outnumber new displacements in the east

A profile of the internal displacement situation

26 April, 2007

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Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

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OVERVIEW

DR Congo: returns outnumber new displacements in the east

Despite successful elections held in the second half of 2006 and an overall increase in the level of stability, over a million people remained displaced in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as of March 2007. Operations by Congolese armed forces to disarm militias, as well as human rights violations committed by both these forces and the militias, continued to cause frequent displacement in eastern provinces. But overall the scale and intensity of conflict have considerably decreased over the last few years, and far more people are returning home than are fleeing. Upon their return, however, IDPs often find their villages completely destroyed, and most of them receive little or no assistance to rebuild their lives. According to UNHCR, there is an urgent need for a national strategy outlining the rights of returning IDPs and refugees, and facilitating their reintegration.

Since the mid-1990s, millions of Congolese have fled their homes to escape fighting between rebel groups and the national government in a complex conflict which has involved neighbouring states as well. Close to four million people are estimated to have died as a result of the conflict which has been accompanied by widespread human rights violations, including the killing of civilians, widespread sexual violence against displaced and other women, child recruitment and looting and burning of IDP possessions. Displacement peaked in 2003, with an estimated 3.4 million people forced from their homes, most of them in the east.

Background of displacement and recent developments

In 1996, and again between 1998 and 2003, the DRC suffered two major wars, in which millions died and large-scale displacement occurred. A number of rebel groups, more or less closely linked to outside powers such as Uganda and Rwanda, competed to control large areas of eastern DRC. Civilians have borne the brunt of the violence, often being targeted for ethnic or political reasons. Displacement peaked in 2003, with an estimated 3.4 million people forced from their homes, most of them in the east of the country. The International Rescue Committee estimates that 3.9 million people have died as a result of the latest war (IRC, 6 January 2006).

In mid-2003, a power-sharing transitional government was set up following the withdrawal of foreign armies. Made up of former enemies who frequently quarrelled openly, the national government was not able to bring security to eastern DRC, where local militias continued to cause massive displacement. In 2006, millions of voters took part in the country's first multiparty vote in over 45 years, in order to replace the transitional government. The majority of IDPs were reportedly not able to vote due to insecurity, or because they had lost their electoral cards during their flight, or had them confiscated by armed men (OCHA, 15 August 2006; NRC, April 2006).

Around 1,000 EU troops and more than 17,000 UN peacekeepers protected the elections, which were won by Joseph Kabila. Authorised to use all necessary means to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence ("Chapter VII" of the UN Charter), MONUC – the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo – plays a crucial role in providing security in the country. It is also tasked with monitoring compliance with the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council on armed groups operating in eastern DRC. In July 2006, the UN Security Council extended the scope of possible sanctions in the DRC to individuals committing serious violations of international law – including forced displacement – involving the targeting of children in

situations of armed conflict (UNSC, 31 July 2006). Despite the arms embargo, weapons continue to be channelled to various armed groups in the DRC from neighbouring countries.

One cloud on the horizon is that the main defeated candidate, Jean-Pierre Bemba, slipped out of the country in April 2007 after violent clashes in the capital Kinshasa between his armed supporters and the security forces.

A major challenge for the Congolese government is the need to integrate over 78,000 troops from different belligerent factions (in a process known as *brassage*), as well as to disarm and repatriate foreign armed groups (MONUC, 8 March 2007). Until the reform of the army is complete, the DRC will experience at best a fragile peace (AI, 19 January 2007). The integration process has been marred by corruption and by conflicts between soldiers, often reflecting local ethnic divisions, particularly in North and South Kivu (ActionAid, 17 November 2006). Failings in the disarmament and demobilisation programme, administered by the Congolese commission CONADER, have resulted in an undisciplined national army, which has taken on the characteristics of the rebel groups it was supposed to be integrating (CFR, 16 February 2007). Congolese soldiers, themselves ill-equipped, unpaid and unfed, are often in no position to defend themselves – or any civilian in their care – against armed groups. In addition, they continue to harass civilians and extort their goods (MONUC, 8 March 2007). As a result, thousands of people flee their homes in eastern DRC every month, due to attacks by armed groups such as local militias, the Hutu Rwandan Armed Liberation Forces and Mai Mai factions, as well as operations by the Congolese army against such groups, and violations by the army against civilians. In 2006, over 500,000 fled their homes in eastern DRC (OCHA, 30 November 2006).

New displacement and return movements

The UN estimated that over one million people remained displaced in the DRC as of March 2007 (OCHA, April 2007). Over half of them are in North Kivu, followed by Ituri, South Kivu and Katanga. Most IDPs in eastern DRC live with host communities or hide in forests. Following massive influxes of people, IDP camps have also been set up.

Displacement per region: main actors and patterns

North Kivu: battles between rival army factions, attacks by Rwandan Hutu rebels and Mai Mai militias, as well as violations committed by Congolese armed forces against the population continued to cause displacement. Some 100,000 people were displaced in the province before the national elections of 2006. Another 113,000 fled their homes in late 2006, following clashes between soldiers close to dissident General Laurent Nkunda and other troops in territories close to the main town of Goma (OCHA, 15 August 2006; MONUC, 8 March 2007). Over the following months, brigades made up of former Tutsi militias loyal to Nkunda were deployed in the province rather than being sent to other regions and integrated with other soldiers (“mixage” process), which brought further insecurity and massive displacement (AFP, 7 April 2007). In January 2007, both Congolese troops and Mai Mai combatants were responsible for looting and other violations, causing widespread displacement in areas where they were fighting each other (MONUC, 20 February 2007). In February and March 2007, clashes between the Congolese army and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) Hutu rebel group caused the displacement of at least 25,000 villagers (DPA, 23 February 2007; IRIN, 14 March 2007).

Ituri: civilians continued to flee attacks by militias, as well as operations by the Congolese army and MONUC against those militias. Some 150,000 people found refuge in mid-2006 in camps such as Gety and with host families, in what was described as the largest displacements in the region in over two years (OCHA, 15 August 2006; WFP, 25 July 2006). In 2007, tens of thousands of villagers fled to the forest, after their villages were reportedly burned down by

Congolese troops, in the context of army operations against local militias (MONUC, 19 March 2007).

South Kivu: large portions of South Kivu are controlled by Rwandan Hutu militias, which continued to cause internal displacement in the province (MONUC, 8 March 2007; IRIN, 13 April 2007). Fighting between government troops, some loyal to a dissident colonel, also caused thousands of displacements in early 2007 (IRIN, 2 February 2007).

Katanga: in 2006, over 130,000 people were temporarily displaced by fighting between Mai Mai and Congolese troops. Many of them had their homes destroyed and their crops burnt (ECHO, 14 February 2007). Later in the year, Mai Mai attacks caused the displacement of tens of thousands in the north of the province (OCHA, 31 August 2006, "humanitarian situation"; OCHA, 15 August 2006).

Still, overall, the scale and intensity of conflict have considerably decreased, and far more people are returning home from displacement than are fleeing their homes (ECHO, 14 February 2007). Nearly half a million IDPs went back to their places of origin in 2006 (UNHCR, 13 February 2007). However, there seems to be a real gap in terms of addressing critical return and reintegration needs of IDPs in DRC, mainly due to lack of funding. The majority of returning IDPs do not receive assistance, despite the fact that fighting and looting have led to a complete breakdown of services, and returning IDPs often find health centres, schools and their houses destroyed upon their return. Also, land and property rights disputes have been identified as a major obstacle to return, and as a potential source of renewed conflict in the East (UNHCR, 13 February 2007).

Physical security

The protection of the displaced and other civilians remains a serious concern in eastern DRC. Unruly and unpaid Congolese military personnel, as well as the national police, have become the largest threat for civilians, as they have been reported to rape and abduct IDPs, terrorise farmers, steal livestock, and pillage local plantations (MONUC, 8 March 2007; ICG, 9 January 2006). In September 2006, nine IDPs, initially reported abducted, were believed to be among at least 32 civilians summarily executed by government soldiers in Ituri (MONUC, 30 November 2006). According to MONUC, the Congolese army, as well as armed militias, has been responsible for increased human rights violations in North and South Kivu in 2007 (MONUC, 20 February 2007).

Armed groups are committing grave human rights violations, including killings, rape, sexual exploitation, abductions, forcible conscription of children, looting, plundering of crops, illegal taxation and general harassment of civilians. The illegal exploitation of natural resources (gold, coltan and diamonds) and the smuggling of goods and weapons add to the violence. In early 2007 for example, several thousand people in Kasai Oriental province fled their villages, which were burned down following a conflict linked to a diamond mine in the area (OCHA, 27 February 2007). In Lubero territory in North Kivu, Rwandan Hutu militia are reported to regularly force the civilian population to carry exploited minerals for one to two weeks at the time, causing many to flee their villages (MONUC, 19 March 2007).

Despite all initiatives undertaken to counter sexual violence and the adoption of two Laws on Sexual Violence in July 2006, rape continues to be widespread throughout the country (MONUC, 8 March 2007). Soldiers and rebel fighters have engaged in acts of sexual violence in the context of fighting, to attack the fundamental values of the community, to scare the civilian population into submission, to punish them for allegedly supporting enemy forces or to provide gratification for the fighters (HRW, 7 March 2005; AI, 26 October 2004). Government forces have emerged as the main perpetrators of sexual abuse (OCHA, 31 March 2007). Thousands of women have also been abducted and kept as slaves in the forces' camps to provide sexual, domestic and

agricultural services (International Alert & al., 2005). According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, 54,000 victims of sexual violence had been identified since 2004, of which 16 per cent were children (DPI, 16 March 2007). This is likely to be only the tip of the iceberg, with many sexual violence survivors ashamed or otherwise unable to come forward to seek help (UNICEF, 24 July 2006). In South Kivu, some 4,000 displaced women were reported to have been raped in a few months in 2006 (IRIN, 2 August 2006). In Ituri, IDP camps, which are often located in close proximity to military camps, are inhabited mostly by women and children who easily become victims of rapes by soldiers (MONUC, 8 March 2007). Men and boys have also been sexually assaulted by combatants (HRW, 7 March 2005).

Many displaced children have been forced into the ranks of the armed groups, and thousands of them remain in militias. In June 2006, the UN Secretary-General reported to the UN Security Council that violations against children in the DRC continued to a large extent with impunity, including the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups, abduction, sexual violence, killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools (UNSC, 13 June 2006). Recruitment of child soldiers by militias were reported by local and international observers – including by the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict – to continue in 2007, particularly in North Kivu (MONUC, 14 February 2007; DPI, 16 March 2007). Amnesty International reported in October 2006 that some 11,000 children were still with the armed forces or groups, or were otherwise unaccounted for in the demobilisation programme (AI, 11 October 2006).

Humanitarian conditions

IDPs in eastern DRC generally suffer from food insecurity, according to a comprehensive WFP/FAO assessment. Indeed, most people cannot access their field while they are displaced, and find their crops, food stock and tools looted upon return. Among them, female-headed households are estimated to be the most vulnerable (WFP, 31 October 2006). In camps in Ituri, at least ten displaced people – many of them children – were dying each day in 2006 due to appalling sanitary conditions and food shortages. Attacks on humanitarian workers by armed groups in the area prevented the delivery of basic services and food (IRIN, 1 September 2006; RI, 25 August 2006).

The vast majority of IDPs and returnees lack access to basic infrastructure (health centres, schools and roads), potable water, food, seeds, tools, clothes and straw to build houses. With DRC's healthcare structures collapsing, displaced people are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases. Every day, 1,250 people die in DRC above what is considered a "normal level" for the country. Over 70 per cent of these deaths are due to easily preventable and treatable diseases (IRC, 6 January 2006).

Epidemics of cholera, measles, bubonic plague and other diseases broke out among IDPs in Ituri, North and South Kivu, Katanga and Maniema in 2006, due to their precarious living conditions and lack of access to clean drinking water (MONUC, 5 March 2007; IFRC, 5 September 2006). Malaria remains the number one cause of mortality in the DRC. Displaced people are also exposed to HIV/AIDS infection, as they usually lack the means to protect themselves and do not have information about its transmission (WHO, 31 May 2006). They may even be more at risk of HIV than the general population in the DRC, but more information and data are needed before conclusions can be drawn (UNHCR/IDD, January 2006).

Humanitarian access

In 2006 and early 2007, access to IDPs and other vulnerable populations in eastern DRC improved in many areas. But in parts of the Kivus, Katanga and in Ituri, access remained difficult, due to military operations against uncontrolled armed groups and related attacks on civilians by militias and undisciplined Congolese troops. Armed groups have repeatedly attacked, looted and taken hostage humanitarian staff, making it one of the most dangerous places for aid workers. In North Kivu, since the deployment of “mixed brigades” in 2007, at least five humanitarian vehicles have been attacked, and some areas of the province have become inaccessible due to insecurity. Other factors hampering the response to the needs of displaced people and returnees include the sheer size of the country, the absence of roads and the high degree of geographical dispersal of IDPs. WFP had to resort to food drops and airlifts to reach IDPs in areas of Katanga, Maniema and South Kivu where road and rail transport is virtually non-existent (IRIN, 6 April 2006; WFP, 26 September 2006).

National and international response

On a provincial and national level, the Congolese government has so far played little role in responding to the needs of IDPs and returning IDPs (RI, 17 October 2006). Nominally, the Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs has the primary responsibility for responding to the needs of IDPs. Local observers say, however, that the ministries of the interior and defence are also involved in protecting IDPs and returning IDPs, but their role in practice is far from clear. According to UNHCR, there is an urgent need for a national framework or strategy for tackling displacement which outlines the rights of returning IDPs and refugees and facilitates their reintegration (UNHCR, 13 February 2007).

UN agencies, national and international NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are providing emergency assistance to IDPs as well as transport assistance and return packages to returning IDPs. In February 2007, UNHCR launched an appeal for \$15 million to carry out protection-monitoring mechanisms in the areas of displacement and return, and to conduct early-warning and prevention activities. Security permitting, UNHCR will also support the establishment of mechanisms to settle land and property disputes, provide humanitarian assistance to returning IDPs and promote inter-ethnic coexistence (UNHCR, 13 February 2007). At the same time, UNHCR is planning to assist some 100,000 Congolese refugees to return, out of a total of 400,000 (UNHCR, February 2007). In North Kivu, the Norwegian Refugee Council is carrying out an innovative project linking rapid reconstruction of village infrastructure, providing work for returning IDPs, with measures to protect them from violence in a still-volatile area (RI, 17 October 2006). MONUC patrols in IDPs’ areas of origin have given them enough confidence to leave their temporary camps and rebuild their lives in their villages (OXFAM, 16 February 2007).

In 2006, the DRC was selected as one of the pilot countries where the UN introduced its new “cluster” approach, aimed at increasing accountability and predictability by designating lead agencies for humanitarian sectors. Each cluster includes UN agencies and international NGOs, which coordinate their actions in a specific sector. Of particular relevance to IDPs in the DRC are the clusters on protection led by UNHCR and the early recovery cluster led by UNHCR/UNDP which focuses on return/reintegration. According to OCHA, the protection cluster has been one of the most active in the DRC, for example by working with MONUC to reverse army decisions to force IDPs to return home, or carrying out training of Congolese troops on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, humanitarian principles and gender-based violence. The Early Recovery Cluster, established in May 2006, carried out a mapping of UN and non-UN reintegration/post-conflict/poverty reduction programmes to identify gaps (OCHA, 9 March 2007). Also, a Rapid Response Mechanism, managed by UNICEF and OCHA, provided emergency assistance to some 500,000 IDPs in 2006 (OCHA, 21 July 2006).

In order to strengthen the response to the crisis in the DRC, the humanitarian community has requested over \$686 million through its DR Congo 2007 Humanitarian Action Plan. One of the main objectives of the plan is to support the return towards self-sufficiency for IDPs and refugees (OCHA, 30 November 2006). The main funding source for this plan is a mechanism called the "Pooled Fund", a multi-donor humanitarian fund. DRC is the country getting the largest amount of money – \$36.6 million out of some \$85 million for the first half of 2007 – from the Central Emergency Response Fund, as part of its grants for under-funded emergencies (OCHA, 7 February 2007). According to local observers, it is too early to know whether the cluster approach and the new funding mechanisms have made an impact for IDPs and other vulnerable people.

(April 2007)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Political developments

DRC political developments- Chronology: 1870-2007

1870s: Commissioned by King Leopold II of Belgium, the explorer H.M Stanley establishes the King's authority in the Congo basin.

1884-85: Leopold's claim on the Congo is formalized at the Berlin Conference. The "Congo Free State" was created as a personal fiefdom of the Belgian Crown.

1908: The Congo becomes a Belgian colony.

1960: The Congo becomes an independent state, with Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister and Joseph Kasavubu as President.

1961: Lumumba is murdered, reportedly with US and Belgian complicity.

1965: President Kasavubu is ousted by General Mobutu, army chief of staff.

1990: Mobutu announces multiparty democracy but keeps significant powers.

1991: Anti-Mobutu sentiments explode in mass rioting and looting by unpaid soldiers in Kinshasa.

1992: Riots and looting by unpaid soldiers in Goma, Kisangani, Kolwesi; ethnic tensions rise between the Hunde, Nyanga and Nande and the Banyarwanda in North Kivu.

1993: Ethnic strife between the local populations and the Banyarwanda breaks out in Masisi area. The coup in Burundi against new Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye results in the arrival of some 80,000 Burundian refugees in Zaire.

1994: Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda. Following the Tutsi led counter offensive, one million refugees, mainly Hutus, cross the border with Zaire.

1995: Renewal of the ethnic war in Masisi.

1996: Revolt of the Zairian Tutsis "Banyamulenge" in South Kivu; the ADFL's (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire) "Liberation" war led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila begins from the east." (MSF 19 Nov 2002, p64)

"In 1996 Rwandan and Ugandan forces invaded the Congo, ousted long-time ruler Mobutu Sese Seko, and installed Laurent Desiré Kabila in power." (HRW 2 June 2005)

1997: Mobutu is ousted by the ADFL forces and flees in exile to Morocco.

1998: Congolese rebel forces, backed by Rwanda and Uganda, start attacking Kabila's forces and conquer the east of the country. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe come to Kabila's aid and push the rebels back from Kinshasa." (MSF 19 Nov 2002, p64)

In July 1998 Kabila tried to expel the Rwandan troops, but they and the Ugandan forces instead engaged Kabila's government in the second Congo war, one that eventually drew in Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia (supporting Kabila) and Burundi (allied with the Rwandans and Ugandans). Often termed as Africa's first world war, the conflict resulted in the deaths of 3.5 million people, the great majority in eastern DRC. Many victims were displaced people who died from exposure, hunger, or lack of medical assistance." (HRW 2 June 2005)

1999: First confrontation of Rwandan and Ugandan troops in Kisangani. Signature of a cease-fire agreement [in Lusaka] by all six of the countries involved in the conflict; MONUC observers are deployed in the DRC.

2000: Six-day war between Rwanda and Uganda in Kisangani.

2001: President Kabila is shot dead by one of his bodyguards; his son Joseph takes over.

2002: Eruption of volcano Nyiragongo in Goma. Accord signed between Presidents Kabila and Kagame of Rwanda committing Rwanda to withdraw its troops from the DRC and Kinshasa to address Rwanda's security concerns in the DRC." (MSF 19 Nov 2002, p64)

Through continued international pressure, the national government and major rebel movements eventually signed a power-sharing agreement at Sun City in April 2002 that allowed for the establishment of the Global and All Inclusive Peace Agreement which set up the transitional government in June 2003. Despite this agreement and other bilateral and regional security agreements, insecurity continued in large parts of eastern Congo. (HRW 2 June 2005)

2003 *On 1 April, In Sun City, South Africa, DRC government and rebel groups unanimously endorse a transitional constitution to govern DRC for two years. They also endorse the global agreement signed in Pretoria on 17 December 2002. Transitional government named by Kabila on June 30* (IRIN 5 Jan 2004)

2004 *In May, fighting breaks out in the eastern town of Bukavu, between soldiers loyal to the Kinshasa government and renegade soldiers of a former Rwandan-backed rebel group. Expert panel on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in DRC then accuses the Rwandan government of supporting Congolese dissidents. In October, the International Criminal Court and the DRC sign an accord allowing the prosecutor to begin investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the country* (IRIN 4 January 2005)

2005 *In December, Congolese voters approve a new constitution providing for a decentralized political system, limiting the president to two five-year terms, and guaranteeing women half the seats in government* (Christian Aid 20 December 2005)

See also IRIN, 9 January 2006, DRC: Year in Brief - Democratic Republic of Congo 2005 - A chronology of key events [\[Internet\]](#)

2006 *President Joseph Kabila was reelected president in October 2006, after two rounds of elections. Ex-rebel chief Jean-Pierre Bemba came in second. "Mr. Kabila only won a majority in five out of the eleven DRC provinces, with a huge Kabila vote in Katanga and a poor voting turnout in Kinshasa, a Bemba stronghold, giving him a decisive victory"* (MONUC 16 November 2006)

2007 "The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) successfully held elections in 2006 , but government institutions remain weak, and outbreaks of violence continue in the country's eastern provinces. Ambassador William Swing, UN envoy in the DRC, told a recent Brookings Institution

meeting: 'The challenges ahead therefore may be greater than those of the just completed transition.'" (CFR 16 February 2007)

MONUC Peacekeeping mission works to bring security to eastern DRC (1999-2007)

- Some 17,000 troops currently deployed
- MONUC had to transform itself from a ceasefire observation mission to one that handles a multitude of other tasks in support of the transition
- UNSC has imposed a mandatory arms embargo on the provinces of North and South Kivu and the Ituri region of the eastern DRC, but according to Amnesty International and the International Crisis Group, reports of arms and related deliveries continued despite the embargo
- MONUC played a crucial role in providing security in DRC and assisting DRC with its successful elections
- In all of DRC's provinces, MONUC has gained control over and secured major towns and cities
- According to OXFAM, MONUC will need to remain in DRC using its presence to protect civilians from immediate threats and creating a stable environment in which longer-term reforms can take place (Feb 07)

"The UN Mission's mandate has expanded greatly since its inception in 1999, from ceasefire observation to include now:

- support of the transitional government;
- assistance in security sector reform;
- disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups;
- aid in re-establishing a state based on the rule of law;
- monitoring of the arms embargo;
- protection of civilians in imminent danger; and
- election support.

These political and military tasks have proven extremely difficult to fulfil, especially since MONUC is often forced to work through a weak and factious transitional government and army. It has also been plagued by insufficient troop numbers, inadequate equipment and an ambiguous concept of military operations, and its reputation has suffered from a sexual abuse scandal in 2004.[...]

Even in the areas of the Congo where MONUC has had the resources to act, it has often failed to protect civilians, most obviously during the May 2002 massacre in Kisangani, the fighting in Bunia in 2003, and the mutiny in Bukavu in May 2004. Its inaction was mainly due to the reluctance of troop-contributing countries to put their soldiers in danger and a lack of clarity in the concept of operations that led the mission to react to rather than anticipate and prevent trouble. In the Kivus, MONUC has been cautious due to the terrain and FDLR strength.

In 2005 MONUC began to interpret its mandate more robustly in Ituri, carrying out aggressive cordon and search operations, demilitarising zones, and killing over 100 militiamen." (ICG 19 October 2005)

"The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) has supported the Congolese government in the political transition process. It deserves the praise it has received for assisting DRC with its successful elections and other recent achievements.

The importance of the electoral process should not overshadow the crucial role that MONUC has played in providing security in DRC. Through its military presence and operations MONUC has been able to restore stability to large parts of the war-torn country, thereby reducing incidents of organised violence against civilians and increasing humanitarian access and economic activities.

There is little doubt that, without a substantial and effective MONUC presence, this relative stabilisation of the security situation could quickly unravel and threaten the wider region as well. MONUC officials, humanitarian actors, and civilians who have been affected by violence are warning the international community of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that a premature scaling back of MONUC presence could induce.[...]

Until the Congolese government can eliminate the threats posed by its security forces, other armed groups, and recently demobilised combatants, MONUC will need to remain in DRC, using its presence to protect civilians from immediate threats and creating a stable environment in which longer-term reforms can take place.[...]

In all of DRC's provinces, MONUC has gained control over and secured major towns and cities. In addition, MONUC's military presence and logistical capacity has significantly increased humanitarian access (and also economic opportunities) to previously insecure or remote rural areas (for example along the Rwindi–Rutshuru road in North Kivu, the Bunia–Kasenyi road in Ituri and the main Bunia–Beni and Bunia–Mahagi commercial routes).

The presence of MONUC troops has reduced incidents of organised violence against the civilian populations. Especially in Ituri, MONUC's operations against militia groups (for example around Mahagi) have succeeded in disarming the majority of combatants and allowing large parts of the population to return to their normal lives. 'When MONUC arrived, the militias left', explained displaced people in Djugu." (OXFAM 16 February 2007)

"In July 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1493, which imposed an embargo against illicit arms trafficking in the Congo and authorised MONUC to monitor points of entry into the country. Resolution 1565, adopted on 1 October 2004, gave MONUC the authority to conduct unannounced inspections and seize arms and any other material related to violation of the embargo. An overstretched MONUC has failed to implement this mandate forcefully. While the primary responsibility for enforcement of the arms embargo lies with the Congolese government, it currently lacks the willingness and ability to take this on. The insufficiently staffed and poorly resourced Panel of Experts is unable to monitor the arms embargo properly, and the Security Council Sanctions Committee has yet to recommend sanctions against the list of targeted individuals submitted to it by the Panel." (ICG 19 October 2005)

"Yet, before and after the imposition of the UN embargo, reports of arms and related deliveries continued. International arms flows into the region have corresponded to the clandestine supply of military aid by powerful forces in the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda to their competing client armed groups and militia in eastern DRC who practice banditry and show little or no respect for human rights." (AI 5 July 2005)

"UN Secretary-General reflects on the post election period: "In the post-elections period, addressing the many challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo will require the continuing support of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. It is envisaged that post-electoral tasks of MONUC, in cooperation with the United Nations country team and the international community, would include: providing support to the new Government and civil society in strengthening democratic institutions; promoting the rule of law and basic human rights; building an adequate security environment and architecture; strengthening economic management; and establishing and consolidating State authority nationwide. In the context of long-term institution-building, including governance and security sector reform, natural resource management and decentralization, MONUC would work to advocate, facilitate and support national planning and reform processes that will enable donors to coherently assist the

implementation of such programmes.” (UNSC 21 September 2006)

To view the UNSC Resolution extending the mandate of MONUC until May 2007, please see:
UNSC, 13 Apr 2007, DR Congo: UN Security Council extends mission until 15 May, unanimously adopting resolution 1751 (2007) [[Internet](#)]

See also the resolution on Eufor R.D.Congo to support MONUC during the election process:
[Democratic Republic of the Congo: Resolution 1671 \(2006\) adopted by the Security Council at its 5421st meeting \(S/RES/1671\)](#), **United Nations Security Council (UN SC)**, 25 April 2006

See also:

Enough, Eastern Congo monthly report, March-April 2007 [[Internet](#)]

Refugees International (RI), 6 Feb 2007, DR Congo: Security council must take steps to protect civilians [[Internet](#)]

ActionAid, 17 Nov 2006, DR Congo: MONUC - DDRRR, DRR, Military and Rule of Law Reform - Reducing Violence against Women [[Internet](#)]

The [home page of MONUC](#) contains links to recent UN documents on DRC

UN Security Council condemned activities of armed groups and urged increased assistance to IDPs (2006)

Resolution 1653 (2006) (excerpts):

“The Security Council

[...]

“Aware that the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the illicit trade in those resources and the proliferation and trafficking of arms is one of the factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in the Great Lakes region of Africa, and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

[...]

“Welcoming the efforts undertaken by the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission comprising of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda as a significant contribution to heightened dialogue between the countries of the Great Lakes,

“[...]

“Taking note with satisfaction of the holding of the First International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes region, in Dar es Salaam, on 19 and 20 November 2004,

“Recognizing the ‘Good Neighbourly Declaration’ of September 2003 by the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda and the Dar es Salaam Declaration of 2004 adopted by the first Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region,

“Recognizing the significant achievements and progress in the peace processes in the Great Lakes region, the recent installation of a democratically elected government in Burundi and progress in the transition to democratic institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

[...]

“6. Urges all States concerned to take action to bring to justice perpetrators of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and to take appropriate measures of international cooperation and judicial assistance in this regard;

[...]

“8. Strongly condemns the activities of militias and armed groups operating in the Great Lakes region such as the Forces Démocratique de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), the Palipehutu-Forces National de Liberation (FNL) and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) which continue to attack civilians and United Nations and humanitarian personnel and commit human rights abuses against local populations and threaten the stability of individual States and the region as a whole and reiterates its demand that all such armed groups lay down their arms and engage voluntarily and without any delay or preconditions in their disarmament and in their repatriation and resettlement;

“9. Stresses the need for the States in the region, within their respective territories, to disarm, demobilize and cooperate in the repatriation or resettlement, as appropriate, of foreign armed groups and local militias, and commends in this regard the robust action of MONUC, acting in accordance with its mandate, in support of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

“10. Underscores that the governments in the region have the primary responsibility to protect their populations, including from attacks by militias and armed groups and stresses the importance of ensuring the full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian workers to people in need in accordance with international law;

“11. Calls upon all States in the region to deepen their cooperation with a view to putting an end to the activities of illegal armed groups, and underlines that these States must abide by their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of their neighbours;

“12. Urges the international community, non-governmental organizations and civil society to increase humanitarian assistance to civilians affected by displacements and violence from years of protracted conflicts in the Great Lakes region;

“13. Commends the efforts of the United Nations Organization Missions in the region in accordance with their respective mandates, to protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel, to enable delivery of humanitarian aid and to create the necessary conditions for the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons;

“14. Requests the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the Council, as appropriate, on how best to support efforts by States in the region to put an end to the activities of illegal armed groups, and to recommend how United Nations agencies and missions -- UNMIS, MONUC and ONUB -- can help, including through further support the efforts of the governments concerned to ensure protection of, and humanitarian assistance, to the civilians in need;

“15. Calls upon the countries of the region to continue in their efforts to create conducive conditions for voluntary repatriation, safe and durable integration of refugees and former combatants in their respective countries of origin. In this regard, calls for commensurate international support for refugees, reintegration and reinsertion of returnees, internally displaced persons and former combatants;

“16. Calls upon the countries of the region to reinforce their cooperation with the Security Council’s Committee and with the Group of Experts established by resolution 1533 in enforcing the arms embargo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to combat cross-border trafficking of illicit small arms, light weapons and illicit natural resources as well as the movements of combatants, and reiterates its demand that the Governments of Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi take measures to prevent the use of their respective territories in support of activities of armed groups present in the region;

“17. Urges the governments concerned in the region to enhance their cooperation to promote lawful and transparent exploitation of natural resources among themselves and in the region;

[...]” (UNSC 27 January 2006)

National elections pave way for improved security (2006-2007)

- A relatively successful July 30 first round was followed by three days of pitched battles between soldiers loyal to President Joseph Kabila and ex-rebel chief Jean-Pierre Bemba
- Around 1,000 EU troops and more than 17,000 U.N. peacekeepers protected first democratic elections in over 40 years
- Transition process accompanied by the UN, and in particular the Comité International d'accompagnement de la transition (CIAT)
- In March 2007, opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba sought refuge at the South African Embassy in Kinshasa, after refusing to integrate its guards into the national army

“The second half of 2006 was a crucial and defining period in the history of the DRC as the presidential, legislative and provincial elections marked the end of the transitional government installed in 2003. The first round of presidential and parliamentary elections took place on 30 July 2006, and the run-off and provincial elections were held on 29 October 2006. The National Assembly was inaugurated on 22 September 2006. On 27 November 2006, the DRC Supreme Court confirmed Joseph Kabila as the new President of the DRC. The following day, the other presidential contender, Jean-Pierre Bemba, accepted the results and voiced his intention to continue his political engagement in the opposition. [...]

The announcement of the provisional results of the first round of the presidential elections, on 20 August [2006], was marked by the eruption of three-day heavy fighting in central Kinshasa between forces of the two second round contenders, Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba, and an attack on the residence of Jean-Pierre Bemba. The fighting of 20-22 August left 23 persons dead and 43 wounded, according to figures provided by the Ministry of Interior. Following these incidents, the human rights situation in Kinshasa significantly deteriorated and the number of serious politically-motivated human rights violations committed by both the RG1 and the DPP increased. Demonstrations, organised in Kinshasa on 19 September in the aftermath of the fire that destroyed TV and radio stations belonging to Vice-President Bemba, were marred by several violent incidents.

Tension peaked again shortly before and after the announcements of the provisional results of the second round of the presidential elections, on 15 November, which gave 58.08% of the vote to Joseph Kabila. An exchange of fire between the DPP and RG soldiers took place in Kinshasa city centre on 11 November 2006. The incident was followed by mass arrests of street dwellers by the PNC. On 21 November, the police guarding the Supreme Court fired warning shots and used tear gas to disperse the crowd gathered around the Court building where the hearing of Vice-President Bemba's appeal to contest the IEC2 provisional results of the second round of the presidential elections was taking place. This provoked several incidents of violence and unidentified men set alight a building adjacent to the Supreme Court's main courtroom. As a result, the hearings were disrupted. Although no arrests or injuries were reported, election materials related to the legislative elections were reportedly destroyed. On 24 November, the Court reconvened at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” (MONUC 8 March 2007, para.23-26)

“The transition process in the DRC was accompanied by the United Nations, and in particular the Comité International d'accompagnement de la transition (CIAT), made up of permanent members of the UN Security Council, MONUC, the European Union, the African Union and other concerned countries such as South Africa, Belgium, Angola, and Gabon.”

“The EU has sent some 1,000 soldiers to the Democratic Republic of Congo, meant to act as a deterrent against anyone disrupting or challenging the result of the elections.

[...]

The EU force has a four-month mission, starting the first day of voting, but will only intervene if the Congolese police and army, as well as the U.N. are unable to control violence.” (Reuters 20 July 2006)

“The situation in Ituri was defused to a certain extent by an agreement reached just before the election with Peter Karim, the commander of Front Nationaliste et Intégrationniste (FNI). Karim's FNI was responsible for attacks on FARDC and MONUC, and had taken seven Nepalese soldiers hostage. Karim and his militia agreed to join the demobilisation process and released the Nepalese hostages. Not everybody in Ituri, national and international NGO's appreciated the circumstances of this agreement. The main threat in Ituri is still posed by the more than 15,000 militia members who have been disarmed and demobilised but not successfully integrated.[...]

The attack by General Laurent Nkunda has not yet been dealt with. Just after the election, General Nkunda attacked Sake, a small town in North Kivu, killing two government soldiers and wounding 14. This prompted the displacement of thousands of civilians.” (ISS 16 August 2006)

“Violence erupted in Kinshasa as opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba rejected 15 March [2007] ultimatum to integrate guards into national army. Reports of up to 600 killed in ensuing clashes 22-23 March, in which Angolan troops reportedly bolstered Kabila's forces. European diplomats condemned “premature use of force” before all paths of negotiation exhausted. Bemba, accused of treason, sought refuge at South African embassy and may leave for exile in Portugal. New government under PM Antoine Gizenga emphasised program to tackle corruption, increase transparency and reform security services. Security in east remained volatile. Local “mixage” integration process between dissident commander Laurent Nkunda and national army continued slowly. 5 integrated brigades now partially formed. Nkunda's demands for high-ranking positions, amnesty and return of Tutsi refugees remain unmet. Operations launched by Nkunda's troops against Rwandan FDLR rebels in North Kivu resulted in attacks against local population, killing 15. In Ituri, rebel leader Peter Karim sent 300 troops into integration camps. 4,000 remain in bush triggering MONUC threat to resume operations. Several Mai-Mai groups in North and South Kivu also agreed to join integration process.” (ICG 2 April 2007)

See also

International Crisis Group (ICG), 9 Jan 2007
DR Congo: Staying engaged after the elections [Internet]
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4604&l=1>

MONUC, 6 Feb 2007 New DRC government announced [Internet]
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EGUA-6Y6T9S?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=cod>

Swiss Peace Foundation, 31 Dec 2006
FAST Update DRC/Kivu region: Semi-annual risk assessment Jul - Dec 2006 [Internet]
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EK0I-6YK49E?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=cod>

The Challenge of demobilisation of Congolese and foreign combatants (2003-2007)

- In November 2004, a law regulating and organizing the unified army (FARDC) came into force
- Despite the fact that 46,000 combatants (out of a total of approximately 130,000) have been integrated into a new national army, it has become clear that the Congolese Army is in no

position to defend itself – or any civilian in its care – against militia warlords, foreign rebels, local defence forces, or any other armed actors (Feb 07)

- Conflict between military units has been most frequent in North and South Kivu where divisions between soldiers often reflect local ethnic divisions
- In North Kivu, many crimes are blamed on the “mixed army brigades of regular army soldiers and former rebels led by deposed Congolese Tutsi general Laurent Nkunda (April 2007)
- According to UN Secretary-General's report, FARDC remains fragile because of weak command and control; high levels of corruption; poor operational planning and tactical skills; poor administrative and logistical capacity to oversee the deployment, payment, sustenance and equipping of troops; very limited training capacity; and questionable loyalty on the part of some troops (March 07)
- Non-payment to former soldiers has led to frequent outbreaks of violence at the disarmament centres, and delays in the demobilization process have prompted demonstrations in protest at the slow pace of reintegration (2006-2007)
- Negotiations between the Congolese army and the three remaining rebel groups in Ituri led to the signing of a “Comprehensive Agreement for Peace in Ituri”, but clashes resumed at the end of 2006
- In Ituri, several factors seem to block the DDR process in Ituri : fear of militia leaders to be arrested and tried, like Thomas Lubanga, lack of knowledge about the amnesty process; lack funds and of a predictable reintegration program; lack of control by militia leaders of their elements (December 2006)
- UN SG Ban Ki-moon, who visited the DRC in January 2007, stressed the need to create "a professional, well-paid and well-equipped army and police"

“On 12 November 2004 a law regulating and organizing the unified army (FARDC) came into force. Article 45 of the *Loi portant organisation générale de la défense et des forces armées*,

Law on the General Organization of Defence and the Armed Forces, recognized the key national military entities to take part in the process of integration into the FARDC. These entities include the *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC), the former government army; the armed groups the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma, the *Mouvement de Libération du Congo* (MLC), Congo Liberation Movement, the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/Mouvement de Libération* (RCD/ML), Congolese Rally for Democracy/Liberation Movement, the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/National*, Congolese Rally for Democracy/National, and the *Mayi-Mayi* “Patriotic Resistance” fighters. Also included were the ex-*Forces Armées Zairoises* (ex-FAZ), the government army of former President Mobutu, the ‘Tigers’ (*les Tigres*) and other military and paramilitary groups determined by the government. These last included the armed groups of Ituri and the Mayi-Mayi armed groups operating in Katanga province.” (AI 19 January 2007)

“Despite the fact that 46,000 combatants (out of a total of approximately 130,000) have already been integrated into a new national army, it has become clear that the FARDC (*Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*) is in no position to defend itself – or any civilian in its care – against militia warlords, foreign rebels, local defence forces, or any other armed actors. Attacks on government forces in North Kivu in November 2006 have served as a timely reminder that, without full support from MONUC, the Congolese army is completely incapable of preventing attempts to seize major population centres such as Goma.

Underpaid, underfed, ill-equipped and badly led, FARDC soldiers in all of the eastern provinces remain the single biggest cause of insecurity in DRC, responsible for committing more than 80 per cent of all human-rights abuses against civilians. Similar accusations of abuse are also

levelled against other arms of the security forces (including police) and 'demobilised' ex-combatants who continue to rely on violence as a means of survival." (OXFAM 16 February 2007)

"The process of integrating troops from different belligerent factions, known as *brassage*, was due to conclude before the end of the transition. Although the majority of troops has undergone the process and has since been deployed, a number of troops in the Kivus (eight Brigades in South Kivu and four in North Kivu) remain disinclined, or hostile, to *brassage*. The Naval Force of Katanga and Ituri, a number of battalions in Katanga and Orientale provinces, RG and DPP soldiers still remain mostly outside the army integration process. According to MONUC sources, 78,832 soldiers are yet to go through the process. On the other hand, CONADER proved to be unable to provide regularly demobilised soldiers with the promised packages. As a result, the soldiers stay in *brassage* centres too long, causing insecurity for the local population as was the case in Beni area, Aru (Ituri District) and in Lubumbashi.

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (DDR) continued despite lack of funds. In Katanga, more than 1,000 Mayi-Mayi combatants disarmed in the reporting period. In Ituri, negotiations between the FARDC and the three remaining armed groups – Cobra Matata's FRPI, Peter Karim's FNI and Mathieu Ngoudjolo's MRC– continued throughout the second half of 2006. On 29 November [2006], these armed groups signed a "Comprehensive Agreement for Peace in Ituri" with the Congolese government, by which they agreed to surrender their arms and enter the army integration process. The FRPI, MRC and FNI accepted to give up their weapons at the regrouping points in the presence of the FARDC and in collaboration with MONUC. Three hundred and eighty-one out of 4,500 militiamen laid down arms in the month of December alone. However, on 24 December, clashes resumed in Ituri between the militiamen allied to Peter Karim and FARDC troops, continuing until 29 December 2006 and jeopardising the disarmament process." (MONUC 8 March 2007)

"The security situation remains precarious in many areas; Equateur, Ituri, the Kivus, Katanga, the Kasais, Bas-Congo and Kinshasa are particular areas of concern. FARDC remains fragile because of weak command and control; high levels of corruption; poor operational planning and tactical skills; poor administrative and logistical capacity to oversee the deployment, payment, sustenance and equipping of troops; very limited training capacity; and questionable loyalty on the part of some troops. While 14 of an intended 18 integrated brigades have been established, none can be considered effective without MONUC logistical support and, on occasion, operational training. The capacity of the national police has improved with the help of the United Nations and bilateral donors. However, it is still severely limited by deficiencies in training, a lack of unified and accountable command structures and systems for registering and vetting personnel and a lack of equipment." (UNSC 20 March 2007)

"Lawmakers in the Democratic Republic of Congo have warned of dozens of crimes committed against civilians by new government soldiers, in a report seen by AFP on Saturday.

The study into the eastern Nord-Kivu region by members of the provincial assembly, which will be presented to the governor on Wednesday, details summary executions, rapes, tortures and kidnappings.

The crimes are blamed on the "mixed" army brigades of regular army soldiers and former rebels led by deposed Congolese Tutsi general Laurent Nkunda, who have been deployed in Nord-Kivu since January [2007]." (AFP, 7 April 2007)

"There have been repeated clashes between the integrated and non-integrated brigades. For example, the 9th integrated brigade and the 83rd brigade fought on 5 August 2006 resulting in civilian casualties. The 83rd brigade is one brigade that has refused to integrate into the FARDC, as has the 85th consisting of Mayi-Mayi, arguing that they would face discrimination – an

argument which may not be entirely without merit considering that Congolese Tutsi soldiers were attacked in February 2006 at an integration centre. The ethnic thinking of the military leadership is difficult to overcome and the integration process is heavily influenced by it. This has been complicated by a lack of support for the process of integration by some members of the transitional government, who do not want to solve the problem since anarchy strengthens their positions. North Kivu suffers particularly from the non-integrated forces. Laurent Nkunda, a Rwandophone former RCD commander, has gathered troops loyal to him, including the 83rd brigade and a number of deserters, and created a zone of insecurity predominantly in Masisi and Rutshuru, declaring a 'republic des volcans' – and has sought to destabilise the province. In early 2006 his actions displaced an estimated 50,000 people. He also launched a new military and political movement on 25 July this year and he is wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity." (ActionAid 17 November 2006)

"United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomes a decision by the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) Transitional Government to disarm a Rwandan rebel militia on DRC territory by force after it failed to honour its pledges to disarm and return home.

In his 18th report to the Security Council on the peacekeeping UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), he also calls for the extension of state authority across the whole country so that the Government can collect the revenues needed to provide services to the Congolese people." (UN News Service 8 August 2005)

"During the reporting period, the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process also continued to face difficulties. Delays in the payment of demobilization allowances by the Commission nationale de la démobilisation et de la réinsertion (CONADER) generated serious discontent among ex-combatants. Despite recent efforts to address the backlog, the reintegration of former combatants into society remains slow." (UNSC 28 December 2005, para.35)

"The disarmament and demobilisation programme of the Congolese army has been suspended due to lack of funds, according to François Atufuka Mbuze, spokesman for the National Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (CONADER).

Atufuka said CONADER had closed 18 orientation centres across the country on 30 June. "From this moment onwards, all the orientation centres have been closed and we are setting up mobile intervention teams to intervene when needed," he said. "We do not have the funding to proceed with the programme."

Atufuka added that 65 percent of the army's troops, or at least 60,000 soldiers, had passed through the centres, and some 40 percent had chosen to remain in the army.

The disarmament and demobilisation programme has been beset by problems since the start. Ideally, the former soldiers are expected to spend one week at the disarmament centres, but logistical problems mean they sometimes spend more than 15 days awaiting their severance pay as they are prepared for reintegration into civilian life.

Non-payment has led to frequent outbreaks of violence at the centres, and delays in the process have prompted demonstrations in protest at the slow pace of reintegration." (IRIN 7 July 2006)

"In the long-run, the failure to form a competent national army will have serious repercussions for regional stability and the relationship between the DRC and its neighbors, in particular Rwanda and Uganda." (Swiss Peace Foundation 30 June 2006)

“As of 8 September [2006], CONADER had demobilized more than 76,614 ex-combatants, including 19,000 children. Meanwhile, some 85,000 elements have yet to undergo the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.” (UNSC 21 September 2006)

“UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who visited the country in January [2007], stressed the need to create “a professional, well-paid and well-equipped army and police (BBC).[...]

Successful army reform is contingent on the success of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), a program to dismantle Congolese rebel groups, either by turning their ranks into civilians or integrating them into the national army. But failings in the DDR program, administered by the national commission CONADER (French), have resulted in an unprofessional and undisciplined national army that has taken on the characteristics of the rebel groups it has coopted, rather than reforming them.

Critics say the DDR program lacks independent verification of disarmament, fails to communicate to ex-combatants about the demobilization process, and is not sufficiently linked to security sector reform. CONADER's director of information says disarmament was suspended at the end of 2006 due to lack of funds, and there are 150,000 people waiting to be demobilized. Former fighters declining to join the national army often have difficulty supporting themselves even after reintegration programs.” (CFR 16 February 2007)

In Ituri : “Plusieurs facteurs semblent bloquer le processus du Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion (DDR) en Ituri, notamment la peur des chefs de milices d'être arrêtés et traduits en justice, à l'instar de Thomas Lubanga et d'autres chefs de guerre qui avaient été nommés au grade de général; le fait que les chefs de milices n'aient pas encore reçu les textes concrets sur la question d'amnistie; le manque de fonds, de kits et d'un programme de réintégration fiable; le manque de contrôle total de leurs éléments par les chefs des milices.” (OCHA 22 December 2006)

See also

Amnesty International (AI), 19 Jan 2007

DR Congo: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the reform of the army [[Internet](#)]

International Crisis Group (ICG), 13 Feb 2006 DRC: Security sector reform in the Congo Africa Report N°104 - 13 February 2006 - Nairobi/Brussels [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 21 Dec 2006, DRC: More militiamen, dissident soldiers surrender - MONUC [[Internet](#)]

2003-2005

Nature of Transition Government

“The transitional government, which was sworn in on 30 June 2003, is a political compromise between the five main armed groups:

- Joseph Kabila's *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC, the old government's army);
- Jean-Pierre Bemba's *Mouvement de Libération du Congo* (MLC);
- Azarias Ruberwa's *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma* (RCD-G);
- Mbusa Nyamwisi's *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération* (RCD-ML);
- Roger Lumbala's *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-National* (RCD-N);
- as well as Mai-Mai militias from the east of the country.

These disparate groups have in theory converted themselves into political parties that now share power in Kinshasa with representatives from civil society and the political opposition. According to

the transitional agreement and the constitution, the former belligerents should hand over control of their armed groups to a unified and apolitical new national army, the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC).

The reality is very different. Most of the 300,000 combatants in the country are deployed in the same positions and are controlled by the same military hierarchies as before the transition. These parallel chains of command have also been replicated in the administrative and financial structures in the capital and provinces.” (ICG 30 March 2005, p.1)

“Many factors contribute to insecurity in eastern DRC. Infiltration by Rwandan Commandoes or Congolese mutineers and refugees in Rwanda, Rwandan armed refugees of the Hutu Forces of the Democratic Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and Burundi armed refugees of FNL resisting voluntary DDRRR conducted by the MONUC, and some Mayi-Mayi groups in Kivu and Katanga, and stubborn Ituri militia continue to cause insecurity in the east.” (ISS 31 December 2005, p11)

“In late September 2005, Vincent Otti, the indicted LRA deputy chairman, led an estimated 400 fighters into Garamba National Park in the Congo. Crisis Group interlocutors agree that the operation was well planned, not the act of desperation described by some Ugandan officials and international observers. It opened a third theatre of operations, created an alternative safe-haven for the LRA, and further stretched the Ugandan military, reducing its capacity to respond in southern Sudan and northern Uganda.³⁰ Although the incursion is a serious threat to international peace and security, the collective response has been ineffectual, and local aid workers say the insurgents now regularly enter and leave the Congo.” (ICG 11 January 2006, p5)

International Criminal Court has jurisdiction to investigate crimes committed in DRC (2003-2007)

- In March 2006, an Ituri warlord was brought to The Hague to face charges brought by the ICC; the ICC confirmed the charges against him in January 2007

“After initially indicating in July 2003 that it might investigate the situation in Ituri, the International Criminal Court (ICC) formally announced on 23 June 2004 that it would commence its first investigation into crimes committed in the DRC since 1 July 2002. This was preceded by a letter of referral from President Kabila in March 2004. ICG [International Crisis Group] welcomes this development. Ituri is the proper locale for the court's debut for a number of reasons. There are a number of individuals there who have been directly involved in the deaths of approximately 5,000 people since July 2002 (and another 55,000 since 1999). The main perpetrators are the leaders of the still active armed groups. Their prosecution would not only advance justice but would also be a significant deterrent. The ICC can isolate this initial investigation so that it does no political damage to the fragile transitional process, without excluding the possibility that future investigations might examine the roles of those in or associated with the Transitional Government. The fact that the potential targets in Ituri are outside the wider political process minimises the likelihood of outside interference. Successful prosecutions in Ituri would serve as a clear demonstration to all in the DRC, including those currently destabilising the Kivus, that the time of impunity is over.” (ICG 26 Aug 04, p18)

“The Office of the Prosecutor has selected the situation in Ituri, Democratic Republic of Congo, as the most urgent situation to be followed. The Prosecutor himself and selected staff are analysing the information available and will request additional information on the occurrence of crimes and assess the ability of the State to deal with them.[...]

The report on the latest of four Security Council missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo, issued on 16 June 2003, described the occurrence of gross violations of human rights in the eastern part of the country, including murder, mass rape, large-scale displacement of civilians, the use of child soldiers and even, reportedly, cases of ritual cannibalism. These crimes could constitute genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, and could thus, fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.” (ICC 16 July 03)

“The International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) signed an accord on Wednesday allowing the court to begin investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed within the country.[...]

The court is due to be properly established in the country by the beginning of 2005.” (IRIN 8 October 2004)

“This regional civil conflict of massive savagery went almost totally ignored by the world – and by Africa-based foreign correspondents – until March this year [2006], when an Ituri warlord was brought to The Hague to face charges brought by the fledgling International Criminal Court, ICC.

Suddenly Ituri was on the international map.

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, leader of a Hema militia named the Union of Congolese Patriots, UPC, was arrested and placed in custody by the DRC authorities following the killing and mutilation in February 2005 of nine Bangladesh soldiers who were serving in United Nations peacekeeping force in Ituri.

ICC, which had been asked by the government to investigate the situation in eastern Congo, issued an arrest warrant for Lubanga in February 2006, and he was transferred to ICC custody and sent to The Hague the following month.

Lubanga is now incarcerated in the prison complex set up to house war crimes suspects tried by the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

ICC prosecutors are preparing charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes against the 45-year-old DRC rebel commander. These will include the accusation that his forces conscripted children under the age of 15 to fight in combat. The ICC's Argentinean chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, alleges that Lubanga has trained children as young as seven to become guerrilla soldiers.” (IWPR 27 July 2006)

“In a landmark step towards fighting impunity, on 29 January [2007] the International Criminal Court confirmed the charges against former militia leader Thomas Lubanga for war crimes committed in Ituri during 2002 and 2003.” (UNSC 20 March 2007)

See also: African Faith-based Communities, Advancing Justice & Reconciliation in Relation to the ICC [[Internet](#)]

Insecurity caused by continuous attacks by Hema and Lendu militias in Ituri District (2002-2007)

- Conflict between the Hema and Lendu has previously occurred in 1972, 1985 and 1996
- According to MONUC, conflict in 1998 was sparked by land dispute between ethnic Hema and Lendu escalated conflict since mid-December 1999
- Use of modern weapons such as Kalashnikov instead of traditional weapons

- Exploitation of natural resources fuels violence in Ituri
- In 2003, a French-led EU Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) stabilised Bunia, and paved the way for the UN to return a substantially reinforced MONUC
- One of the main rebel groups active in Ituri district, the FNI militia, started to surrender its weapons under the DDR process (February 2007)

Struggle to keep control over rich Ituri region

"Ituri province, created in 1999 out of part of Orientale province, is rich in gold, timber, and coltan (colombo-tantalite, a precious mineral). In addition it produces substantial amounts of coffee. Because of its location near Lake Albert and the Ugandan frontier, Ituri is a locus of trans-border trade that offers lucrative opportunities for transporting and taxing goods.

Several groups rebelling against the Kinshasa government have fought each other and splintered within themselves as they struggled to get and keep control over this wealthy region. The conflicts over political preeminence and control of resources have taken place increasingly along ethnic lines and have spilled over to encompass groups not originally touched by these hostilities. Thus a long standing rivalry between Hema and Lendu over the control of land and access to fishing rights now brings violence to various groups -- like the Nande, Gegere, Bira, and Alur -- said to be associated with one or the other of the original contenders. The conflict first involved some 40 percent of the local population -- roughly the numbers of Hema and Lendu -- but now brings devastation to far greater numbers. With the increase in attacks and victims on both sides, the level of fear has risen, making it easier for leaders to mobilize people for violence, supposedly as a measure of self-defense." (HRW 31 Oct 02)

"Ituri is one of the richest areas in the Congo with deposits of gold, diamonds, oil and timber. It is also home to 18 different ethnic groups, with the Hema/Gegere and Lendu/Ngiti communities representing about 40 percent of the inhabitants. Ethnic identity assumed growing importance after a local land dispute in 1999 between the Hema and Lendu was exacerbated by the occupying Ugandan army and national rebel groups who wanted to expand their power base. The broader war in the Congo and the availability of political and military support from external actors -- notably Uganda and Rwanda -- fuelled the growth of armed political groups based on ethnic loyalties. Chief among these were the Hema-dominated Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), the Lendu-dominated Front for National Integration (FNI), the southern Hema-dominated Party for Unity and Safeguarding of the Integrity of Congo (PUSIC), and the mixed People's Armed Forces of Congo (FAPC)." (HRW 8 November 2006)

Ethnic clashes in Ituri have increased over the past years

"Between 2002 and 2004 these Ituri armed groups attempted to gain recognition on the national scene, with their leaders hoping for positions in the Kinshasa-based transitional government and in the newly integrated army. Local militia leaders frequently switched alliances, playing off various outside rivals and changing sides as their interests dictated. They attempted to control huge swathes of territory and strategic sites, including gold mines and lucrative customs posts, in order to enhance the importance of their movements. Control of strategic sites allowed the armed groups to win much-needed financial and political support from outside backers. Competition for control of natural resources, particularly gold, was a major factor in prolonging the armed conflict in Ituri." (HRW 8 November 2006)

"Where as before conflicts between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups were resolved with traditional weapons now they are using Kalashnikov assault rifles. Even worse, the Hema, like the Lendu are both running training camps where hundreds of recruits trained in how to use modern arms." "(AFP 9 June 2002)

“There have long been tensions and conflict between the Hema and Lendu communities in the district, fuelled by bad governance. The latest conflict - which has provoked so many of the abuses - was sparked off by a particular land dispute in 1998 when some Hema concessionaires took advantage of the weakened State apparatus to illegally enlarge their estates to the detriment of neighbouring mostly Lendu agriculturalists. The agriculturalists revolted when law enforcement agents came to evict them and in response they tried to destroy the land of the Hema concessionaires. Initially starting to the north of Bunia, this violence gradually extended to the whole of Ituri district. Moreover, while spreading through the district, the conflict quickly turned into a confrontation opposing the two communities, the Hema and the Lendu. This conflict would not have reached such a level of violence without the involvement of national Congolese players, as well as of foreign Governments. The Ugandan army, already present in Ituri since late 1998, fuelled the conflict by initially supporting some Hema notables and allegedly bombed hundreds of Lendu villages. Some Lendu traditional authorities created self-defence units. Believing that a Hema conspiracy existed against them, the Lendu militias began attacking Hema villages solely on account of their ethnicity. They also benefited from external support to organize themselves, from either the Congolese (pre-transition Government, rebel movements) or individual Ugandan officers.

The conflict entered a new phase of violence at the end of 2001 with the intensification of ethnically targeted attacks on villages, including killings, torture, rape of civilians, looting of homes, and destruction of social infrastructure. When the Hema militia UPC took over Bunia, first in August 2002 and again in May 2003, they adopted an ethnic cleansing policy, to empty the town of its Lendu and Bira populations, as well as the "non-Iturian" Nande community, which was a commercial rival to the Hema businessmen. Hundreds of Lendu villages were completely destroyed during attacks by Ugandan army helicopters together with Hema militia on the ground.

Different rebel faction leaders struggling for political power in Ituri have continued to profit from the ethnic resentment originally created by the land dispute. A series of splits, from 1999 to mid-2003, have in fact resulted in Bunia, the capital of Ituri, being the stage for repeated power struggles and skirmishes. At each stage in the fragmentation of the rebel groups, new militias were recruited loyal to one or another commander or faction leader. Often half of the militias were children. They were deployed not only to fight each other but also to whip up insecurity in the countryside and seize strategic localities and commercial opportunities. Ugandan army commanders already present in Ituri, instead of trying to calm the situation, preferred to benefit from the situation and support alternately one side or the other according to their political and financial interests.

The chiefs of armed groups took over the roles traditionally held by administrators, businessmen, traditional chiefs and law enforcement officers. They appointed "public officers", collected local taxes, sold the natural resources of their area of control, arrested civilians, judged them and in some cases executed them. The competition for the control of natural resources by combatant forces, exacerbated by an almost constant political vacuum in the region, has been a major factor in prolonging the crisis in Ituri. Those resources have also been of continued interest to foreign business networks in the region. One source of revenue for rebel groups has been the sale of concessions to foreign businesses.” (UN SC 16 July 2004, para 4-7)

“The security situation in Ituri remains unsteady despite the cease-fire agreements signed recently between the FARDC and various militias. While some militias, including Peter Karim, a Congolese rebel leader who kidnapped seven Nepalese United Nations peacekeepers in May of this year, have laid down their arms and signed a peace agreement with the government, disarming the rest of the armed groups in the area will be very difficult.” (RI 25 August 2006)

“The north-eastern district of Ituri, symptomatic of the situation in eastern DRC as a whole, is a region devastated by war. It experienced many serious bouts of inter-ethnic violence that caused

the death of tens of thousands of civilians and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes and take refuge in insecure camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Armed group attacks in Ituri often targeted “opposing” ethnic communities and included women and children as active participants in the violence. The proliferation of ethnic and community-based armed groups in Ituri is the result of the vacuum created by the collapse of state authority in the region since the beginning of the war.” (AI 19 January 2007)

“One of the main rebel groups in the troubled Ituri District of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) began surrendering its weapons on Tuesday under an ongoing demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process, military and United Nations sources said.

The Front des nationalistes et intégrationnistes (FNI) militia, whose leader, Peter Karim, was made a colonel in the national army in October 2006, started handing in their arms in a village near Lake Albert on the DRC's border with Uganda.

‘It is the last active group whose main elements turned in their weapons this morning in the village of Dera and are being taken to a centre for initial orientation,’ said Gen Vainqueur Mayala Vichana, the national army's commander in charge of Ituri. About 170 militiamen out of FNI's estimated 1,000 fighters had surrendered their arms by midday on Tuesday, he added.” (IRIN 28 February 2007)

Katanga Province: a violent yet neglected region (2006)

- Three conflicts: tensions between southerners and northerners, between outsiders and natives, and between Mai-Mai militias and the national army

“Katanga province is one of the most violent yet neglected regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most of its problems are the same as those that are systemic in the rest of the country but it needs urgent attention because it is both the heartland of national politics and the nation's most mineral-rich province, a potential economic dynamo whose mines once produced 50 per cent to 80 per cent of the national budget. [...]

The home province of President Joseph Kabila and many other senior Kinshasa politicians is divided by three conflicts: tensions between southerners and northerners, between outsiders and natives, and between Mai-Mai militias and the national army.

The north-south competition has become pronounced since Laurent Kabila, a northerner and father of the current president, Joseph Kabila, seized power by overthrowing the Mobutu dictatorship in 1997. The south is one of the most mineral-rich areas of the continent, whose copper and cobalt deposits have prompted Katangan politicians – mainly northerners – to cultivate personal networks in the local security forces to protect their interests and threaten their rivals. These officials are resented by southerners, who feel excluded from the wealth of the province. This rivalry has triggered violence. In October 2004, for example, the army killed over 70 civilians while suppressing a rebellion by a ramshackle militia in the mining town of Kilwa. In May 2005, officials alleged a secession plot in Lubumbashi and arrested south Katangan politicians and military officers. Both operations appear to have been prompted by Kinshasa politicians eager to protect their mining interests and to squash opposition.

The election campaign has reignited conflict between native Katangans and immigrants from Kasai province. Under Belgian rule, many Luba from Kasai came to run the mining companies and state administration, creating tensions manipulated by politicians, who in 1992-1993 organised militias to ethnically cleanse the province. More than 5,000 Luba were killed. The

Union of Congolese Nationalists and Federalists party (UNAFEC), which is run by some of the same figures who led the violence in the early 1990s, is using its youth gangs to intimidate its opposition, who are often Luba. Leaders of the party's youth wing have called for "necklacing" opponents with burning tyres.

The violence in the remote areas of northern Katanga is tightly linked to actors in Kinshasa. During the war, Laurent Kabila created Mai-Mai militias in the region to stem the advance of Rwandan-backed rebels. These militias, bolstered by arms from officials in Kinshasa as recently as 2004, have not been integrated into the national army and are fighting each other and the army over poaching and taxation rights." (ICG 9 January 2006)

"En novembre 2005, l'armée congolaise lança une offensive militaire afin de briser une rébellion menée par les Maï Maï au Katanga. Des soldats du gouvernement ont systématiquement regroupé des centaines de civils soupçonnés d'être Maï Maï et en ont délibérément tué et torturé à mort des centaines. Ils ont aussi violé collectivement plusieurs femmes accusées d'avoir soutenu les Maï Maï.

Des combattants Maï Maï, sous le commandement de Kyungu Mutanga, plus connu sous le pseudonyme de Gédéon, et d'un autre dirigeant Maï Maï, Makabe Kalenga Ngwele, ont eux aussi tué, violé et agressé de manières diverses nombres de civils depuis 2002. Dans certains cas, les Maï Maï ont publiquement torturé leurs victimes avant de les tuer et les manger au cours de cérémonies publiques visant à terroriser la population locale.

[...]

A ce jour, les autorités congolaises n'ont pas réussi à agir effectivement contre ces auteurs d'abus. Le 12 mai, Gédéon s'est rendu aux casques bleus des Nations Unis, à Mitwaba, dans le centre du Katanga. Plusieurs jours après, il a été remis aux officiers juridiques congolais qui l'ont gardé en détention, mais ne l'on inculpé d'aucun crime. » (HRW 21 July 2006, Mai Mai)

"Insecurity [...]

The problems between the Mai Mai and the FAC can be traced to Laurent-Désiré Kabila's call to arms in 1998, and the perception among the Mai Mai that while they were defending Lubumbashi and Kamina from Rwandan-backed RCD forces, FAC soldiers were looting their villages and abusing their families. As a result, most Mai Mai today don't trust the FAC, and feel they haven't been properly compensated for their efforts to defend Kabila Sr. They claim to be ready to turn in their weapons to the international community, but not to the local authorities.

Ethnic tension

During the last decade, Katanga has been the scene of violent ethnic clashes. In 1992 and 1993, Kasaians were victims of ethnic cleansing by the Mobutu regime in retaliation for the election of Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister. The Governor of Katanga, Gabriel Kyungu, was encouraged to persecute people from Kasai province. Katangans themselves became involved, enticed by the promise of Kasaiian-held jobs at the Gecamines, the country's largest state-owned mining company. According to MONUC's human rights section, thousands of Kasaians were killed and over 500,000 sequestered in inhuman conditions before being evacuated by humanitarian organizations to Kasai, where most of them had never set foot before. Although tension has decreased in the past few years, there is a risk of flare-up especially during the pre-elections period when ethnicity may be exploited for political gain." (MONUC 27 Nov 03)

North Kivu: a strategic province marred by violence (2005-2007)

- North-Kivu is currently the stage on which national political and military antagonisms are being played out
- In 2006, Laurent Nkunda, the dissident former RCD-G military commander who has repeatedly attempted to destabilize North and South Kivu provinces, launched several attacks in North Kivu
- Massive displacement occurred at the end of 2006, following fighting between various Congolese brigades, some of which were loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda
- Mai Mai operating in the territory of Beni committed acts of looting and extortion, arbitrary arrest, illegal detentions and abductions, resulting in a massive displacement of the local population

“North-Kivu is among the most strategic of the DRC's provinces, situated on the DRC's border with Uganda and Rwanda, whose security concerns, as well as economic and political interests, have twice tipped the DRC into disastrous armed conflicts since 1996. The province contains the intersecting zones of control of different, largely ethnic-based, Congolese armed political groups, each sponsored at one time or another by the three governments and their national armies. The province is home to a mix of ethnic groups with historically troubled relations, focused particularly on the issue of land tenure. North-Kivu also is of prime economic importance, with lucrative customs revenues from the Uganda and Rwanda border-crossings, substantial mineral deposits and valuable agricultural and cattle-rearing concerns.[...]

North-Kivu is currently the stage on which national political and military antagonisms are being played out. Far from improving the security climate in North-Kivu, the DRC's transitional authorities at government and provincial levels have allowed a deterioration in the situation, including an inflammation of ethnic tensions, to take place. Rwanda and Uganda have also continued to have a detrimental influence on events in the province. As a result, the human rights situation has worsened. In December 2004 a large-scale military confrontation between different military units in North-Kivu, all of them officially part of the FARDC, almost brought about the collapse of the transition. In the course of the confrontation, hundreds of civilians in North-Kivu were victims of killings, acts of torture, rape and other human rights abuses, which in many instances amounted to crimes under international law. Many of these human rights abuses appeared to be ethnically-motivated, in apparent reprisal for the presumed support of a particular ethnic group for an opposing armed group. As has become typical of the DRC's tragic recent past, the perpetrators of the human rights abuses committed during the December fighting were left unchallenged and the victims quickly forgotten by political leaders.

The fighting, relatively short-lived, gave way to a grudging military stand-off, as the government and international community, not for the first time, tried to chart the DRC's way out of crisis. However, the underlying causes of the December confrontation have not been addressed and as the DRC's transition unsteadily approaches its end in June 2006, the political, economic and military stakes in North-Kivu are looming ever larger over the country's future. As tensions sharpen, the risk is deepening of mass human rights abuses in the province. At the same time, UN peacekeeping (MONUC) resources are overstretched and directed mainly to other areas of insecurity in eastern DRC.[...]

NORTH-KIVU: POWER, LAND AND ETHNICITY

North-Kivu province comprises six territories and the provincial capital, Goma. Beni and Lubero territories, often referred to as the grand nord; lie in the north of the province, Walikale territory to the west; and grouped around Goma the three territories of Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo, collectively referred to as the petit nord.

The major ethnic groups in North-Kivu are the Hunde, the Nande, the Nyanga and Banyarwanda, with smaller populations of other ethnic groups, such as the Tembo. Goma has a mixed ethnic population. The Banyarwanda(25) form the majority of the population in Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories. The remainder of the population in these territories is primarily Hunde or Nande. The territory of Walikale, in the west of the province, is shared primarily between the Nyanga and Hunde, with only a small Banyarwanda population. The Nande predominate in Beni and Lubero territories.

a. Political power built on an ethnic base

The mainly Tutsi-led RCD-Goma controls the capital Goma and the territories of Rutshuru (bordering Rwanda and a small area of Uganda), Nyiragongo and most of the territory of Masisi. Since December 2004 [...], Walikale and the western-most part of Masisi territory (formerly held by the RCD-Goma) is now under government control. Beni and Lubero territories, which along their eastern edge border Uganda, are controlled by the RCD-ML, headquartered on the city of Beni. The RCD-ML, which is primarily Nande-led, suffered major military reversals shortly before the beginning of the transition, has two ministerial posts in the transitional government, one of which is occupied by the RCD-ML President Mbusa Nyamwisi, himself a Nande.[...]

The other two major ethnic groups in North-Kivu, the Hunde and Nyanga, have little in the way of political power or representation in North-Kivu, and are largely marginalized by the Nande and Banyarwanda communities. Before power politics became dominated by armed political groups, both groups used to hold a traditional, customary authority in the petit nord, through a system of tribal chieftaincies. This customary authority is slowly waning. Militarily, both groups are represented by relatively weak and incoherent mayi-mayi militia units. Their simmering sense of resentment is an added factor in North-Kivu's troubled ethnic mix.[...]

b. North-Kivu's Banyarwanda communities

The presence of populations of Rwandan descent in North-Kivu predates 1910 when parts of Kivu were ceded to the Belgian Congo(26) (present day DRC) from the German-ruled Ruanda-Urundi (present day Rwanda and Burundi). Between 1937 and the mid-1950s, the Belgian colonial administration transferred hundreds of thousands of Rwandans (Ruanda-Urundi being by then under Belgian rule) to the Congo, primarily to Masisi and Rutshuru territories. This resettlement was designed partly to ease demographic pressures in densely-populated Rwanda, but mainly to provide a ready workforce for large colonial agricultural and mining concerns in North-Kivu. Significant numbers of Rwandan migrants also came to Congo to seek land in the then relatively sparsely populated east of the country.

Between 1959 and 1963 several thousand Rwandan families, mainly Tutsi, settled in Congo fleeing pre- and post-independence insecurity in Rwanda. Other Rwandan, again mainly Tutsi, families sought refuge from persecution by the Hutu-dominated government and its supporters in Rwanda during subsequent years. In July 1994, the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda and the victory of the Tutsi-led RPF over the then Hutu Rwandan government, led to the flight of over a million Rwandan Hutu refugees to eastern Zaire. The influx had a profoundly destabilizing effect on the region: much of the Hunde population was displaced and almost all the Tutsi population was forced to flee to Rwanda by violence perpetrated by elements among the Rwandan Hutu refugee and the Congolese Hutu populations. Many Tutsi were later encouraged to return to DRC in the course of RCD-Goma rule in the Kivus.

In August 1996 the Rwandan RPF government helped to form and gave their support to the AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo), a coalition of Zairian armed groups led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila and opposed to the Mobutu government. In September 1996, Rwandan government (Rwandan Patriotic Army, RPA) and AFDL forces invaded the Kivus, to eliminate Rwandan Hutu combatants, their bases and their known or suspected supporters. The RPA and the AFDL massacred tens of thousands of unarmed Hutu refugees and Congolese civilians in the process and also forced hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees to return to Rwanda, while many more were scattered into the forests of Zaire, in appalling humanitarian circumstances.

c. Contradictory nationality laws

The question of the nationality of the Banyarwanda population has been a divisive issue in post-independence Congo, affecting the rights of members of these groups to hold land and political office, and thus impacting on the tenure of political and economic power in the east. In the course of the last 40 years, Congolese nationality laws have been amended four times, sometimes to the disadvantage of the Banyarwanda who have periodically been stripped of their entitlement to Congolese nationality. By and large, these changes have been driven by the competing political and economic interests of the leaders of the various ethnic groups.[...]

In November 2004, after a hotly contested passage through the DRC's Parliament, a new nationality law was promulgated which confers the right to Congolese nationality on all people – and their descendants - who were resident in the DRC on or before 30 June 1960, the date of independence. Dual nationality is not permitted under the law.

Although this new law should put an end to debate about the status of the Banyarwanda – the majority of whom were present in the territory of DRC before June 1960 - the status of the Banyarwanda in the Kivus, and of Tutsi especially, remains precarious. The practical impact of the new law will be limited until much more has been done to calm strained ethnic relations in the Kivus, particularly in the context of forthcoming national elections where eligibility to vote is a key issue dividing the communities in North-Kivu [...]" (AI 28 September 2005)

In late-January [2006], Laurent Nkunda, the dissident former RCD-G military commander who has repeatedly attempted to destabilize North and South Kivu provinces, launched a new attack in the North Kivu territory of Rutshuru. Supported by elements of the 83rd brigade who had been boycotting the military integration process, Nkunda and his men captured several towns in the area for several weeks after clashing with the fifth integrated brigade of the FARDC which had committed human rights abuses against the Kinyarwanda speaking population in the area. MONUC stepped in to assist the FARDC in recapturing the towns, and a group of 1,800 troops subsequently abandoned Nkunda, leading to the retreat of his forces to the territory of Masisi. However, the fighting displaced several thousand people and stoked tensions between Kinyarwanda speakers and the other members of the local communities, in particular the Nande community of North Kivu. Meanwhile, in March the fifth brigade was replaced by the second integrated brigade that is assisted by MONUC forces.

- The bulk of Nkunda's forces are Banyamulenge (ethnic Tutsi), and they are widely believed to have backing from Rwanda, which continues to seek influence in the region. Although there have not been any major incidents since then, the situation remains potentially explosive. Nkunda remains at large in spite of a longstanding warrant for his arrest, and there are still many troops who remain loyal to him and continue to boycott the military integration programme. It is very likely that Nkunda will launch a renewed attempt at destabilizing the region either in the period leading up to the elections or immediately thereafter. The RCDG will lose most of its power in the province as a result of the elections, and Nkunda and his backers – he has close links to Eugene Serufuli, the RCD-G's governor of North Kivu province - may choose to reclaim control through

military means. Even if Nkunda does not do so, the new provincial leadership will be faced with the presence in the province of dissident soldiers who are opposed to the new government. North Kivu is therefore expected to remain unstable for some time to come.” (Swiss Peace Foundation 30 June 2006)

“Even since the official end of the war in 2002, North Kivu has been the theatre of violence, fighting and looting by a mixture of armed groups operating in the region. Through out the past year, the population has been subject to harassment, racketeering, rape and forced displacement. In 2005 alone, MSF treated over 1200 rape patients in Beni, Kayna and Rutshuru areas, where men in arms committed most rapes. The territory of Rutshuru has been particularly violent and unstable, leading MSF to open a project in August 2005 to support the surgery, pediatrics and internal medicine wards of the general referral hospital in Rutshuru, and to provide much needed primary health care and a referral system to the population of Katwiguru health zone. However, it has been over a year since such heavy fighting erupted in the region provoking so much displacement.” (MSF 31 January 2006)

“The end of 2006 was marked by clashes between FARDC and insurgents in North Kivu. On 25 November 2006, fighting broke out in Sake – 25 km west of Goma – between FARDC (ex-ANC) soldiers of the 81st and 83rd Brigades loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda and the 11th and 14th Integrated Brigades of the FARDC. Military clashes continued sporadically until the end of the year in Rutshuru and Masisi territories of North Kivu and caused a mass displacement of the local population.” (MONUC 8 March 2007)

“In North Kivu, Mayi-Mayi combatants operating in the Vurondo area, territory of Beni, have created widespread insecurity in the zone, committing acts of looting and extortion, arbitrary arrest and illegal detention, abductions, resulting in a massive displacement of the local population.” (MONUC 20 February 2007)

See also

IRIN, 24 Jan 2007, RDC : Laurent Nkunda favorable à l'intégration de ses combattants au sein des Fardc
[\[Internet\]](#)

Overview of armed groups

Overview of armies and groups involved in eastern DRC (2005-2007)

“The 1998 war ended when the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement was signed in Pretoria on 17 December 2002 between Kabila’s FAC, the Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), the Ugandan-backed Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), two other Uganda proxies (the RCD-Liberation Movement and the RCD-National), and the Mai-Mai, tribal militias that served as proxies for Kabila. Separate agreements were signed in July and September 2002 with Rwanda and Uganda respectively for the withdrawal of their troops. Angolan and Zimbabwean troops that had been supporting Kabila followed suit.” (ICG 13 February 2006, p13)

“The current total number of foreign combatants is estimated at between 8,000 and 9,000, about 5,000 foreign combatants being in North Kivu and 3,000 to 3,500 in South Kivu. Of these, most belong to the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), with perhaps as few as 600 Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU)

and a small handful, in the low hundreds at most, being the remnants of the Burundian Forces nationales de libération (FNL)." (UNSC 22 May 2006)

Congolese Armed Groups:

Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC)

"When Kabila came to power, he decided to reform the army. This was to become an integrated force comprised of soldiers of Mobutu's Forces Armées Zairoises (FAZ), and Kabila's own core force of Banyamulenge and Katangan gendarmes. However, neither of the latter elements was sufficiently well equipped or adequately trained to take command of the new FAC army. [...]

Most of the better-trained FAC troops belonged to the elite unit of the 10th Battalion stationed in Goma. It was this unit, numbering 25,000 men, which launched the rebellion on 2 August 1998 from FAC headquarters in Kivu. An official announcement that the FAC had started a war to liberate their country was broadcast over Radio Goma by one of their officers, Sylvain Mbuki. Kabila denounced them as traitors and puppets of Rwanda and Uganda. Their defection led directly to the loss of Kivu. They immediately started marching north towards Oriental and Equateur provinces, south to Northern Katanga and also towards the centre of the country; the FAC troops stationed in those provinces all defected to the rebel movement.

In response, Kabila has embarked on a massive recruitment exercise to plug the gap in the FAC's ranks. However, the deserters included the more experienced FAC soldiers and the new and obviously inexperienced recruits have not proved up to the job. Kabila has therefore had to co-opt more seasoned fighters from among the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militias, soldiers who formerly fought for Idi Amin, and the Burundian FDD in order to beef up his war machine." (ICG 21 May 1999, "The Congolese parties to the Conflict")

Mai-Mai militias

For many Congolese, the idea of Maï Maï is linked to a state of mind: the determination to take up arms against the presence and domination of foreigners on Congolese soil. The Maï Maï are regarded by a large proportion of the population as groups of resistance fighters opposing the occupation,²⁷ and some Maï Maï commanders do present themselves as symbols of Congolese resistance.[...]

One of the cornerstones of the Maï Maï movements is, in a reflection of the 'Simba' [lions in Kiswahili] of the 'muléliste' rebellion of the 1960s, the use of magical religious practices which basically consist of initiation and immunisation rites, and specific prohibitions. These practices have the dual function of protecting the combatants on the battlefield and enhancing discipline and the internal cohesion of the group.[...]

These movements are by their nature highly diversified and very unstable. Many of them were set up spontaneously around a leadership which had no previous political experience. The ups and downs, the risks inherent in fighting, the internal conflicts, the constant splits and regrouping that these movements experience mean that their structures and their methods are constantly called into question. This results in a lack of cohesion within the groups and in opportunism on the part of many Maï Maï fighters who, while presenting themselves as symbols of the resistance, kill, pillage, rape, seize local people's property, and engage in the illegal exploitation of resources." (International Alert & al., 2005, p20)

"A few radical *Mayi-Mayi* groups do not wish to be demobilized and integrated into a unified army that includes the RCD-Goma, which they describe as a 'servant in the pay of Rwanda.'

The other reason behind this reticence to join the demobilization and integration process is economic. Anarchy and the vacuum of state authority resulting from the war led to all armed

groups, including the *Mayi-Mayi*, adopting a culture of economic exploitation. Most of these armed groups profit from the extraction of natural resources and extortion from the local civilian population.

Two important factions of the *Mayi Mayi* are in particular opposing the DDR and army integration process. First is the Kivu-based *Mayi-Mayi*, called the *Patriotes-Resistants* in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement documents. Second is the Katanga *Mayi-Mayi*, which remains engaged in open armed confrontation with the FARDC and are responsible for massive human rights abuses." (AI 19 January 2007)

See also :

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 16 Mar 2006,
DR Congo: From protection to insurgency - history of the *Mayi-Mayi* [[Internet](#)]

Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD)

"The RCD-Goma had its own army, l'Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC), which was the main armed opposition to the regime in Kinshasa. This heterogeneous army was made up of soldiers from the remnants of Mobutu's army, 'Kadogos' [child soldiers] of the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL), who had taken part in the capture of Kinshasa in 1996, elements from Kasai, recruited under the patronage of Dr Adolphe Onusumba Yemba, former president of the RCD, Banyamulenge militias, who had fought in the ranks of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1990, Congolese Hutus recruited in Rutshuru, and other Banyamulenge militias. The RCD army numbered between 20,000 and 30,000 men.

The RCD exercised political, administrative and military control in eastern DRC from 1998 to 2003, thanks to the active support of Rwanda. It justifies its existence by the need to protect the Congolese Tutsi population.[...]

The RCD joined the transitional government of national unity which was set up in Kinshasa in June 2003, following the signing of the Pretoria Accords. Having been originally a politico-military movement, the RCD transformed itself into a political party, whilst its army was to be integrated in the new national army. However, this integration has still not taken place, since the transitional government continues to be undermined and torn apart by internal power struggles and also is paralysed by mutual suspicion among its different components. The former RCD factions, and other armed groups that are part of the new government in fact retain their own military structures, under the aegis of the restructured national army. Moreover, despite the official reunification of the country in June 2003, the transitional government has met with enormous difficulties in exercising its political, military and administrative authority throughout the country, especially in the provinces of South and North Kivu, where the RCD remains very influential." (International Alert & al., 2005, p19)

"[T]he RCD-Goma is divided between a faction willing to keep faith with the DRC's political transition and a faction that has become increasingly hostile to it. The latter "hardline" element has shown a willingness to resort to military force and is believed to maintain strong military links with the Rwandan government. The cleavage between these two wings became even more pronounced during reversals of the RCD-Goma's fortunes in 2004. Driven by a deep mistrust of the government in Kinshasa and fears that the Banyarwanda (Congolese Hutu and Tutsi of Rwandan origin whose mother-tongue is Kinyarwanda) community in eastern DRC may be the target of Kinshasa-inspired ethnic violence, the hardline wing sees its interests lying in the maintenance of firm RCD-Goma military control over its last remaining bastion in North-Kivu and a close relationship with Rwanda, including by remaining under Rwanda's military umbrella." (AI 28 September 2005)

“The first major change came after mutinies within units of the former National Congolese Army (ANC) – the armed wing of the RCD – in North and South Kivu. Under the integration proposed by the transitional government, a former FAC general, General Prosper Nabyolwa, was deployed in September 2003 to command the tenth military region in South Kivu. His authority was thwarted by the RCD troops, who were particularly worried that he would arrest some of their officers who had been sentenced to death in absentia for the assassination of Laurent Kabila in January 2001. When Nabyolwa did move to arrest one of these in February 2004, there was a mutiny, leading to a battle for Bukavu three months later. To regain control, Kinshasa deployed 10,000 FAC and MLC troops to North and South Kivu. They took Bukavu back but RCD hardliners in Goma accused Kabila of besieging their communities and power base in North Kivu. These tensions unleashed further fighting around the town of Kanyabayonga in November 2004.

As a consequence, the RCD lost military control over South Kivu and northern Katanga. Two FAC and one MLC brigade were deployed to South Kivu, and many hardline RCD commanders fled to Rwanda and Goma. In North Kivu, in turn, a sort of ad hoc integration took place between the RCD-ML, MLC and FAC units that had been brought in to deal with the RCD insurgency.

However, the RCD troops had carved out a stronghold in the territories of Masisi and Rutshuru and resisted attempts to deploy others there. At least two brigades of the RCD, although paying lip service to Kinshasa’s authority, have still not been integrated.

By the end of 2005, however, around 3,500 RCD troops had been integrated into one of the six formed brigades. As no reliable census of the army has been published, it is difficult to know how many RCD troops remain in the field. MONUC officers estimate that around 4,000 to 8,000 are in South Kivu, 3,000 to 6,000 in North Kivu and another 4,000 to 8,000 in northern Katanga, Maniema, Kasai Oriental and Province Orientale. Like other factions, the RCD has maintained parallel chains of command in order to protect its interests. But the deployments to the East in 2004 have broken down its civilian and military command structures, and the former rebels are only able to control directly the 81st and 83rd Brigades in Masisi, Rutshuru and Goma.” (ICG 13 February 2006, pp13-14)

MLC

“The Army of Liberation of the Congo (ALC), the military wing of the MLC, is very weak. At the Sun City talks, the MLC claimed to have 20,000 soldiers. As with all the other factions, however, these figures were wildly inflated. Independent estimates by MONUC and other observers put their strength closer to 10,000. After the Bukavu crisis, the MLC sent between 3,000 and 5,000 troops to the East. These troops were later integrated into the military regions and have lost most of their links to the MLC hierarchy. A further 1,800 joined the six integrated brigades, with more than 1,500 opting for demobilisation. Between 1,000 and 1,500 MLC troops remain in formed units in Equateur, while the rest of their troops are either waiting for demobilisation or for army integration.” (ICG 13 February 2006, p14)

“Just a few days ahead of historic elections planned for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a major rebel coalition plaguing the eastern part of the country has agreed to put down its weapons in a breakthrough brokered by the United Nations.

The UN Mission in the country (MONUC) said that the move by the rebel coalition Mouvement Revolutionnaire Congolais (MRC), which consisted of regrouped combatants from other armed militias that had previously disbanded, will make relocation easier for displaced persons in the troubled Ituri District and allow many more to vote in the elections.” (UN News Service 27 July 2006)

The RCD-ML.

“At the beginning of the transition, Mbusa Nyamwisi, president of the RCD-ML declared he had 8,000 to 10,000 Patriotic Congolese Army (APC) troops based in the Beni-Lubero area of North Kivu. More realistic estimates are between 3,000 and 5,000. While around 1,000 of these have joined one of the integrated brigades or been demobilised, Mbusa retains control over several thousand, whom he will use to secure his home base during the elections.” (ICG 13 February 2006, p14)

Foreign armies and groups

Rwandan Army

“Until its official withdrawal from the east of the DRC in September–October 2002, the Rwandan army retained a strong presence there. It was obliged to withdraw its troops under pressure from the international community, notably the United States of America, but Rwanda nevertheless reorganised itself, restructuring the military arm of the RCD-Goma and creating a rapid intervention force which could be redeployed in eastern Congo if necessary. Before their withdrawal, it was estimated that the Rwandan troops numbered between 25,000 and 35,000.

Rwanda cites security considerations as the justification for its presence in the DRC; i.e. the need to protect its borders from Rwandan Hutu rebels operating in North and South Kivus under the banner of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), numbering between 15,000 and 20,000 men.” (International Alert & al., 2005, p19).

Burundian Army

“The Burundian army was present in the Fizi and Baraka regions before it officially withdrew from South Kivu in September 2002. Its presence in DRC was dictated by Burundi’s concern to protect its borders from infiltration by the various rebel movements opposed to the government in Bujumbura, in particular the Forces de Défence pour la Démocratie (FDD) and the Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL). It was in this context that the Burundian army allied itself with the Rwandan army to fight against the FDD. » (International Alert & al., 2005, p20)

Rwandan Hutu militias

“The Rwandan Hutu rebels present on Congolese territory have, since 2000, been grouped together in a politico-military formation called Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which numbers between 15,000 and 20,000 men. This rebel force is made up of three main groups: the ex-FAR and Interahamwe who took part in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994; the ex-FAR who did not take part in the genocide; and new, post-genocide recruits, who constitute the majority of the troops. Since 1994, Congolese territory has been used as a home base for Rwandan Hutu militias in their war against the regime in Kigali. After the Hutu refugee camps in the east of the DRC were dismantled in 1996, almost 20,000 militiamen and soldiers of the former Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) formed the Armée de Libération du Rwanda (ALiR) and, starting from Kivu, infiltrated the north-west of Rwanda. Here, for two years they led an insurrection, which was eventually crushed by the RPA in mid-1998. The Rwandan Hutu militias, better known in the region under the label of Interahamwe, were allied for several years with the Burundian FDD rebels. However, this alliance came to an end when the FDD laid down their arms after signing a ceasefire agreement with the Burundian government. The Hutu militias have committed widespread acts of violence in eastern DRC. In the course of the research for this study, they were identified as the armed group most actively engaged in acts of sexual violence and assaults against women in South Kivu.” (International Alert & al., 2005, p21)

“The Congo: Solving the FDLR Problem Once and for All, [...] from the International Crisis Group, examines the continued existence in the Congo of 8,000 to 10,000 FDLR troops, Hutu rebels with

links to the 1994 genocide in their home country, Rwanda. Though too weak to threaten Kigali, and though many of its members are not themselves genocidaires, the FDLR remains a key source of regional instability." (ICG 12 May 2005)

"Currently, Rwandan rebels are organising themselves into a political party that seeks to position itself carefully within the new geopolitical dynamics of the Great Lakes region. Coalitions and alliances with some Mayi-Mayi groups in the Masisi and Ruzizi areas, where there are larger concentrations of the Rwandan language-speaking groups. The FDLR faces the serious problem of securing a regular supply of arms, ammunition, food and medicines. To survive, they engage in banditry, called 'Rasta operations', in which local Congolese criminals are involved." (ISS 31 December 2005, pp15-16)

« Des attaques contre la population civile commises par des groupes armés hutus rwandais continuent sans répit dans les Kivus. » (MONUC 27 July 2006)

For more information on the FDLR, see Marina Rafti, South Kivu: a Sanctuary for the Rebellion of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp [[Internet](#)]

The Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL)

"With regard to the Burundian foreign armed groups, the almost total withdrawal of Burundian combatants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, amounting to nearly 4,000 elements, which accompanied the peace process in Burundi, has significantly eased the problem of armed groups from that country in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[...]

Concerning the handful of FNL elements still remaining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese armed forces have identified a small group, numbering in the low hundreds, of alleged FNL combatants encamped on the Ubwari Peninsula in South Kivu." (UNSC 22 May 2006)

"Nearly all the Burundian combatants have now left the DRC, MONUC believes." (MONUC 17 July 2006)

Ugandan Armed Groups

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)

"Information gathered by MONUC indicates that only one of the six Ugandan armed groups mentioned in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is still active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, namely, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).[...]

The Allied Democratic Forces are reckoned to have 200 to 300 fighters, mainly in the Ruwenzori Mountains close to the border with Uganda. Unlike some of the other foreign armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ADF are not known to have external allies. Like most other armed groups, ADF are believed to be only lightly armed." (UN SC 5 April 2002, para.12-13)

Lord Resistance Army (LRA)

"The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda signed a ceasefire in Juba, Sudan on 26 August. Its terms include a movement of LRA troops towards assembly points in Uganda, a movement that will likely cross northern DRC, probably passing via Ituri. Such movements will need to be monitored to ensure that local populations en route are not harassed or attacked." (OCHA 31 August 2006)

“The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), which maintains a small presence in the remote Garamba Park border region in the north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, poses a major security challenge and a continuing source of tension for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States.” (UNSC 20 March 2007)

ADF/NALU

“The Government of Uganda has repeatedly extended the amnesty it offers to Ugandan elements of ADF/NALU. In the meantime, MONUC facilitated the establishment at Beni, North Kivu, of the Ugandan Amnesty Commission’s office, which is funded by the Government of Ireland. This office allows contact to be made with the Ugandan combatants in an attempt to persuade them to return home and participate in the reabsorption programmes.” (UNSC 22 May 2006)

Main armed groups in Ituri (2007)

“The *Mouvement des Révolutionnaires Congolais* (MRC) is an Ituri armed group formed in Uganda in 2005. Initially, its main base was at Aveba, in Ituri. It reportedly recruited its members from among the community of refugees in Uganda and also from members of armed groups hostile to the DRC programme in Ituri. According to Congolese and Ugandan local human rights organisations, the movement is believed currently to have around 600 men led by former PUSIC, FRPI, FNI, UPC and RCD-ML officers.

Another Ituri armed group, led by Peter Karim, whose fighters were drawn mainly from the *Front Nationaliste et Intégrationniste* (FNI), Nationalist and Integrationist Front, initially close to the MRC, also resisted DDR in Ituri and fought against FARDC and MONUC forces. According to reports from local NGOs both the MRC and Peter Karim’s group committed many human rights abuses against civilians. [...]

On 26 July 2006 in Kambutso in Ituri, the MRC signed a peace agreement with the transitional government and committed to demobilize its troops in return for a “general amnesty” for its fighters and a position as colonel in the FARDC for its leader, Mathieu Ngojolo. However Colonel Kakolele, one of the senior members of the group has not endorsed the agreement. Peter Karim agreed a peace accord with the transitional government in Ddoy on 13 July 2006. He agreed to disarm his group on terms similar to those accorded to MRC, including also appointment as colonel in the FARDC. 45 These accords were rushed through within days of the first round of presidential elections in July 2006, reportedly to enable the free movement of people to the polling stations. However, despite the peace accords, it was reported that these groups continued to recruit new fighters. The appointments of Mathieu Ngojolo and Peter Karim as FARDC colonels were confirmed by the DRC Minister of Defence, Adolphe Onusumba, in October 2006.

‘The objective of these nominations is the pursuit of peace,’ Adolphe Onusumba told the press, although it remains unclear whether these agreements will mark an end to armed group abuses in Ituri or herald a significant improvement of the human rights situation in the region.” (AI 19 January 2007)

Main causes of displacement

Plunder of natural resources by warring parties continues to be major factor causing displacement (1998-2007)

- In May 2001, UN report on exploitation of natural resources accused foreign armed forces and Congolese fighters of using DRC's natural resources to fuel the conflict
- In Oct 2002, the final version of the UN report stated that due to elite criminal networks, the illegal exploitation of DRC's resources would continue, despite the withdrawal of foreign armed forces
- NGOs stress that the UN must address the role of multinational corporations in war (Oct 03)
- Various NGO reports show the central role of natural resources, such as coltan and diamonds, in the conflict
- The UN failed to follow up on the UN panel's reports recommendations, and those responsible for the illegal exploitation of the resources have not been held responsible (June 2005)
- Several thousand people fled their villages in Kasai Oriental province, which were burned down following a conflict linked to a diamond mine in the area (February 2007)
- In Lubero territory in North Kivu, civilians reportedly fled their villages, as Rwandan Hutu militia reportedly regularly forces the civilian population to carry exploited minerals for one to two weeks at the time (March 2007)

"In the DRC [...], the distinction between conflict and development-induced displacement has been blurred as civilians have been displaced to make way for resource extraction, which in turn has fueled the war and further displacement." (Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 26 Aug 05, p5)

"The DRC has 10 percent of the worlds copper, two-thirds of its coltan, as well as gold, diamonds, uranium, zinc, among others - and a river system that could electrify all of Africa." (ISN 27 July 2006)

"In 2000, the U. N. Security Council expressed concern that Congo's natural resources such as gold, diamonds and other minerals were fuelling the deadly war. They appointed a panel of experts¹¹ to look into the matter who published four separate reports between April 2001 and October 2003. ¹² In these series of reports, the U.N. panel of experts reported that Rwandan, Ugandan, and Zimbabwean army officers as well as members of the Congolese elite were growing rich from the wealth of the Congo. They showed how extraction of these resources helped fund armed groups, thus fueling the war. They further documented how the minerals of the Congo were fed into the networks of international commerce. The panel concluded in its report of October 2002 that the withdrawal of foreign armies would not end the resource exploitation because the elites had created a self-financing war economy.

In 2002, following heavy international pressure, in part because of the U.N. panel reports, both the Rwandan and Ugandan governments agreed to withdraw their soldiers from Congo. Uganda subsequently arranged with the Congolese government to keep some forces in northeastern Congo until 2003 when the last of their troops withdrew. This report [by HRW], focused on control of gold in northeastern Congo, shows that the pattern of exploitation of natural resources described by the U.N. panel of experts, does indeed continue as of this writing, resulting in widespread abuses of human rights. The trade in gold is just one example of a wider trend of competition for resources and resulting human rights abuses taking place in mineral rich areas throughout the Congo.[...]

During eighteen months of conflict in 2002 and 2003, Hema and Lendu armed groups fought to control the gold-mining town of Mongbwalu in Ituri. As they passed control of the rich prize back and forth five times, they also slaughtered some two thousand civilians, often on an ethnic basis.

In addition, they carried out summary executions, raped and otherwise injured thousands of civilians, engaged in torture, and arbitrarily detained persons whom they saw as enemies. During the frequent clashes, tens of thousands of civilians were forced to flee their homes, losing much or all of their goods to looting or destruction." (HRW 2 June 2005, p14, p23)

To see the Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/357), 12 April 2001, [\[External Link\]](#)

For the UN SC 13 November 2001 Addendum to the report on exploitation of natural resources, please see source below.

For May 2002, UN SC 22 May 2002 Interim Report on the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC, see reference below. "

To see the 2002 report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of DR Congo, 16 Oct 2002, see [\[External Link\]](#)

For the 2003 report of the Panel, 23 October 23, see reference below

"The panel's reports raised the expectation that U.N. member states would hold to account those companies that were responsible for misconduct, but these hopes were misplaced. After the publication of their final report in 2003, its mandate of the U.N. panel of experts was ended and the information uncovered by the panel was archived for 25 years. The failure of the U.N. to follow up on the panel's recommendations has been a major blow to further progress on the critical issue of the link between conflict and natural resources in the DRC and beyond." (HRW 2 June 2005, p120)

For more on the exploitation of coltan in eastern DRC, please see a study by [The Pole Institute, January 2002, The coltan phenomenon, How a rare mineral has changed the life of the population of war-torn North Kivu province in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo](#) [link below]

For more information on the coltan trade and the role of European companies, please see "Supporting the War Economy in the DRC: European Companies and the Coltan Trade" by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS), January 2002 [\[External Link\]](#)

Reports by Amnesty International (2001 & 2003):

"The report, entitled '*Democratic Republic of Congo - 'Our brothers who help kill us'*', identifies the drive to control and exploit the DRC's natural resources as the biggest single factor underpinning the continuing violence in the country.[...]

Wealth for a small military, political and commercial elite has come at a huge price. Hundreds of thousands of Congolese civilians have been tortured and killed during fighting to secure control of natural resources. Thousands of others have died due to malnutrition and lack of access to humanitarian assistance after being forced to flee their homes.

Foreign forces have also deliberately stoked inter-ethnic conflicts and mass killings in order to promote their economic interests. This has been the case in Ituri for example, resulting in further mass killings and large scale destruction of habitations. Thousands of women have been raped. Children as young as 12 have been forced into hard labour in the mines. Human rights defenders who have denounced these abuses have been beaten, detained, forced to flee or killed." (AI, 28 April 2003)

"Une mission conjointe d'évaluation a été effectuée dans le district de Tshilenge, dans le territoire de Miabi, à 60 km au sud de Mbuji-Mayi, le 21 février 2007 par l'UNICEF, la MONUC et la

Société Civile du Kasai Oriental afin d'évaluer la situation humanitaire après l'incendie et la destruction de deux villages de la zone de santé rurale de Tshilundu suite à un conflit autour de la mine de diamant de Ntabalayi. La mission a recommandé, entre autres, au Comité permanent inter-agences (CPIA) de plaider auprès des partenaires pour une assistance aux enfants scolarisés déplacés, aux ménages dans les familles d'accueil, et pour un plaidoyer pour le retour des familles dans leurs villages d'environ 3 500 habitants." (OCHA 27 February 2007)

"Exploitation of natural resources by a large number of Rwandan Hutu combatants in the National Park of Maiko, located at the border of the Lubero territory in North Kivu and of the western part of the Oriental Province is reportedly the cause of growing insecurity and human rights violations in this area. According to information received, Rwandan Hutu combatants regularly force the civilian population to carry the minerals exploited to their bases which require travelling on foot for one to two weeks. In some villages of the western part of Lubero territory, this situation has reportedly caused displacement of populations." (MONUC 19 March 2007)

For more information on the extent and use of DRC's natural resources, see Global Witness, 30 June 2004 **Same old story - A background study on natural resources in the DR Congo** [[Internal Link](#)]

and

Global Witness, June 2006, Reforming the DRC Diamond Sector [[Internet](#)]

90 percent of new displacement in DRC is due to armed conflict (August 2006)

"Concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo, while the recently held democratic elections were viewed as a key to solving the long-standing conflict in that country, there had been over 500,000 newly displaced people requiring the assistance of international agencies from January to June this year, he said. This amounted to an average of 84,000 displaced people per month, which was three times more compared to figures for this time last year. It was estimated that more than 90 per cent of those displaced persons was due to armed conflict." (DPI 10 August 2006)

Armed groups cause displacement in the Kivus (2004-2005)

- Thousands of people were displaced following clashes between insurgent group and Congolese army in mid-2004 in South Kivu
- Several hundred thousand people were displaced in North Kivu in 2004 following various attacks

"Beginning in February 2004, dissidents from the former rebel movement Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (RCD-G) sparked clashes in the Kivu provinces of the eastern Congo. These were the result of disagreement within the transitional government over power-sharing in the army and the administration but the conflict was exacerbated by the interference of Rwanda, which sent troops across the border in November 2004, claiming to pursue the Hutu extremist FDLR. The resulting fighting displaced over 100,000 civilians and pushed the transition to the brink of collapse." (ICG 30 March 2005)

"The Bukavu crisis. In late May and June 2004, dissident ex-RCD/Goma officers Jules Mutebusi and Laurent Nkunda mutinied against the Kinshasa-appointed regional military commander in South Kivu resulting in two weeks of fighting in and around the town of Bukavu. Humanitarian assistance for the area was disrupted, local populations displaced, and the border with Rwanda

closed as tensions between the two countries again mounted. Local residents suffered extensive violence, looting, and rape. At least 88 people died, more than 100 were injured, and thousands of residents became either internally displaced or fled to neighboring Burundi and Rwanda.

At one point during the crisis, nearly 1,300 local residents felt sufficiently insecure to take refuge inside the MONUC compound in Bukavu. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 3,500 Tutsi residents of Bukavu fled to Rwanda out of fear of ethnically-based reprisals, since the dissident commanders are both Tutsi. An estimated 20,000 Congolese Tutsis fled to Burundi.

When Bukavu fell to the dissidents, students and others in many major cities throughout the DRC rioted for two days against the lack of international action to end the violence. The riots caused considerable damage to the property of U.N. and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Humanitarian agencies lost an estimated \$1.5 million in supplies, equipment, and vehicles during the violence, and three OCHA offices sustained considerable damage. Humanitarian organizations suspended efforts in the Bukavu area for nearly a month as expatriate personnel were evacuated and local staff remained restricted to Bukavu center.

Once MONUC convinced the dissident leaders to leave Bukavu, the GDRC deployed Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) reinforcements to eastern DRC in July to prevent further destabilization attempts. Since then, clashes between the FARDC and remaining armed opposition forces in the Kalehe area have caused the displacement of an additional estimated 20,000 persons.” (USAID 20 August 2004)

“The humanitarian situation in North Kivu deteriorated in the end of 2004, with more than 100,000 displaced in the Kanyabayonga/Kayna crisis alone. The cause of crises in North Kivu over recent months has been an escalation of conflicts between armed groups, characterized by pillaging, rape and murder of civilians by military forces, leading to mass movement of populations to host communities or to isolated forest areas. Epicentres of displacement in North Kivu include Kanyabayonga/Kayna/Kirumba, and north as far as Lubero, where up to 150,000 were estimated to have fled from their villages during the end of November/start of December due to conflict between ex-ANC and FARDC (Kinshasa) military; Nyabiondo town was systematically looted by ex-ANC following an advance of their position against Mayi-Mayi forces, leading to 100% displacement of the population of the town and surrounding localities (estimated at 26,000 people); and Mangerudjipa, west of Butembo, which was totally deserted following Mayi-Mayi movement into the town, which has been subsequently retaken by FARDC forces.

South Kivu also experienced a number of acute emergencies in recent months, including flooding in Uvira, displacements in Walungu and Minova due to conflict, and an outbreak of cholera throughout the province.” (UNICEF 24 March 2005)

“Most of the people living in the village of Kigalama, in the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) South Kivu Province, have fled after Rwandan rebels launched an attack there last week, the provincial governor said on Monday.

"Thirteen villagers and seven Rwandan rebels were killed," Didace Kaningini Kyoto, the governor, said.

He said almost 5,000 people normally lived in Kigalama, about 130km southwest of the provincial capital, Bukavu. Most of them have now fled.

Kiningini said the attack started late on Thursday when Hutu Rwandan combatants from the Forces de liberation de Rwanda (FDLR) surrounded the village. Then, they killed people who tried to flee with machetes and other crude weapons.” (IRIN 25 July 2005)

« Au Sud Kivu : les combats engagés par les FARDC pour la reprise des zones jadis sous contrôle des FDLR dans les Hauts plateaux de Kalehe ont causé de mouvements de populations. Plusieurs familles fuyant les combats se sont réfugiées dans les localités de Kigoma, Karasi, Bulambika et Numbi. Les FARDC ayant repris le contrôle de certaines localités se sont investis dans le pillage systématique des maisons et des champs. Fuyant ces pillages, les habitants des villages situés sur l'axe Lugushwa-Itutu se sont enfuis vers Itutu-centre et dans la plaine de Ruzizi où 500 IDP ont été recensés. » (OCHA 31 December 2005)

Fighting among government troops, some loyal to dissident colonel cause displacement in South Kivu (January 2007)

- Fighting among government troops, some loyal to dissident colonel, Michel Rukunda, caused displacement west of Uvira, South Kivu in January 2007

“The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) has dispatched aid workers to evaluate the condition and needs of 4,000 displaced people in the eastern plateau town of Minembwe [150 km west of Uvira, South Kivu]. [...]

MONUC said it would also evacuate those who were severely wounded during the fighting between government and dissident troops in this area of South Kivu Province.

Until now, fighting had been too severe to allow such a mission. In addition, humanitarian officials said, the displaced had fled in several different directions. At least 3,000 residents are still hiding in the hills and bush near Minembwe.

[...]

Fighting began on 25 January between government troops of the 122nd and 12th brigades against those loyal to the dissident colonel, Michel Rukunda. He joined Gen Patrick Masunzu, commander of the 122nd brigade, who in 2005 rebelled against the authorities in defence of Congolese of Rwandan origins, known as the Banyamulenge, against harassment and physical abuse.

The army retook Minembwe on Wednesday. Kranzer said the army killed five dissidents, wounded five others and captured two officers.

Meanwhile, negotiations are continuing between the government and another dissident army general, Laurent Nkunda, under the mediation of the Rwandan government, in a bid to end the low-level rebellion he has waged against the Congolese government, mostly in North Kivu, since 2004.

Nkunda said recently he had agreed to participate in talks with the government on condition that troops loyal to him are integrated into the army and the rights of all Kinyarwanda speakers in the country are protected.

The talks between Nkunda's rebel movement, known as the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple, and the Congolese army, have been in progress since early January.

The reintegration into the army of Nkunda's 81st and 83rd brigades has been ongoing.” (IRIN 2 February 2007)

Displacement in North Kivu, due to army operations against militias, and militias attacks (2006-2007)

- FARDC Operation against Ugandan ADF/NALU caused the displacement of 119,000 civilians in December 2005
- Fighting between Congolese armed forces (entre brigades brassées et non brassées), attacks by FDLR and Mai Mai militias, as well as atrocities committed by Congolese armed forces against the population continue to cause displacement in North Kivu (August 2006)
- In August 2006, the Commission on the Movement of Population said that over 100,000 people had been displaced in the last three months
- Congolese troops were reported to systematically looted villages, resulting in the massive displacement of the local population in January 2007, in areas close to Butembo, North Kivu, where they were deployed to repel attacks by Mai Mai combatants
- Clashes between the Congolese army and areas dominated by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) caused the displacement of some 15,000 villagers in North Kivu (February 2007)
- In March 2007, some 10,000 people fled their village in North Kivu following clashes between DRC government forces and rebels from the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR)

“[T]here are currently 541,000 displaced persons in North Kivu. The joint military operation of the FARDC and MONUC against the ADF/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) that began at the end of December 2005 caused the displacement of more than 134,000 persons on the Oicha-Eringeti axis, at Kamango and in the Isale region. These battles also limited access to fields during the planting season, consequently diminishing the availability of foodstuffs.” (OCHA 30 November 2006)

“Despite a heavy deployment of UN peacekeeping contingents in the province, insecurity and violence have taken the whole region ablaze. In just over one month, heavy fighting in the Rutshuru and Beni regions have lead to over 80 000 people being displaced either within North Kivu or across the border as refugees in Uganda.” (MSF 31 January 2006)

“Nord Kivu: Les mésententes entre les brigades brassées et non brassées, l’activisme des milices FDLR et MayiMayi ainsi que les exactions des FARDC ont été les principales causes des déplacements des populations dans le territoire de Masisi. Les affrontements entre la 9ème brigade et la 83ème brigade au début du mois ont provoqué la fuite d’environ 3.000 personnes de Sake vers la ville de Goma et dans des villages environnants. La courte durée du déplacement a permis d’éviter que la crise n’atteigne une dimension sanitaire et alimentaire inquiétante. Une nouvelle vague de 6.000 déplacés s’est installée respectivement à Kamandi et Kikovu, sur la côte ouest du lac Edouard dans le territoire de Lubero, à Kikovu, à Kamandi gîte et Kamadi Lac. Ceux qui sont venus du groupement de Bwito (l’ouest Rutshuru) ont fui les exactions des FDLR, et les autres, en majorité originaires du groupement de Bwito et de Nyakakoma en territoire de Rutshuru échappaient aux affrontements entre les FARDC et les FDLR à Nyamilima (nord Rutshuru). La situation humanitaire de quelque 600 autres ménages en provenance d’Itebero et de la bordure du parc du Sud Kivu et se trouvant à Walikale et Mubi reste toujours difficile à préciser à cause des problèmes d’accès liés à l’insécurité. Ces familles déplacées ont fui les exactions des cadres FDLR et Mayi Mayi.

A l’issue de tous ces mouvements, la province du Nord Kivu a totalisé quelque 29.770 nouveaux déplacés au mois d’Août [2006]. » (OCHA 31 August 2006, « situation humanitaire »)

“ Dans le Grand Nord, 900 nouvelles familles déplacées se trouvaient sur l'axe Beni Eringteti en provenance de l'Ituri (Geti, Tchei, Aveba, Idohu...) fuyant les opérations militaires FARDC/MONUC contre les miliciens Lendu et Ngiti du MRC. Ces nouveaux déplacés ne sont pas encore regroupés dans un site aménagé pour faciliter une assistance humanitaire adéquate. Selon la commission Mouvement de Population, il y aurait encore 686 097 déplacés - dont 105 798 nouveaux déplacés de moins de 3 mois - sur l'étendue de la province.” (OCHA 15 August 2006)

“In February 2006, the members of the FARDC 5th Integrated Brigade were routed by the forces of General Laurent Nkunda at Rutshuru which caused the displacement of roughly 50,000 persons towards the cities of Kanyabonga, Kayna and Kirumba. The robust intervention of MONUC forces prevented an even greater slippage of the security situation.[...]

In mid-April [2006], a joint MONUC/FARDC operation against the FDLR (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda) of Kahumiro and Rive destroyed their camps and routed the FDLR who subsequently avenged themselves against the populations of Kikuku, Nyamilima and Mukoka: more than 10,000 persons headed towards Kiwanja and Ruthuru to take refuge there.” (OCHA 30 November 2006)

“FARDC troops from the 223rd Company of the 2nd Integrated Brigade deployed in Vurondo, Kalemba and Rwahwa – area approximately 20 km north-west of Butembo – to repel attacks by Mayi-Mayi combatants operating in the area, allegedly committed many serious human rights violations resulting in massive displacement of the local population. According to eyewitnesses, soldiers who were aboard a FARDC truck that broke down in Vurondo on 11 January, allegedly systematically looted the villages of Kalemba and Vurondo as well as several houses in the village of Rwahwa.” (MONUC 20 February 2007)

“Dozens of Congolese soldiers and militiamen have been killed and around 15,000 villagers displaced in intermittent fighting this week, United Nations officials said Friday.

‘There have been a lot of incidents this week,’ said Andrew Zadel, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu province.

Katwiguru, a town of about 10,000 some 100 kilometres from Goma, was “completely empty except for 500 people. Most are hiding in the bush or staying with families in other towns,” Zadel said.

The clashes came the week after a new Congolese brigade was deployed in North Kivu and started patrolling an area dominated by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).” (DPA 23 February 2007)

“An estimated 10,000 civilians have fled the village of Burumba in North Kivu province in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) after violence erupted between the national army and a Rwandan Hutu rebel group, officials said on Tuesday.

The displaced people had sought refuge in the neighbouring village of Nyamilima after the clashes, which erupted on Saturday between DRC government forces and rebels of the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR), some of whose members have been in eastern Congo since 1994 and stand accused of masterminding the genocide in their country.

"Our patrols arrived in the area on Saturday and Sunday but found an empty village whose inhabitants had fled towards the village of Nyamilima," Major Ajay Dalal, spokesman for the United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUC), told IRIN by telephone from Goma, the capital of North Kivu.

Relief workers had by late afternoon on Tuesday not been able to approach Nyamilima to help the displaced because of the prevailing insecurity, according to Andrew Zadel, spokesman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in North Kivu.

Some displaced had sought shelter in schools and churches while others had been accommodated by families in Nyamilima, according to MONUC-run Radio Okapi." (IRIN 14 March 2007)

See also :

[DR Congo: Stop army clashes in North Kivu](#), Human Rights Watch (HRW), 14 August 2006 [Internet]

Displacement in South Kivu (2006)

"From 13 to 17 July 2006 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) distributed basic relief items to 2,184 displaced families (11,000 people) who had fled the hostilities in Shabunda.

The families left their villages two months ago owing to the deteriorating security conditions in the Lulingu and Katchiungu areas north of Shabunda, in South Kivu. Since tension between the weapons bearers in the area remains acute, they have so far been unable to return to their homes.

During their flight these families lost most of their belongings. Some have taken shelter with host families in central Shabunda, others have sought refuge in nearby forests." (ICRC 20 July 2006)

"[T]he various military operations of the FARDC with the logistical support of MONUC against the 'Raïa Mutomboki' group, Colonel 106 and other Mayi Mayi in the territories of Bunyakiri, Mwenga, Hombo, Kalonge and Shabunda caused the displacement of approximately 30,000 households. Sexual violence grew on an unprecedented scale in combat areas. The total number of IDPs reached 222,000 persons." (OCHA 30 November 2006)

Fighting by local militias, and between the army/MONUC and militia all caused major displacement in Ituri District (1999-2006)

- According to MONUC, more than 60,000 people have been killed and 500,000 displaced in the northeastern Ituri district between 1999 and 2003
- UN observers and NGOs believe the Lendu militias' objective in displacing the Hema is to change the ethnic composition of Djugu, a territory to the north of Ituri's main town, Bunia (March 2005)
- Fighting between local militias and Congolese Army/MONUC cause displacement in 2005
- Some 200,000 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo remain in camps and temporary housing after fleeing from the violence of rival militias in Ituri
- Anticipating attacks by the Congolese Army and MONUC, local ituri militias attack the population, causing the displacement of thousands (November 2005)

- At the end of 2005, intense fighting between Congolese troops and FRPI and MRC militias in Mahagi territory caused the displacement of populations to Pono, Bogi and to Uganda (December 2005)
- In May 2006, many communities south of Bunia began fleeing to Gety from their villages, after their streets became battlegrounds between government forces and rebel militia
- At least 15,000 new IDPs in August 2006 were registered in Aveba
- WFP said in July 2006 that these are the largest displacements that they had to deal with in Ituri for at least two years
- In Ituri, FARDC operations against Peter Karim's FNI have resulted in an increasing number of allegations of human rights violations committed by FARDC troops; villagers fled to the forest, as their villages were burned down by FARDC soldiers (March 07)

"More than 60,000 people were killed, 50,000 houses burnt and 500,000 people got displaced in DR Congo's Ituri region between 1999 and September 2002, a reliable source at the UN Observer Mission in the country (MONUC) here said.

Violence against civilians and hard-line positions among belligerents in Ituri caused 'the most worrying humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo,' the source disclosed Wednesday. [...]

Initially, the conflict in Ituri (Eastern province where Bunia is capital) was a feud between Hemas and Lendus, before the involvement of armed groups whose leaders are fighting in a power struggle over the region.

The rebel factions of RCD-National led by Roger Lumbala (supported by Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC), the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC led by Thomas Lubanga) and the Mbusa Nyamwisi's RCD-ML, evicted from Bunia and Mambasa, are engaged in the bloody struggle." (PANA, 26 December 2002)

"In early November [2003], Bunia experienced an escalation in violent clashes between several entities: 1) between the two major ethnic Hema militias (the Rwandan-backed Union des Patriotes Congolese (UPC) and the Ugandan-backed Parti pour l'Unite et la Sauvegarde de l'Integrite du Congo (PUSIC)), 2) between the UPC and MONUC, and 3) to some degree between the ethnic Lendu militia Forces de Resistance Patriotique en Ituri (FRPI) and MONUC following the arrest of the FRPI commander, Colonel Ngodjolo, for his alleged involvement in the assassination of an UPC advisor. A series of attacks occurred when approximately twenty UPC soldiers opened fire on several MONUC positions, including MONUC headquarters. These attacks prompted retaliation by MONUC, which initiated the arrest of suspected gunmen in armed assaults, night foot patrols, and a ban on all uniforms and public meetings within a designated perimeter around MONUC headquarters in Bunia. [...] The UPC militia returned its zones of control to the Ituri Interim Administration on November 14, 2003. Before this handover, Bunia was controlled by two administrations: the UPC and the Ituri Interim Administration (IIA). Having one administration governing Ituri and recognized by the national and international community is an important symbol of unity in the region, which will also improve the effectiveness, credibility, and legitimacy of the IIA." (USAID 30 Nov 03)

"[T]he numbers of persons displaced by three weeks of fighting in July between the FAPC (Forces Armées du Peuple Congolais) and FNI (Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes) in Mahagi Territory, Ituri District continued to rise this month. By 28 August, the number of IDPs displaced in this region had risen to 90,000." (UN OCHA 31 Aug 04)

“Since mid-December 2004, violent attacks have caused the displacement of some 100,000 Hema; 80,000 of them are now living in the Kakwa, Gina, Tchomia and Tché displaced camps.” (OCHA 4 May 2005)

“UN observers and NGOs believe the [Lendu] militias' objective is to change the ethnic composition of Djugu, a territory to the north of Ituri's main town, Bunia (IRIN 23 March 2005).

“Thousands of Congolese civilians may have been displaced by recent fighting between UN peacekeeping troops and local militiamen in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN mission's public information officer, Mohammad Abdoul Wahab, said on Tuesday.

[...]

During Monday's fighting, UN Bangladeshi and Indian troops fought more than 1,000 militiamen of the Fronts des nationalistes et intégrationnistes who were armed with mortars, rockets and grenades, Wahab said. The UN used two MI-25 combat helicopters in the operation and reinforced its troops with Pakistanis.” (IRIN 28 June 2005)

“Some 200,000 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo remain in camps and temporary housing after fleeing from the violence of rival militias in the northeastern Ituri region, humanitarian groups said on Friday.” (AFP 5 August 2005)

“- En Ituri, alors que les déplacés de Kagaba ont commencé à retourner dans leurs villages d'origine, d'intenses affrontements entre FARDC et milices FRPI et MRC à Kudikoka en territoire de Mahagi ont fait fuir les populations vers Pono, Bogi et en Ouganda.” (OCHA 31 December 2005)

“Although the security situation in the Ituri-district has improved over the last several months, military operations between the governmental armed forces (FARDC) of and militias in the southern part of the district have resulted in massive displacements of people. Recent clashes and burning of houses by militia troops have pushed people to flee their homes and seek refuge near the village of Aveba, 70 kilometers south of district capital of Bunia. Pakistani MONUC troops have a compound in Aveba. More than 6,000 people have sought refuge near the compound.” (United States Fund for UNICEF 10 February 2006)

“In Ituri, recovery and relapse exist side-by-side. In Djugu Territory, where the conflict in Ituri started in 1999, the situation has greatly improved over the last few years. Many (but not all) of the displaced have gone home, access is much easier and more secure, and a deal has been struck with the last warlord in the area to end fighting with the FARDC and MONUC. However, in Irumu Territory, just to the south of Djugu, war has returned. In a replay from the past, displaced people are flowing into Bunia, agencies are scrambling to help (as attention is pulled away by the elections), and no end is in sight.” (RI 25 July 2006)

“On 14 July, WFP distributed a two-week ration to 30,000 people in Gety from its warehouses in Bunia, Ituri – but more resources are urgently needed. WFP food stocks in Bunia have almost run out after a distribution yesterday to more than 14,300 displaced people in Kotoni, 12 kilometres from Bunia.

“These are the largest displacements that we've had to deal with in this region for at least two years, when the last heavy fighting occurred here,” said Felix Bamezon, WFP Country Director in DRC. “The historic elections are attracting the world's attention but whatever the outcome, the need for food assistance will remain.” (WFP 25 July 2006)

“Consécutivement à l'instabilité sécuritaire qui avait prévalu dans la partie sud de Bunia, en Territoire d'Irumu, des milliers de personnes avaient été contraintes de se déplacer pour trouver refuge soit en brousse, soit dans les régions environnantes ou lointaines. Ainsi, rien que dans la région sud de Bunia, quelque 150.000 personnes, notamment les membres de la collectivité de Walendu Bindi, ont abandonné leurs milieux d'origine : Tsey, Bavi, Songolo, Medu, Marabo, Nyakunde, etc. Ces populations vivent aujourd'hui dans la précarité, les unes dans des familles d'accueil, les autres dans les sites tels que Gety (45.000 personnes) Tchomia (12.000 personnes), Aveba, Kotoni (11.000 personnes), Idohu, Komanda (12.000), Bunia, Dele, etc.” (OCHA 15 August 2006)

“In May [2006], many communities south of Bunia began fleeing to Gety from their villages, after their streets became battlegrounds between government forces and rebel militia. In these villages, over 90% of the houses, churches, schools, and health centres were burnt to the ground. The entire area remained inaccessible until June, when Medair country director Johan ten Hoeve travelled to Gety village.” (MEDAIR 15 August 2006)

In August 2006, « Les populations ont continué de souffrir des exactions des FARDC et des troupes non gouvernementales. En effet, la présence des troupes FARDC est devenue un facteur réel d'insécurité pour la population en territoire d'Irumu : plusieurs cas de viols perpétrés à Lengabo et Medu en territoire d'Irumu leur sont attribués ainsi que plusieurs barrages érigés sur l'axe TseyTchekele pour soustraire de l'argent aux populations. Ont été signalés des cas d'assassinat commis par des éléments FARDC [...]. Par ailleurs, lors de l'une des incursions nocturnes des miliciens FRPI dans le camp des déplacés à Mangiva, une femme a été grièvement blessée par balle. Fuyant les exactions de ces différents groupes armés, les populations se sont déplacées dans plusieurs localités : au moins 15.207 personnes déplacées ont été enregistrées à Aveba (79 km au sud de Bunia). A Nioka, Songolo et Medu, plus de 16.000 retournés ont besoin d'être assistés rapidement en vivres, intrants agricoles, abris, eau potable, médicaments. [...]

Malgré le désarmement de 4.696 excombattants en Ituri, la situation sécuritaire est loin de s'améliorer. La présence de plusieurs groupes armés nationaux et étrangers a été signalée pendant le mois d'Août : les milices LRA et UPDF lourdement armées en territoire du HautUele (frontière avec la Tanzanie), les FRPI dans le territoire d'Irumu.» (OCHA 31 August 2006, situation humanitaire)

“Civilians in Libi, a commercial centre in the Democratic Republic of Congo's embattled northeastern Ituri District, have fled into the bush following fighting between militia and the national army, which is supported by troops from the United Nations peacekeeping mission. “Libi and the surrounding villages are empty of their inhabitants,” said Idrissa Conteh, information officer for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Ituri, on Tuesday.

The exact figure of the displaced civilians has not been established, but Libi normally has a population of some 16,000. The commercial centre is between the Mahagi and Djugu territories and 100km north of Bunia, the main town in Ituri.” (IRIN 30 May 2006)

“In Ituri, FARDC operations against Peter Karim's FNI have resulted in an increasing number of allegations of human rights violations committed by FARDC troops in the Walendu Pitsi collectivity in Djugu territory that covers the whole region between Kpandroma and Laudjo – area 50-100 km north-east of Bunia. FARDC troops engaged in fighting the FNI militia in the area of Jiba – 120 km north-east of Bunia, allegedly went on a rampage in Jiba and surrounding villages, looting and harassing the local population after dislodging the FNI on 2 February. A total of 12 villages were reportedly burnt. As a result, most of the villagers fled to the nearby forest.

On 6 February [2007], FARDC troops from Blukwa allegedly burnt the village of Linga, killing four civilians and causing the displacement of the population in the nearby forest. Still on 6 February 2007, a group of FARDC soldiers shot dead a civilian in Jiba as he was returning from the fields. The day before the same FARDC troops had looted the health centre at the Jiba Mission.

On 7 February, FARDC troops from Fataki allegedly burnt down the localities of Sanduku, Riza and Kpakala. The population from these villages was allegedly massively displaced toward Libi, where Peter Karim was reportedly operating. On 8 February, FARDC troops from Fataki allegedly attacked the locality of Dyameu reportedly killing a woman in her house during the fire they provoked. Also on 8 February, the FARDC from Kpandroma looted the villages of Mola and Buba although no destruction was reported there.” (MONUC 19 March 2007)

For an overview of the armed groups in Ituri in 2002-2003, and a chronology of major political events human rights violations in 1998-2003, please see UN SC DR Congo: Letter dated 16 July 2004 from UN SG addressed to the President of the Security Council, 16 July 2004, annex I and II [Reference below]

See also:

Reuters Foundation, 7 Jul 2006, U.N.-backed operations displace thousands in Congo [[Internet](#)]

Displacement caused by Hutu Rwandan militias (2005-2007)

- Attacks against civilians in North and South Kivu in 2005
- Hutu Rwandan militia FDLR signed an agreement at the end of March 2005, according to which they would demobilise and return to Rwanda
- High level of armed groups activities in South Kivu, particularly the Rwandan Hutu militias FDLR and Rastas in 2006 and 2007

“Deux fosses communes ont été signalées à la Mission de l’ONU en République démocratique du Congo (MONUC). Elles renfermeraient les cadavres de 39 civils tués samedi dans le village de Ntulumamba, dans la commune de Kalonge, à 75 km au nord de Bukavu, a déclaré un porte-parole de l’ONU. [...]

Des survivants ont affirmé à la MONUC que les attaques avaient été menées par les rebelles hutus rwandais des Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), un avis partagé par Didas Kaningini, gouverneur de la province de Sud Kivu.

Les rescapés affirment que les rebelles ont agi durant la nuit et qu’ils ont enfermé les villageois dans leurs cases, avant d’incendier ces dernières. Ceux qui ont résisté ont été mutilés à coups de machettes.

« Ils nous ont demandé des dollars et comme nous n’en avons pas, ils nous ont ligotés avant de nous asperger d’essence et de mettre le feu », a expliqué un survivant à Radio Okapi, la station radio de l’ONU.

Edmong Ngarambe, un officier supérieur des FDLR, nie toute responsabilité au nom de son groupe. Il accuse les Rastas, un groupe de dissidents des FDLR qui, selon lui, opère en collaboration avec des milices congolaises. Un autre survivant a confirmé la version de Ngarambe à la radio congolaise.” (IRIN 14 July 2005)

“The Security Council this evening condemned the massacre of some 50 people, most of them women and children, which occurred on 9 July in Ntulu-Mamba, Democratic Republic of the Congo.” (UNSC 13 July 2004)

“Trois soldats congolais ont été tués et quatre autres blessés lors de combats qui ont opposé dimanche dernier les forces gouvernementales à des miliciens hutus rwandais dans la province orientale de Nord-Kivu en République démocratique du Congo (RDC). Les combats ont entraîné le déplacement de centaines de civils. [...]

Des centaines de civils déplacés ont fui Miriki pour Kanyabayonga, selon le chef de village, Joël Luhonu.

‘Pour le moment, ils demeurent auprès de leurs proches là-bas’, a-t-il dit. Selon Amisi, le calme était revenu à Miriki, et a demandé aux civils déplacés de regagner leur village.

Les rebelles hutus du Rwanda basés dans l’est de la RDC ont été accusés de nombreuses attaques menées contre des civils, particulièrement sur le territoire de Walungu et de la Plaine de la Ruzizi au Sud-Kivu.

Murwanashyaka a signé un accord le 31 mars au nom des FDLR, annonçant que les miliciens rebelles sous son autorité déposeront les armes et retourneront au Rwanda. » (IRIN 8 June 2005, North Kivu)

“An armed group of mostly Rwandan Hutus in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is accused of killing 18 civilians, mutilating 11 others and taking around 50 hostages on Monday.

The group, known as the Rastas, has been committing numerous human-rights abuses in the region, according to sources in the government and the UN Mission in the DRC, known as MONUC.” (IRIN 26 May 2005)

« Après une période d'accalmie pendant la période électorale, les problèmes récurrents d'insécurité ont repris et sont rapportés presque chaque jour, non seulement à Bukavu où on note la recrudescence des vols à main armée, mais aussi à l'intérieur de la province marqué par les activités des groupes armés et particulièrement des FDLR et des Rastas. Sept des huit territoires de la province connaissent la présence des groupes armés, mais quatre régions sont particulièrement affectées par des attaques à répétition, accompagnées généralement de tueries, pillages, viols, enlèvements de personnes, et parfois, d'incendie des villages. Il s'agit des territoires de Walungu (toute la zone ouest située à la limite avec la forêt), Kabare (particulièrement les groupements de Luhago, Ihembe, et IregaBarhonyi), Kalehe (Les zones de Kalonge et Bunyakiri), Mwenga (les environs de Mwenga centre, la zone de BurhinyiKilungutwe), et Shabunda (la zone NordOuest). » (OCHA 31 August 2006, situation humanitaire)

« A woman was allegedly killed and seven other civilians abducted during an attack by a group of Rwandan Hutu on Mumburi and Kashodu villages – 37 km north of Bukavu - in the night of 7-8 June 2006. According to local sources, the villages were also looted. The FARDC were in the vicinity, but failed to protect civilians against the attack. The attack prompted the displacement of the majority of the population toward Kavumu – 35 km north of Bukavu. Another attack on Kaniola-Cihola village – 62 km south-east of Bukavu – led to one killing and two abductions in the night of 7 June 2006.” (MONUC 14 July 2006)

“Les attaques répétées de rebelles rwandais sur des villages de la province du Sud Kivu, en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) ont contraint des milliers de villageois à fuir leurs domiciles pour la ville de Walungu, a annoncé un représentant des Nations Unies.

« A Walungu centre, 1 590 familles de déplacés, représentant 7 450 personnes, sont installées dans la ville et d'autres continuent d'arriver », a affirmé jeudi Modibo Traoré, représentant du Bureau des Nations pour la coordination des affaires humanitaires (OCHA) à Bukavu, la capitale de la province.

Depuis trois semaines, leurs villages, en territoire Walungu, font l'objet d'attaques incessantes perpétrées par des rebelles des Forces démocratiques pour libération du Rwanda (FDLR) et des Rasta, un autre groupe rebelle rwandais." (IRIN 13 April 2007)

Pygmy populations in North Kivu flee forests (2006)

- In late 2005 and early 2006, government forces launched a series of offensives against rebel militia positions near the border with Uganda.
- One of these operations drove the rebels into the rain forest, where they in turn attacked the pygmies, the DRC's original inhabitants, and caused displacement

"The preferred way of life for the Pygmy population around North Kivu is to remain in forested areas. But now they are being forced to flee their villages by a recent upsurge in fighting in the area.

According to humanitarian relief workers, this is an indication that the situation has become much worse in recent weeks. "Pygmies very seldom leave their forests," said Gregory Chevrel of Solidarité, a UNICEF-supported non-governmental organization which assists people who have had to abandon their homes. "They keep to themselves, hunting and remaining very isolated from others.

"But in the past few weeks there are several factions of armed rebels operating all around their villages, so they've fled now for help. If they go home they could be tortured, or killed."

At sites for displaced people, huts with plastic sheeting provide shelter and are equipped with mosquito nets to help prevent malaria. Brand new latrines and water containers have been supplied by UNICEF, Oxfam and Solidarité.

Most of the people who have fled here are staying simply out of fear. "We cannot go home, there's nothing there," said Kibanjanga Malaibi, one of the displaced and a member of the Pygmy population. "We must just stay here near the others." (UNICEF 3 February 2006)

"In late 2005 and early 2006, government forces launched a series of offensives against rebel militia positions near the border with Uganda. One of these drove the rebels into the rain forest, where they in turn attacked the pygmies, the DRC's original inhabitants. The pygmies, armed only with bows and poisiontipped arrows, were powerless to resist. For the first time in their history they were forced out of the forest, carrying their bows and arrows, their musical instruments, a few pots and pans – and not much else. Thirty-three pygmy families – about 200 people – have found refuge in an encampment near Beni. Their head man, Batsinga Sepi, says: "We did not just hear about the war, we lived through it. This has been a serious war and many of our relatives have been killed in the fighting. Our message to the world is that we cannot remain living like this." The UN force commander in the area describes their conditions as "miserable and pathetic." (UNICEF 24 July 2006)

People flee Mai Mai attacks in Katanga Province (2003-2006)

- The Mai-Mai are the greatest security threat in Katanga and the main cause of the displacement in the province
- In 2006, conflict between government forces and Mai Mai militias caused the displacement of some 130,000 people, and the destruction of hundreds of villages

“Over the past few years, the people of central Katanga have been forced to flee their homes over and over again; each time losing everything they own to escape violence. Many eventually arrive to impromptu camps or settle in villages where little assistance awaits them; others are feared trapped in the bush. Without help and with little hope to return home, their situation remains unacceptable. Neither the Government nor the international community have shown an adequate commitment to fulfill their responsibilities to protect and assist these civilians in need.

Violence has held sway across much of central Katanga since at least 1998, when many people found themselves trapped along the front-line between the Rwandan-supported RCD-Goma on the one hand, and the Congolese Government army and Mai-Mai militia on the other.

By the early 2000s, as peace agreements were signed, power-sharing arrangements made and official support for the Mai-Mai dwindled, a different form of conflict began to emerge. Having long been the informal suppliers of foodstuffs for both FARDC troops and Mai-Mai militia, civilian populations are increasingly abused, attacked and manipulated. Meanwhile, military operations against insurgent parties are resulting in massive population displacement further increasing vulnerability to disease, malnutrition and mental trauma in areas where adequate emergency relief is almost entirely absent.” (MSF January 2006)

“The Mai-Mai are the greatest security threat in Katanga and the main cause of the displacement of 286,000 people in the province. More than nineteen warlords in the northern and central territories command bands – estimated by the UN to total 5,000 to 8,000 – who regularly abuse the local population. This violence is closely linked to figures in the transitional government. Officials such as General John Numbi, head of the air force, and former Katangan Governor Aimé Ngoy Mukena, who helped create and supply these militias, now seem unable or unwilling to dismantle them. The Mai-Mai commanders in turn do not want to relinquish control of local resources and integrate into the national army.” (ICG 9 January 2006, p2)

« Dans le combat entre les Maï Maï et les troupes des FARDC au cours de l’opération Katanga, les deux côtés ont délibérément tué et blessé des civils et détruit ou pillé leurs biens. Les atteintes aux droits humains commis ont abouti au déplacement de plus de 150 000 personnes et ont fait d’innombrables victimes. Les souffrances et les abus ont été si largement répandus que les habitants qualifient cette région du Katanga central de « triangle de la mort. »” (HRW 21 July 2006, FARDC)

« Au début 2004, les combattants Maï Maï de Gédéon ont commencé à forcer les habitants des zones qu’ils contrôlaient à abandonner leurs villages et à évacuer dans la forêt, prétendant que c’était nécessaire pour leur propre protection. Les habitants ont déclaré aux chercheurs de Human Rights Watch qu’ils n’avaient guère le choix. Comme l’a dit quelqu’un: « C’était obligatoire. On ne pouvait pas rester en arrière ». Un autre a expliqué: « Ils nous ont obligés à partir. Si nous étions restés, ils nous auraient accusés d’être des traîtres »

Selon des sources locales et des agences humanitaires, des villages ont été incendiés sur tout le Katanga central. Sur tout un tronçon de route au nord de Dubie, par exemple, tous les villages ont été brûlés, notamment Kitembwe, Makamba, Lupwazi, Kapembe, Kato, Manwele, Misiko, Mutundele, Kitonawa et Kampangwe.” (HRW 21 July 2006, Mai Mai)

“The most significant humanitarian event of 2006 has undoubtedly been the unfolding crisis in **Katanga**. Over the last year, a conflict, between government forces and local militias (Mai-Mai) that had once been loyal to the government, quietly grew in scale and consequence, hidden away in the remote regions of central Katanga. By the time it had come to the notice of the international community and been fully assessed some 130,000 had been displaced and further 300,000

affected. The conflict has been resolved but not before hundreds of villages have been destroyed and vast areas of crop looted or burned⁸. People need assistance to start afresh but getting it to them is a logistic problem and if the planting season is missed, many may still face starvation. Operations are underway to try and beat this clock." (European Commission-ECHO 14 February 2007)

"FARDC military operations against the Mayi Mayi launched near the end of 2005 forced the temporary displacement of roughly 200,000 towards the centre of Katanga. The current number of displaced people is roughly 102,000." (OCHA 30 November 2006)

500,000 new IDPs following military actions against militia groups (2006)

Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, during briefing the Security Council on his recent trip to assess the humanitarian situation in the DRC: "Expressing concern about the impact on civilians of operations by Government armed forces, he said more than 500,000 people had been newly displaced in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, often following military actions against militia groups. Too often, civilians fled because of the fighting and were then victimized by the armed forces, who accused them of supporting the militias. The only long-term solution was the formation of one competent national army with the exclusive right to bear arms." (UNSC 15 September 2006)

Other causes of displacement

Thousands of people displaced due to floods in Maniema and in Katanga (2007)

"At least 20,000 people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are still without shelter after floods caused by heavy rains destroyed their homes in November 2006, humanitarian agencies have said.

"The flood waters have swept away everything - homes, livestock, plants - everything is under water," Guy-Marin Kamandji, the information officer for Congo Caritas Development, a member of Caritas International, said on Tuesday after a tour of Katanga Province where several towns and villages remain submerged.

[...]

[M]ost of the people affected by the floods survived by fishing in the Congo River, which crosses the town in two areas, and lived in mud and grass-thatched shelters. [...]

[M]any of the affected people risked contracting waterborne and diarrhoeal diseases because of the flooding. He added that the displaced lacked safe drinking water and needed non-food items such as mosquito nets, tents and blankets.

[...]

According to the Maniema governor, Koloso Sumahili, at least 2,600 people are still without shelter in Kindu. Crisis committees comprising local authorities and humanitarian workers have been established to evaluate people's needs.

A similar situation prevails in towns and villages in Isangi, Basoko, Banalia and Kisangani in the northeastern Orientale Province, which has also experienced heavy rainfall in recent months. [...]

In the province of Katanga, at least 11,586 people are living without shelter in difficult conditions, according to Congo Caritas Development.

River levels in these areas started to rise in October 2006, and heavy rains contributed to the widespread flooding." (IRIN 25 January 2007)

Fire causes internal displacement (2006)

"At least 10,000 people have been left homeless after fires destroyed eight villages in the Congo's southeastern Maniema province, NGOs have said.

The fires, mainly in and around the gold-mining Salamabila area, 365 km from the main town of Kindu, destroyed at least 1,500 homes in eight villages, the NGO DanChurchAid said. Some of the fires were suspected to have been caused by arsonists whose identity remains unknown while others were described as bush fires.

Salamabila is one of six collectivities making up the Kabambare Territory. It is home to 53,964 inhabitants, with 10,984 living in the Namoya agglomeration. Those affected by the fires have been living in churches and schools or with neighbours while others have remained in their burnt houses.

According to the NGO, there is also the risk of widespread malnutrition among children in the affected households.

There has been a rise in the number of fires in Maniema since June, with some 380 houses burnt between 4 and 10 September. At least 2,600 people were left without shelter in the latest incident, according to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

On 15 June, 1,025 houses were burnt, making 5,060 people homeless. Earlier the Kimbanseke market was set on fire by unknown persons.

Most of the homes are constructed with straw, making them highly flammable.

Aid for the homeless has slowly trickled in, with 767 non-food kits comprising blankets, medication, condoms and second-hand clothes being provided by the Catholic NGO, CARITAS; CONADER, the national agency overseeing the disarmament and reintegration programme; and the United Nations Population Fund.

However, the assistance remains insufficient given the numbers affected. It is hard to provide aid to the people as the area is densely forested, DanChurchAid said.

The non-food aid is also expensive as it has to be transported by bicycle for weeks, the NGO said." (IRIN 26 September 2006)

See also:

DanChurchAid (DCA), 15 Oct 2006
DRC: Assistance given to 1.500 homeless families [[Internet](#)]

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

Global Figures

Over a million IDPs in March 2007

- In 2007, there were over a million IDPs in eastern DRC, over half of them in North Kivu

ITURI DISTRICT (as of 03/07)	IDPs
Mahagi	10 520
Djugu	46 331
Mambasa	6 954
Irumu	115 555
Aru	28 353
TOTAL ITURI	207 713

NORD KIVU (as of 01/07)	IDPs
Beni	112 334
Walikale	28 965
Lubero	224 608
Nyiragongo	14 367
Masisi	109 572
Rutshuru	61 821
TOTAL NORD KIVU	551 667

SUD KIVU (as of 01/07)	IDPs
Shabunda	11 035
Mwenga	53 780
Walungu	24 415
Kabare	47 495
Kalehe	26 890
TOTAL SUD KIVU	163 615

KATANGA (as of 10/06)	IDPs
Mitwaba	2 885
Kalemie	5 045
Manono	19 480
Malemba Nkulu	29 166
Bukama	0
Pweto	26 575
Moba	1 100
TOTAL KATANGA	84 251

OVERALL TOTAL 1 007 246

Source: OCHA, map, April 2007

Total estimate of IDPs drop to 1.1 million in November, compared to 1.48 million in August (end 2006)

“Levels of new displacements decreased across the country in August [2006], mainly due to the reduction in military activity against armed groups in the east. It is hoped that this trend will continue into September. Updated IDP figures submitted by the humanitarian Inter Agency Standing Committees across DRC now stand at **1.48 million** – as against 1.6 million in April

2006. Returnees in Katanga (see below) and in the Territory of Djugu, in Ituri, make up the bulk of this decrease.

The main IDP caseload remains concentrated in Ituri, North and South Kivu. Over 35% of total the IDPs are located in the Territories of Lubero and Beni in central and northern North Kivu." (OCHA 31 August 2006)

According to the latest estimates, **1.1 million** people are still displaced, mainly in the east of the country. This figure represents a reduction of 33% when compared with 2005. Half of the remaining displaced persons are located in North Kivu.

New Displacements

At the beginning of 2006, armed confrontations as well as other types of violence resulted in the displacement of some 500,000 persons, mostly women and children. This significant increase of population movement in the humanitarian triangle (Ituri, Katanga and the Kivus) was due to MONUC-backed FARDC operations against militias, interethnic conflict and the combined exactions of armed groups and government forces. Resident populations were also affected, given that 90% of IDPs live with host families forced to share everything despite their already precarious situation.

Concerning the return of IDPs, the surrender of certain warlords – notably in Katanga – and the adherence of their troops to the processes of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and “brassage” have offered a unique opportunity to encourage displaced populations to return to their places of origin. The disarmament and demobilisation of Mayi Mayi troops has thus led

to the return of roughly 100,000 people who had been displaced within Katanga. It is hoped that current negotiations between the government and other militia leaders, notably in Ituri, and the compliance of their troops with the brassage process will also contribute to the reestablishment of security and encourage IDPs to return. Between April and September 2006 some 490,000 people left areas of displacement and went back to their villages of origin in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and

Katanga. These returnees nonetheless suffer from a lack of adequate infrastructure and means of agricultural production. They have also been forced to endure the presence of armed groups (militias and FARDC) that has limited their movement and prevented them from returning to normal life." (OCHA 30 November 2006, pp10-11)

Provinces	IDP population as of October 2006*	IDP return in 2006*	Expected IDP return in 2007*
North Kivu	540,841	490,000	950,000
Province Orientale (mainly Ituri)	210,434		
South Kivu	222,075		
Katanga	101,947		
Total	1,075,297		

* Estimate

Source: UNHCR, 13 February 2007

1.6 million IDPs as of the end of 2005

According to OCHA, an estimated 1,664,000 people were displaced as of the end of 2005, while 1,680,100 were reported to have returned home from the end of 2004 to the end of 2005. The regions most affected by internal displacement are the provinces of North and South Kivu, Katanga, and Ituri.

DRC total		
Provinces/ Districts	IDPs	Retournés - 12 mois
Ituri	280,000	213,500
Orientale	30,000	1,200
Nord Kivu	502,500	300,000
Sud Kivu	351,500	456,500
Maniema	7,600	252,000
Tanganyika	48,500	369,000
Katanga	263,900	77,900
2 Kasais	40,000	0
Equateur	100,000	10,000
Kinshasa	40,000	0
Total	1,664,000	1,680,100

(OCHA October 2005)

2.3 million IDPs as of end 2004

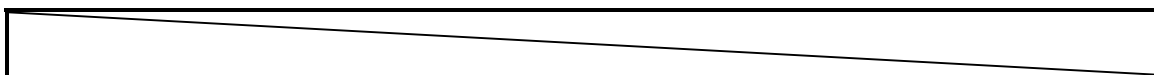


Table of IDPs and Returnees in DRC

As of August 2004*

Provinces

Displaced

Returns

Date of Information

Katanga

365,000

190,000

August 2004

Province Orientale

455,000
260,000
August 2004
Maniema
165,000

August 2004
North-Kivu
785,000

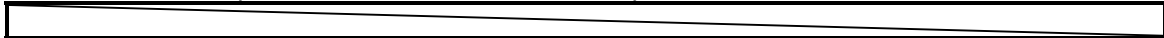
August 2004
South-Kivu
254,000
275,000
August 2004
Equateur
165,000

August 2004
Kinshasa
Bandundu
Bas Congo
45,000 (includes +/- 3,000 expellees from Angola)

August 2003 for the IDPs and June 2004 for the expellees.
East and West Kasai
95,000 (includes +/- 40,000 expellees from Angola)

August 2004
TOTAL
2,329,000
725,000
August 2004

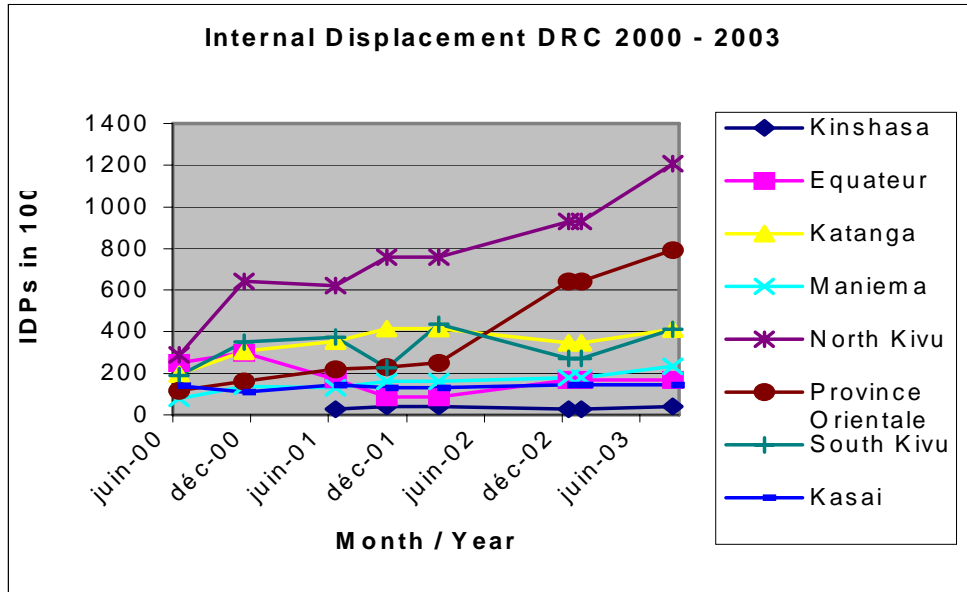
*These figures are estimations representing a consolidation of data furnished by provincial commissions on Population Movements as well as reports of various evaluation missions.



(UN OCHA 31 August 2004)

From 2 to 3.4 million people displaced in DRC (2000-2003)

- Approximately 3.4 million people displaced in DRC by end 2003
- More than 2.7 million IDPs by end of 2002
- Over 2 million IDPs in DRC by end of September 2001



(UN OCHA 18 Nov 03, p18)

End 2003

"A fifth year of uninterrupted war in large parts of the DRC further eroded coping mechanisms, and pushed entire populations to near exhaustion. This was reflected in the startling increase in IDP numbers from 2.7 million in January 2003 to 3.4 million in August 2003." (UN OCHA 18 Nov 03)

Major increase mainly due to the crisis in Ituri:

"Some 8,000 civilians lost their lives as a result of deliberate killing or indiscriminate use of force from January 2002 to December 2003. More than 600,000 have been forced to flee from their homes." (UN SC 16 July 2004, para.40)

End 2002

There were more than 2.7 million IDPs at the end of 2002, according to OCHA (UN, 16 January 2003).

"The recent aggravation of violence in rebel-held areas (mainly in Ituri region, South Kivu, Kindu, Shabunda and northern Katanga) increased the number of displaced persons by at least 500,000 since the beginning of the year, putting considerable pressure on the humanitarian community's response capacity. The continuous eruption of cholera epidemics in many provinces (Kasais, Katanga, Orientale and Kivus) is an indication of the exhaustion of the population's survival strategies after years of protracted crisis and the need to reinforce the existing emergency response and coordination mechanisms." (OCHA 19 Nov 2002, p27)

"The Humanitarian Coordinator described the situation in the border region of Uvira, the Hauts Plateaux and Fizi- Baraka as a "creeping disaster", with over 100 villages deserted and 20,000 newly displaced families, bringing the total number of internally displaced people in South Kivu to an estimated 400,000." (UN SC 18 Oct 02, para.60)

End 2000-2001

According to UN estimates, there were about 2,045,000 IDPs in DRC as of the end of September 2001 (UN OCHA 30 September 2001).

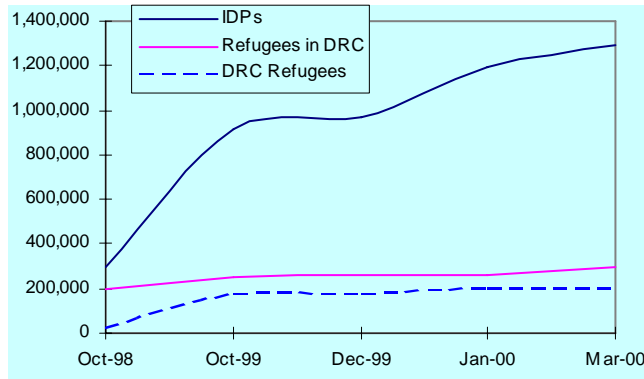
According to the United Nations, "The vast majority of the 2 million people displaced by war are children and women." (United Nations 7 June 2001)

There were about 2,002,500 IDPs in DRC by the end of December 2000. (OCHA 31 December 2000, p.3) This represents a significant increase during the last of part 2000, since there were 1,4 million IDPs by June 2000 and 1,8 million by September 2000. (UN November 2000, p.15). This is despite the fact that an estimated 810,000 former IDPs have returned to their habitual place of residence. (OCHA 31 December 2000, p.6).

From 500,000 to close to a million IDPs (1998-1999)

- 960,000 IDPs in DRC by end of 1999
- 500,000 IDPs in DRC by end of 1998

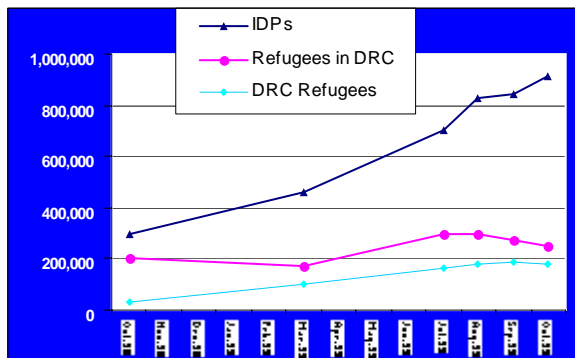
Increase of the number of IDPs 1998-2000



(OCHA 17 April 2000)

End 1999

"[By January 2000 there were] some 960,000 internally displaced persons in eight of the 11 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and over 300,000 refugees from six of its nine neighbouring countries.." (UN SC 17 January 2000, para. 24)



(OCHA 15 November 1999)

End 1998

"The number of IDPs is believed to have almost tripled since the outbreak of hostilities in the DRC and is estimated to have reached the level of 500,000 persons scattered in North and South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema, Kasai, Equateur and Katanga provinces. In rebel-held areas, the current conflict is marked by patterns some of which are similar to those that affected humanitarian action during the 1996-1997 war in former Zaire, i.e. all communities of Northern and Southern Kivu are considered - and consider themselves as - collective targets for military attacks. Massive, durable displacements are expected to have been amplified during the last three months. The situation is usually different in other parts of the DRC, where the populations are only afraid of looting and side-effects of military confrontations. Thus, they only leave their houses for as long as fighting, looting or take-over of a town will last at local level." (UN December 1998, p.14)

It should be noted that USCR apparently subscribed to a more careful estimate of IDPs by the end of 1998:

"The outbreak of renewed war in Congo-Kinshasa in August uprooted hundreds of thousands of people, some for a few days, others for the rest of the year. At year's end, displacement persisted primarily in the eastern one-third of the country.

Although an estimated 300,000 persons were internally displaced at year's end and some 130,000 were refugees in neighboring countries, some aid workers estimated that 80 percent of the population in some eastern regions (a million or more people) might have fled their homes temporarily for several days at different times during the year. Such estimates were impossible to confirm because much of the country remained inaccessible to local and international aid workers." (USCR 1999, p.59)

100,000 believed to be displaced by the end of 1997

- After the main civil war ended (May 1997), eruptions of violence in eastern Congo/Zaire pushed additional tens of thousands from their homes
- About 40,000 Congolese fled early in 1997 hundreds of kilometres westward with Rwandan refugees to the city of Kisangani

"The number of residents who became internally displaced during the civil war remains uncertain. More than 100,000 were already uprooted in eastern Zaire prior to the civil war due to ethnic conflicts. Poor roads, impenetrable forests, and pockets of insecurity impeded full assessments of humanitarian needs in the country's vast isolated areas throughout 1997.

A UN funding appeal in March estimated that nearly a half-million Congolese/Zairians were displaced. U.S. aid officials estimated in August that some 230,000 probably were uprooted within the country. A UN human rights official reported in mid-year that 250,000 to 400,000 were displaced. An international NGO put the number at 190,000. All sources agreed that the most pervasive displacement was in the chronically unstable Masisi zone of eastern Congo/Zaire, near the town of Goma.

USCR site visits to eastern Congo/Zaire during 1997 concluded that up to half the population in some areas of the east were at least temporarily displaced during the war. Many were able to return home after several weeks, but thousands of families endured long-term displacement caused by lingering insecurity in their home areas. USCR estimated that up to 150,000 people

remained internally displaced at mid-year, but a majority were "invisible to outsiders because they are dispersed," USCR's report noted.

About 40,000 Congolese fled hundreds of kilometers westward with Rwandan refugees to the city of Kisangani early in the year. More than 70,000 fled to Tanzania. Smaller numbers entered Uganda, Burundi, Sudan, Zambia, and other countries as refugees. As many as 10,000 former Zairian soldiers and their families reportedly fled to Central African Republic.

[...]

In the second half of 1997, after the main civil war ended, eruptions of violence in eastern Congo/Zaire pushed additional tens of thousands from their homes. Some 8,000 people converged on the town of Goma in late April. At least 15,000 fled to Rwanda. Entire areas of Masisi zone, in the east, lay deserted, with 15,000 homes burned and 1,000 people dead." (USCR 1998, pp. 60-61)

400,000 believed to be displaced by the end of 1996

"Uprooted Zairians were the virtually forgotten victims of their country's widening civil war [after October 1996].

An estimated three million Zairians lived in the conflict zones. An estimated 400,000 became internally displaced, and approximately 50,000 others became new refugees in Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda. An additional 1,000 or more Zairian or Rwandan Tutsi fled to neighboring Congo to escape anti-Tutsi violence in the Zairian capital, Kinshasa.

In addition to the new Zairian refugees created during 1996, tens of thousands of Zairians remained refugees from previous years." (USCR 1997, p.107)

Disaggregated figures

Central Katanga: some 92,000 people displaced by conflict in a year (2006)

"Dubie is a community with a population of 10,000 in the Pweto district and Kilwa health zone of Haut Katanga. The main occupation of the population is agriculture plus petty trading, although due to limited infrastructure, insecurity and long distances, this occurs on a small-scale.

Between July and October 2005, as a result of conflict, banditry and violence against civilians in nearby villages, approximately 1,000 displaced people settled in Dubie. They achieved a certain level of integration, providing daily labour for the host population and acquiring small plots of land for their own agricultural activities. However, in the following three months (starting in mid-November), due to an intensified campaign by the Congolese military against the Mai Mai and consequent looting and pillaging by both sides, the numbers of displaced rose dramatically. Dubie became host to approximately 3 200 internally displaced people (IDPs) in November, increasing to 14 000 by the end of December and 16 400 by mid January.

Overall in central Katanga, in less than a year, approximately 92,000 persons have been displaced." (MSF 28 March 2006)

In Katanga, UNHCR delivers digital cards to IDPs to systematize assistance (May 2006)

- In collaboration with MSF, UNHCR registered IDPs in central Katanga and gave them digital I.D. cards in order to systematise the distribution of assistance

“Selon le représentant des Nations unies, les combats se déroulent dans deux grandes régions ; à l'est du centre du Katanga, jusque dans la ville de Petwo, près de la frontière zambienne, et dans la partie occidentale, autour du lac Upemba. Dans la ville de Mitwaba, située entre les deux zones de combat, au moins 20 000 déplacés sont arrivés ces six derniers mois, selon les estimations du Haut Commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés (HCR).

« Ils sont démunis, ils ont des enfants nus et des femmes qui ont pour tout vêtement des cache-sexes », a expliqué pour sa part Karl Nawej, assistant chef de mission de MSF/Belgique.

« Il y en a qui continuent à sortir de la brousse à partir du nord de Mitwaba », a-t-il ajouté, et à Sampwe, une localité située à 20 km au sud de Mitwaba, MSF a découvert une dizaine de milliers d'autres déplacés qui n'ont reçu aucune aide depuis des mois.

Rentré d'une tournée dans la région de Mitwaba, Jens Hesemann, chargé des relations extérieures du HCR a déclaré : « Chaque jour, 50 à 100 nouveaux déplacés sortent de la brousse, presque nus, souffrant de maladie de peau, très mal nourris et nécessitant une aide d'urgence ».

En collaboration avec MSF, le HCR a lancé le 25 avril un programme d'enregistrement permettant de fournir aux déplacés des cartes d'enregistrement numérique pour systématiser les distributions de vivres de toutes les organisations humanitaires.

Pour la première fois en RDC, le HCR applique pour cette opération de protection une technique consistant à délivrer aux déplacés des cartes d'identité numériques. Cette procédure d'enregistrement permettra de fournir une assistance adéquate et en temps opportun, grâce à une bonne évaluation de l'ampleur des besoins et des populations concernées, a expliqué le HCR.” (IRIN 4 May 2006)

Distribution of IDPs by province (mid-99-mid 2006)

- Decrease of IDP figures in all Provinces (mid-2004)
- Great increase of IDPs in Orientale due to crisis in Ituri (mid-2003)
- The majority of displaced persons were found in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, Katanga, Orientale and South Kivu, (Aug 2002)The majority of displaced persons were found in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, Katanga, Orientale and South Kivu, (Aug 2002)
- about 1 million IDPs in the Kivus as of Aug 2002
- The number of IDPs in Equateur decreased greatly from Dec 2000 to Sept 2001
- The number of IDPs in Orientale increased greatly from Dec 2000 to Sept 2001 and then increased again in Feb 2002
- The number of IDPs in Katanga increased by 100,000 IDPs between Dec 00 and Sept 01

November 2003

LOCATION	ORIGIN	Nov 03	Aug 04	July 06
Equateur	DRC	168,000	165,000	100,000

Katanga	DRC	412,000	365,000	175,815
Maniema	DRC	234,000	165,000	5,650
North Kivu	DRC	1,209,000	785,000	686,097
Orientale	DRC	791,000	455,000	Ituri: 185,500; Orientale: 85,330
South Kivu	DRC	413,700	254,000	197,135
East and West Kasai	DRC	145,000	95,000 (includes +/- 40,000 expellees from Angola)	40,000
Kinshasa	DRC	41,000	45,000 (includes +/- 3,000 expellees from Angola)	1,800
TOTAL IDPs		3.4 million	2,329,000	11,477,327

(based on numbers provided by UN OCHA, 18 Nov 03, p19; UN OCHA 31 August 2004; OCHA July 2006)

Area	July 1999	June 2000	December 2000	September 2001	February 2002	August 2002
Equateur	100,000	250,000	300,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
Orientale	70,000	215,000	160,000	230,000	250,000	250,000
North Kivu	160,000	287,000	640,000	760,000	760,000	760,000

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S o u t h K i v u	195 ,00 0	2 2 0 , 0 0 0	3 5 0 , 5 0 0	22 5,0 00	435,1 11	435,00 0
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Source: UN OCHA 15 July 1999, 11 July 2000, 31 December 2000 (p.11), 30 September 2001; 28 February 2002, p.13; August 2002; 31 July 2002

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Short displacements and pre-emptive displacements in Ituri and North Kivu (January 2007)

“In Ituri there is still around 220,000 IDP’s while in North Kivu the number of IDP’s is estimated at 550,000, but I have to stress that these figures are just estimates, and it is important to understand why.

Most of the IDP’s in this country are not living in formal camps, but are living with host families, and are dispersed over the territory, so its very difficult to count them.

The nature of the displacement movements that we see in North Kivu and Ituri is often over short distances from 5 to 80 kilometers, and there’s a mix of pre-emptive displacements, due to fear or threat of violence, and flight from actual combat.

Sometimes people are very quick to move here. Many times people are displaced on numerous occasions, and displacements are often very short term. For all these reasons these figures are very much just estimates.” (MONUC 15 January 2007)

Double simultaneous movements of displacement and return complicates humanitarian assistance (June 2006)

« Depuis plusieurs mois déjà, la communauté humanitaire est le témoin d’un mouvement double et contraire des populations, entre ceux qui tentent d’échapper à des combats ou à des exactions et ceux qui cherchent à regagner leurs villages. Parfois les deux catégories de personnes se retrouvent dans les mêmes localités, ou encore elles sont contraintes de s’enfuir ensemble. Cet état de fait gêne l’action humanitaire appelée à déterminer les groupes prioritaires de son assistance, lorsque ceux-ci sont accessibles. En Ituri, dans le territoire d’Irumu, à Mirangi (territoire de Rutshuru) dans le NordKivu et à Shabunda, au SudKivu, et dans de nombreux autres lieux, l’accès aux déplacés/retournés est compromis par l’insécurité.

Les auteurs d’exactions sont toujours les mêmes (FARDC, FDLR, MRC et MayiMayi) et la MONUC intervient périodiquement pour diminuer leur pression sur les civils. Schématiquement, les paramètres évoluent sur des courbes inversement proportionnelles : d’une part, la zone humanitaire rétrécit sur une bande à l’est du pays et l’espace humanitaire s’amenuise, tandis que l’insécurité augmente en même temps que le nombre des déplacés, d’autre part. L’accès aux personnes affectées ne peut être restauré que par deux mécanismes : des victoires sur les groupes armés ou le plaidoyer sur le terrain auprès des chefs militaires. » (OCHA 30 June 2006)

Displacement is constant feature in the life of most people in central and northern Katanga (2006)

- Mai-Mai burn and loot villages in retaliation for the villagers' perceived support of the FARDC and to deny haven to the army; in turn, the FARDC views the displaced from these villages as Mai-Mai sympathizers

“Over the past two years, tension in central Katanga between the FARDC and the Mai-Mai groups has led to open fighting, with civilians caught in the middle. The Mai-Mai burn and loot villages in retaliation for their perceived support of the FARDC and to deny haven to the army; in turn, the FARDC views the displaced from these villages as Mai-Mai sympathizers. All armed groups, but particularly the 63rd Brigade of the FARDC stationed since 1997 in Mitwaba, live off the backs of the displaced and local population, forcibly appropriating food, money, household goods, relief supplies, and labor. Women are particularly vulnerable to abuse, including rape.” (RI 8 March 2006)

In the last two years violence has provoked several waves of displacement in the Mitwaba – Upemba – Manono triangle.

- In early 2004, political divisions among Mai-Mai factions sparked fighting among groups and counter attacks by the FARDC north of Mitwaba causing a major population exodus towards the forest and the south of the territory;
- In March/April 2005, further fighting between Mai-Mai and military along the axes of Konga-Kintya and Dilenge-Mwema, left some 15,000 men, women and children spread across the camps and villages of Mitwaba, Mazombwe, Kasungeshi and Sampwe. In the zone around Kakonona, 6,000 persons also fled fighting;
- In July/August just under 2,000 civilians fled towards Lukona from villages such as Mukunda, Kyabwe, Shamwana, Kamazanga, Kibemba and Kampangwe. Another 2,000 or so arrived in Dubie around the same time from villages including Mutendele, Kishale and Mpaza in particular;
- In mid-November, following intensified military operations, 6,000 persons sought refuge in Dubie while a further 4,000 decamped to Kizabi near Pweto and another 5,000 to Kabalo.

Over December/January, another 10,000 people made their way towards Dubie while the displaced in Mazombwe were forced to flee after an attack by Mai-Mai. Of the 3,000 original inhabitants, only 1,000 appear to have returned. Another 15,000 persons fled to the shores of Lake Upembe adding to an existing 20,000 displaced. And a further 6,500 persons to Sampwe and Mitwaba.[...]

For most of the people across central and northern Katanga, such upheavals and displacement have been a constant feature of their lives ever since the war started in 1998, and have continued to this day with the conflict between the Mai-Mai and Congolese army.

Thousands of civilians have frequently been obliged to flee to their fields, following waves of abuse and violence. They have lived in their fields away from their villages for anything from a few days to several months –even up to one year – only then managing to return home.

Some had perpetually been going back and forth from their village to their fields and back again – for nights, for weeks or longer. Still others had eventually decamped from their fields to the bush unwilling and/or unable to return to their villages; many had lived a life of continually fleeing from one bush area to another continually in search of safer refuge during one or several months.” (MSF January 2006)

Night commuters in South Kivu (2005)

- 1,500 inhabitants of villages in South Kivu found refuge in town every night

“Throughout the east, militia groups continue to prey on civilians, stealing harvests and food stocks, burning houses, raping women and kidnapping people for ransom.

As a result, hundreds of people in South Kivu are commuting at night to sleep with families who live in more secure towns such as Walungu and Kaniola, 40 and 60 kilometres respectively from Bukavu.

According to the Kaniola administration, 15,000 displaced people are living in the centre of Kaniola with host families, and some 1,500 people come into the centre to sleep every night, with as many as ten families sleeping in one home.

These children who attend a school in the centre of Kaniola don't feel safe even there. Every afternoon they are joined by their teacher, the parish priest and local farmers who no longer feel safe sleeping at home, and they all make the two-hour walk into Walungu.

WFP provides food to both the internally displaced and the host families who have opened up their one-room homes to others.” (WFP 2 June 2005)

Batwa “Pygmy” population has been displaced and marginalized (2003-2004)

- Batwa have been evicted from their original homeland in forests without compensation
- Since the beginning of the conflict, Batwa have been accused of collaborating with the opposite side

“A group of Pygmies, the Batwa, face particular challenges. The Batwa, who live in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), number an estimated 70,000-87,000, according to Minority Rights Group International

Starting in the late 1960s, with the establishment of the Kahuzi-Biega Forest in South Kivu, DRC, and still continuing today, international conservation groups have joined with national governments to forcibly expel Pygmies from newly declared game parks and forest preserves. They are evicted from their homelands and offered neither compensation nor recourse. Homeless, they take up a marginalized status on the periphery of local communities. [...]

It is a social taboo to share food, occupy the same bench and socialize with Batwa in public spaces. While other citizens are issued birth certificates and identity cards free of charge, Batwa must undergo an involved bureaucratic process. Without these cards, it is difficult to enroll in schools and receive government-funded health care, which are otherwise guaranteed to other vulnerable people in the country. [...]

[...] [I]n the DRC, where many more Batwa are able to maintain their lives in the forests than in any other country in the Great Lakes region. However, these forests are popular among rebel groups and are often the battleground for the conflicts raging there today. The Batwa have been accused of exchanging information, becoming spies, or joining an opposing side, and so often become victims of violence. Amnesty International recently reported cannibalistic incidents of armed groups killing the Batwa and forcing prisoners to eat the flesh. While some Batwa do join with rebel and government forces that can provide subsistence, many more are innocent victims of armed conflict.” (RI 12 Aug 03)

“Civil wars, poorly planned conservation parks, lack of access to education, healthcare and land, ethnic discrimination, economic hardships, and inequalities threaten to destroy Batwa cultural

heritage. In August 2003 Refugees International released a report entitled, "Forgotten People: The Batwa 'Pygmy' of the Great Lakes Region of Africa" documenting these threats. They remain the challenges confronted by the 70,000-87,000 Batwa living in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and Burundi. One year later and still forgotten, the Batwa are vulnerable." (RI 20 August 2004)

Majority of IDPs are not housed in camps but have merged into host communities (1999-2006)

- In rural communities IDPs are often absorbed by host villages, accommodated and fed for the initial stages
- In urban areas, people move in with family and friends or squat wherever they can in the towns
- Enormous strain put on already limited resources

"Life for all these groups in the eastern DRC is precarious. Most IDPs crowd host communities, living among the population with friends or family members, or putting up temporary shelters on small plots rented in exchange for day labor. This puts enormous strain on resources already limited by the lack of social infrastructure such as markets, law enforcement, schools, and health centers, not to mention natural resources such as arable land and water. In the South Kivu village of Hombo, for example, the resident population of 4,420 has had to welcome an additional 40,000 people displaced from their homes. When a sudden influx overwhelms the capacity of a host community, makeshift camps spring up in any safe, open area. Before help arrives, shelters built from branches or reeds and covered with straw crowd together, with just enough space between them for cooking fires; water is sometimes far away and rarely clean, and latrines usually non-existent. Some may earn money as day laborers or petty traders, but most are obliged to wait for assistance. The areas most affected by the conflict, both in terms of displacement and return, are in the east." (RI 17 October 2006, p6)

"A characteristic feature of displacement in eastern DRC is the fact that IDPs are not housed in camps but have merged into host communities. Their conditions remain precarious due to lack of farming land, vital services and general insecurity. Remaining in proximity to their places of origin, the displaced are prone to be subjected to the same hazards and abuses that caused them to flee in the first place. On a number of occasions during 1998-99, the displaced and local communities were stranded in combat areas and were removed by military authorities in a bid to create security zones." (UN July 1999, p.8)

"The great majority of displaced persons are relatively well received by foster communities thanks to the family or tribal ties. In urban areas, IDPs are sheltered and fed by their foster families thus becoming an additional burden on the already poverty-stricken urban households. It is not uncommon that the continued stay of IDPs creates discontent that eventually bursts into a conflict with the subsequent expulsion of the displaced. In rural communities on the other hand, IDPs are often absorbed by host villages, accommodated and fed for the initial stages. With the approval of traditional chiefs, the displaced subsequently receive land plots and in due course overcome their dependence on the local community. Eventually, the relations between the displaced and their hosts improve, as the former start contributing to the general well-being of the community." (UN November 2000, p.18)

IDPs seeking shelter in the forest constitute be the most vulnerable IDP group (2000-2007)

- Forest dwellers lack access to health care and subsist on wild foods
- Even after the national elections, IDPs seek refuge in the forests, fearing for their security, where assistance cannot reach them

"Tragically, it is estimated that less than half the displaced communities and families are receiving humanitarian assistance. Those vulnerable and displaced populations left without assistance are hiding in the forests, inaccessible as a result of insecurity and some who emerged for their hiding places in August [2000] were disturbingly described as 'living in animal-like-conditions.'" (OCHA 31 December 2000)

"This group of displaced is legitimately believed to be the most vulnerable among all IDP communities. Most commonly, these people have been displaced several times, having left their home communities seeking security in remote and barely accessible areas. Communities then cleanse a portion of forest and start cultivating. This category of displaced has practically no access to health care and is reduced to consuming wild berries and "non-human" and raw food. Ashamed of their physical appearance and nudity, precarious health conditions (infections, dermatosis, parasitosis, etc.), "forest dwellers" avoid any contacts with the outside world and seek to further distance and alienate themselves from the neighbouring communities. The previous (1996-1998) experience with similar groups of displaced suggested that practically every family loses on average one child under five. Because of its survival tactics, this group is the hardest to access and assist." (UN November 2000, p.15)

In Katanga : « Le déplacement forcé dans la forêt a causé beaucoup de souffrance en raison de la difficulté de se procurer de la nourriture, de l'eau et des soins médicaux. Une personne a expliqué: « Je suis restée dans la forêt pendant près d'un an. C'était vraiment pénible. Il n'y avait rien à manger. Beaucoup n'ont pas survécu » » (HRW, 21 July 2006, Mai Mai)

In North Kivu : "Cependant les problèmes sont encore nombreux. Conséquences similaires d'un état de guerre, le Bureau de la Coordination des Affaires Humanitaires (OCHA) confirme qu'il y a un total de 80.000 IDP dispersés dans toute la région. Craignant toujours pour leur sécurité, les déplacées ne cessent de fuir vers la forêt. Souvent, du fait de leur isolation ou de leur présence dans des zones contrôlées par les rebelles, l'assistance humanitaire ne peut pas les atteindre. D'autres réfugiés arrivent à Goma, mais OCHA indique qu'ici également ce n'est pas facile de cibler ces nouveaux venus qui se mélangent avec les résidents de la ville." (MONUC 27 December 2006)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

Serious protection concerns for IDPs and other civilians despite successful elections (2005-2007)

- MONUC reported that as of the end of 2006, over half of human rights violations were committed by the Congolese armed forces and by the Congolese National Police
- The rights of Congolese civilians, including IDPs and returnees, are constantly threatened by armed militias, government forces, and even elements in their own communities (July 06)
- According to the International Crisis Group, the poor and irregular payment of soldiers has made the Congolese army the largest security threat for Congolese civilians (Jan 06)
- According to MONUC, the Congolese army, as well as FDLR and Mai Mai militias were responsible for increased human rights violations in North and South Kivu early 2007
- According to MONUC, Nine IDPs, initially reported abducted, are believed to be among at least 32 civilians summarily executed by FARDC soldiers of the Intervention Battalion of the 1st Integrated Brigade in Bavi – 50 km south of Bunia – in mid-September [2006]
- In North Kivu, IDPs reported that DRC troops had raped women and stolen their property (August 2006)
- Pattern of forced labor in Ituri, reports HRW (October 2006)
- From January to June 2006, militias and government armed forces clashed at least 20 times in Ituri, causing major instability among the population
- MONUC spokesperson said that UN peacekeepers would stop fighting alongside national troops if they continued to commit human rights violations during operations (Feb 06)
- In December 2005, OCHA noted the increased vulnerability of populations living in areas of Ituri, North and South Kivu and Katanga where armed groups have burned and looted their houses, and stolen their cattle

2007

“The number of cases involving the armed forces of the DRC (FARDC) decreased from 53% of all violations reported to the UNHRO [United Nations Human Rights Integrated Office in the DRC] in the period of January – June 2006 to 40% of violations reported from July to December. However, the FARDC continued to be responsible for an alarming number of human rights violations, including mass killings of civilians, especially in Ituri District. The use of physical violence against civilians, including summary executions, beatings and rape, committed by soldiers of integrated and non-integrated brigades of the FARDC, continued to be widespread.

The number of human rights violations committed by the PNC [Congolese National Police] and investigated by the UNHRO increased in the second half of 2006 by 15%. Throughout the country, policemen continued to carry out arrests of civilians in flagrant abuse of their power and subject detainees to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. In addition to these violations, police officers were responsible for three cases of mass rape in Equateur Province.

Large portions of South Kivu province continued to be controlled by Rwandan Hutu groups, who repeatedly committed serious human rights abuses such as abductions, killings and rape. The

presence of armed groups in some areas of northern Katanga, North Kivu and Ituri District also caused the insecurity and led to a number of incidents of human rights abuses.[...]

A large concentration of FARDC troops in North Kivu, redeployed to the area in order to participate in counter-insurgency operations, combined with a lack of sufficient food supplies, resulted in a number of killings of civilians as FARDC soldiers tried to extort money and food from them. [...]

FARDC soldiers, who are ill-equipped, largely unpaid and unfed, continued to live on the back of the local population, harassing civilians and extorting their goods." (MONUC 8 March 2007)

"FARDC, FDLR, and Mayi-Mayi were responsible for increased insecurity and many human rights violations/abuses in North and South Kivu." (MONUC 20 February 2007)

See also: AFP, 7 Apr 2007, DRC report warns of attacks on civilians by new army [[Internet](#)]

2006

"Protection continues to be a major priority for the humanitarian community in the DRC. The rights of Congolese civilians, including IDPs and returnees, are constantly threatened by armed militias, government forces, and even elements in their own communities. The pervasive prevalence of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), amidst a general climate of impunity, called for joint efforts to address this problem." (OCHA 21 July 2006)

In Ituri: "Nine IDPs, initially reported abducted, are believed to be among at least 32 civilians summarily executed by FARDC soldiers of the Intervention Battalion of the 1st Integrated Brigade in Bavi – 50 km south of Bunia – in mid-September [2006]. Bodies of at least 32 victims, including women and children, were found in three mass graves near Bavi, on 22 November 2006. The bodies had allegedly been moved to Bavi from their original location, on 17 November, after the military involved in the killings found out that there was an investigation. The commander of the Intervention Battalion of the FARDC 1st Integrated Brigade, Captain Francois Molese, and three other officers were arrested by the Military Prosecutor. The judicial investigation is ongoing." (MONUC 30 November 2006)

Also in Ituri: "In August and September [2006], Human Rights Watch interviewed dozens of victims and witnesses in Ituri, many of whom described a pattern of forced labor by government soldiers who abducted civilians and then forced them to work in local gold mines, to harvest and collect food or to transport goods." (HRW 16 October 2006)

"The poor and irregular payment of soldiers, for example, has made the national army, FARDC, arguably the single largest security threat for Congolese civilians. Foreign experts estimate that of the \$8 million allocated each month for salaries and rations, between \$3.5 million and \$5.8 million goes missing. Much of the embezzlement happens through payment of "ghost soldiers", but even the real soldiers are often not paid and rarely receive their rations." (ICG 9 January 2006, p14)

"In North Kivu, the Refugees International team visited the villages of Rubare and Kiwanja near Rutshuru as well as Erengeti in the Grand Nord [the northern part of North Kivu Province]. In Rubare, IDPs reported that the newly arrived Ninth Integrated Brigade steals goods and rapes women, in contrast to the Second Integrated Brigade, which is also deployed in the area. They do not report these abuses out of mistrust of the local authorities - and indeed, a village chief in Rubare claimed that the IDPs were lying when told of the alleged abuses. He also defended the lack of assistance given to the IDPs, some of whom have been in Rubare for four years, by saying that his assistants had not managed to register them." (RI 15 August 2006)

“A family of nine IDPs was reportedly abducted in Sorodo village by soldiers - possibly of the FARDC 1st Integrated Brigade – who brought them to the FARDC position in Olongba – 75 km south of Bunia – on 16 September [2006]. The whereabouts of the victims remain unknown.[...]

The coordinator of a local committee for assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Eringeti – 65 km north-east of Beni – was allegedly arbitrarily arrested by FARDC soldiers, on 12 September 2006. The victim was conducting a census in Chuchubo village – 15 km east of Eringeti – when he was arrested and taken to an ANR post in Erigenti. He was accused of taking photographs of a military camp and interviewing spouses of military personnel. ” (MONUC 9 October 2006)

“United Nations peacekeepers will stop fighting alongside Congolese government forces if they continue to commit human rights violations during operations, the world body said on Wednesday. The U.N. mission has gathered a list of complaints against the army -- detailing dozens of cases of executions, pillaging and rape that took place during and after operations -- and handed it to the head of the army, demanding action be taken.” (Reuters 8 February 2006)

2005

“Widespread human rights violations by armed groups continue with almost total impunity, including killings, rape, sexual exploitation, abductions, forcible conscription of children, looting, plundering of crops, illegal taxation and general harassment of civilian populations. Unpaid Government troops (FARDC) are responsible for many of the crimes. Lack of salaries for these troops is a major problem.

Ethnic clashes, the presence of foreign troops, illegal exploitation of natural resources (gold, coltan and diamonds), and smuggling of goods and weapons all add to the violence. There is no functioning judicial system in much of the eastern DRC. A recent survey showed that it would cost a woman US\$ 300 to succeed in having a rape case brought to court.” (OCHA 8 June 2005)

For more information on human rights violations committed by the Congolese armed forces and by the Mai Mai militia, see :

HRW 21 July 2006, FARDC Analyse Légale [[Internet](#)]

HRW 21 July 2006, Mai Mai Analyse Légale [[Internet](#)]

Reuters Foundation, 21 Jun 2006, UN probes report of force's role in Congo massacre [[Internet](#)]

United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), 6 Oct 2006
DR Congo: MONUC response to the media on MONUC/FARDC 21 Apr, 2006 joint operation in Kazanga, Ituri [[Internet](#)]

IDP representative recounts ordeal to UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (September 2006)

““A representative of thousands of people displaced by fighting in the southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo's Katanga Province told Jan Egeland, the visiting United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, they wanted to return home.

"We have suffered so much for more than a year that we are now willing to return home even if not all the Mai-Mai fighters there have disarmed and the situation is still dangerous," Jean-Venance Mwamba, the head of Kolomani displaced camp, told Egeland on Wednesday.

Egeland was visiting a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kankonona, 500 km northeast of Lubumbashi, capital of Katanga.

Mwamba represented 1,362 displaced people who had fled to Kolomani Camp in the village of Kankonona in Pweto Territory. He said they came from the village of Mwenga, 75 km farther north, after it had been pillaged and burned by Mai-Mai militiamen and government troops, who have been trying to disarm all illegal combatants in the province.

Mwamba said living in Mwenga would have to be better than at the camp, one of many remote areas in central Katanga where about 150,000 people have been displaced by fighting between the Mai-Mai and the army since November 2004.

Relief organisations have recorded high levels of malnutrition and mortality in the camps and are struggling to provide aid.

Mwamba said people in Kolomani had no right to farm the land and did not have fishing material. Children had not gone to school for the past year and the Mai-Mai and the army were harassing them just as they had done in their villages.

Egeland, who is on an eight-day, three-nation visit to Africa, said he would try to help the displaced population." (IRIN 7 September 2006)

Ituri: increased harassment of IDPs in Gety camps, rape in neighbouring Aveba (August 2006)

"Ongoing localised insecurity continues, despite disarmament negotiations currently underway with militia leaders, including Peter Karim in Mahagi Territory and Cobra Matata in Irumu Territory. IDPs in Irumu Territory, currently numbering over 110,000, are unlikely to return home during September [2006], increasing pressure on humanitarian assistance and host families. Living conditions for the 45,000 IDPs in Gety camp have improved following food distributions, but overcrowded conditions have led to a cholera outbreak, and the risk of epidemics remains high. Protection is also an issue, with increased harassment of IDPs and humanitarian workers by armed men, and the looting of an NGO base in Gety in late August [2006].

The 15,000 IDPs in neighbouring Aveba are also in a critical condition, with high levels of rape and poor health conditions. Elsewhere, an increase in plague cases is expected in the Rethy area in September, where plague is endemic and rodent levels high. Bunia town could have an escalation in cholera cases." (OCHA 31 August 2006)

"Five IDPs, a woman and her children, were reportedly killed by unidentified men around Munobi – 5 km from Gety – on 22 July 2006. The victims were on their way to Gety when they were intercepted by the aggressors who shot dead the mother and one of her children and threw the remaining children in fire. Although the identity of the attackers remains unknown, testimonies received suggest that they may have been FARDC soldiers." (MONUC 15 August 2006)

Corruption has immediate impact on humanitarian situation (July 2006)

- Corruption in the armed forces has been particularly detrimental
- Military operations are business opportunities for some commanders
- The troops, who live in terrible conditions, in turn harass and extort the local population

“The Congolese state has suffered from corruption since independence. The logic of the 2002 peace agreement, which established the current political transition, has brought problems of governance into sharp relief. Senior positions in the administration and state-run enterprises were shared between signatories, and state resources were siphoned off to fund election campaigns and private accounts. Between 60 and 80 per cent of customs revenues are estimated to be embezzled, a quarter of the national budget is not properly accounted for, and millions of dollars are misappropriated in the army and state-run companies. The mining sector is particularly prone to corruption, with valuable concessions granted with little legitimate benefit to the state.

These governance problems have an immediate impact on the humanitarian situation. Unpaid soldiers harass and intimidate civilians. Factions within the army and government continue to fight over mines and control of border crossings. The displaced civilians have almost no health services to fall back on, and 1,000 or more die daily as a result.[...]

Corruption in the armed forces has been particularly detrimental. It has been relatively easy for some commanders to embezzle their troops’ salaries. In December 2005, a foreign military expert close to the defence ministry suggested that \$3.5 million to \$5.8 million was being embezzled monthly from the \$8 million set aside to feed and pay soldiers.⁹⁶ The troops, who live in terrible conditions, in turn harass and extort the local population. The army is itself the largest single threat to civilians in the country, while the police in many areas are still seen as a menace. Embezzlement has decreased but not ended in 2006 thanks to the introduction of a payroll mechanism independent of the chain of command instituted by the EU in January and better surveillance by Congolese authorities but the army continues to be plagued by lack of troop discipline in many parts of the country.[...]

Military operations are business opportunities for some commanders. An example was the Kanyabayonga crisis of November 2005, when 10,000 troops were sent east to deal with RCD dissidents in North Kivu. As much as \$30 million was likely embezzled during the operation. The government chartered airplanes in which both President Kabila and Vice President Bemba owned shares and flew food rations from the Kivus to Kinshasa and then back east again. Many soldiers were not paid or fed, which led to mass desertions and the looting of villages.[...]

Left to their devices, soldiers often turn on the local population to survive:

When the army deployed the 63rd brigade to central Katanga to attack the Mai-Mai in November 2005, \$250,000 destined for the operation allegedly went missing. According to international humanitarian officials, soldiers went to the camps of displaced people (IDPs) they were supposed to protect to extort money and food.” (ICG 20 July 2006)

Tensions between IDPs and demobilised Mai Mai in Katanga (June 2006)

- According to humanitarian partners in Dubie, there have been marked tensions between people displaced in camps in Dubie, Katanga Province, and former Mai Mai who are now back in this locality

“Selon les partenaires oeuvrant à Dubie, un regain de tension au niveau des camps des IDP serait perceptible, à la suite de l’arrivée sur place des anciens MayiMayi que la CONADER et le CICR auraient réinsérés dans cette localité. Si des campagnes de sensibilisation à la

cohabitation pacifique ne sont pas entreprises dès à présent, des tensions risqueraient d'éclater entre les anciens MayiMayi et la population civile. » (OCHA 23 June 2006)

Protection is most crucial need of newly displaced people in North Kivu (February 2006)

"Thousands of people continue to flee their homes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as fighting continues between the Army and dissident forces in the eastern part of North Kivu province, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today.

UN and other humanitarian agencies are particularly concerned about people whom have fled the Kiberezi area to surrounding hills and forests and are surviving in the bush with no shelter, water, food or access to assistance.

Kiberezi's normal population is around 40,000, but there are now only about 2,000 people in the area as 30,000 people have fled to the town of Kanyabayonga while others fled to the countryside.

"The extent of the violence and abuse faced by displaced people in North Kivu is extremely serious and very shocking," said Ralf Gruenert, UNHCR's Deputy Representative in DRC, who is now in the area.

Villagers returning to Kiberezi say protection is their most crucial need, followed by water, food and shelter. "These people who were forced to leave their homes and stayed in the region are far more at risk than those who managed to seek refuge in Uganda," said Mr. Gruenert." (UN News Service 10 February 2006)

IDPs are subject to theft and widespread violence in central Katanga (January 2006)

- Entire villages have been burnt, making it harder for IDPs to return home
- Physical violence, including rapes, and psychological threats are prevalent, creating a climate of fear among IDPs

"Diversion of Assistance and Violence

Already dealing with health problems, the IDPs are also having to struggle with the fear of theft and violence. A number of IDPs in both Pweto, Dubie and Mitwaba, as well in the Kabalo area, regularly report that the military loot their cooking pots, blankets and any other possessions they might own.[...]

Diversion of food by the military is also regularly mentioned in Mitwaba and has been seen in the past in Dubie.

In Mitwaba in the past, both residents and displaced, men and women also complained of sexual violence and torture. In many cases, the perpetrators went unpunished.[...]

More recently, in mid-December alone, seven women and one girl of 14 years were treated by MSF following rape by military. Due to taboo and stigmatisation, sexual violence may well be under-reported.[...]

Increasingly, the displaced tell us, the Mai-Mai resorted to burning whole villages, whether following combat with the military or not. For many, this was often a decisive trigger to population flight – leaving most people with few belongings with which they could return to their homes.[...]

The displaced reported widespread psychological threat and physical violence whether in the villages, the fields or the bush. Recruitment into the ranks of the Mai-Mai became involuntary. Families that refused, ran the risk of beatings or death – so sons, husbands and uncles went instead to save the family 'honour' – and their own lives.[...]

Some of the displaced have also mentioned both Mai-Mai and military raping villagers in the fields and the bush. Forced marriages were systematically reported in the zone around Dubie where a token amount, either in-cash or in-kind, had been paid for the bride.[...]

The displaced commonly mentioned other forms of violence affecting men, women and children. If the performance of a new recruit was bad for example, then often the Mai-Mai would avenge themselves by killing a family or other village member – burning them alive." (MSF January 2006)

Some Congolese troops guarding IDP camps are reported to extort IDP belongings (2005)

- According to OCHA, IDPs in Tché are worried about actions of Congolese Army and envisage to return to Bunia

"According to a high ranking official of the FARDC [Congolese army] in Ituri, 'Troops are successfully redeploying deeper and deeper inside Ituri. No single armed group has tried or successfully opposed our deployment within the district.'

As a positive consequence of this redeployment, there is a growing sense of security among the civilian population who feel, according to sentiments expressed by most of them, much safer with the FARDC troops than their own tribal militias.[...]

At the same time, there are emerging reports indicating that some FARDC soldiers deployed at Kafe and Tche are already engaging in extortion of IDPs in these locations. The credibility of the FARDC will depend on the TNG's [Transitional National Government] ability to provide for the upkeep of its military on the ground, at least (in the short term) providing them with food. The news of some FARDC elements loosening up their ethics is worrying and everything possible must be done to stop this before it negatively affects the peace process. The spoilers are watching and waiting for such opportunity to unravel the gains made.[...]

The DRC government should ensure that the many FARDC troops and the police force in the process of being deployed in Ituri are adequately paid to avoid creating an official militia group in replacement of those that have been in existence for the last five years or so." (Africa Initiative Programme 1 April 2005)

"Les déplacés de Tché ont affirmé vouloir se rendre à Bunia si la MONUC se retirait définitivement de Tché. Les populations de ces camps craignent des tracasseries et d'autres exactions de la part des FARDC. Des vols de biens appartenant aux déplacés par les militaires gouvernementaux ont déjà été rapportés." (OCHA 1 April 2005)

Rwandan Hutu rebel groups based in DRC committed massive human rights abuses in South Kivu (2005)

"Rwandan Hutu rebels based in eastern Congo are responsible for hundreds of summary executions, rapes, beatings and hostage-taking of Congolese civilians in the territory of Walungu, South Kivu Province, the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUC, said on Wednesday in a report documenting the human rights violations.

"The 1,724 accusations of abuse are essentially against two groups of Rwandan combatants," Fernando Castanon, the head of the MONUC section of human rights, said.

He said one group is the Rwandais forces democratiques pour la liberation du Rwanda (FDLR) while the other one, known as the Rastas, consists of Rwandan Hutus and some Congolese.

The report is based on 405 confidential interviews taken from 12 to 29 April by a multidisciplinary team from MONUC. The alleged abuses took place from June 2004 to April 2005." (IRIN 19 May 2005)

MONUC reported massive human rights violations in territories of South Kivu (May 2005)

- Hutu militias kidnap and ransom civilians to create terror among the population and finance their armed operations
- MONUC reinforced its presence, which led to the return of 2,000 IDPs

"Durant trois semaines, du 12 au 29 avril 2005, une équipe de l'unité d'enquête spéciale de la division des droits de l'Homme de la MONUC a enquêté sur les nombreuses allégations de violations des droits de l'Homme perpétrées par les groupes armés entre juin 2004 et avril 2005, dans ce territoire de collines entouré de forêts denses, situé à l'ouest de Bukavu. Elle en a visité les groupements les plus affectés: Kanyola, Mushinga, Ikoma, Mulamba, Burhinyi et Tubimbi, où elle a eu l'occasion de s'entretenir avec des centaines de victimes.

Le 18 mai 2005, lors du point de presse hebdomadaire de la MONUC, le Directeur de la division des droits de l'Homme, Fernando Castanon, a livré les premières conclusions de l'enquête. Celles-ci sont accablantes. Au cours de son séjour à Walungu, l'équipe a mené pas moins de 405 entrevues confidentielles. 2 129 cas de violations des droits de l'Homme ont été répertoriés, dont 177 exécutions sommaires, 320 viols, 465 enlèvements, et 748 cas de mauvais traitements, traitements cruels, inhumains et dégradants et 14 cas de disparitions forcées. Pour le seul groupement de Kanyola, au cours de la période considérée, quelque 25 365 dollars ont dû être rassemblés par la population en échange de la libération des otages enlevés par ces groupes armés.

Dans son rapport préliminaire, l'équipe d'enquête spéciale souligne qu'à Walungu les enlèvements de civils assortis de demandes de rançon sont devenus un moyen de terroriser la population et de financer les groupes Hutu disséminés dans les forêts du territoire. Les auteurs présumés de ces violations des droits de l'Homme sont en majorité des Hutu armés appartenant aux groupes FDLR et Rasta, et dans une moindre mesure des militaires des FARDC.

Les FDLR ont démenti leur alliance avec le groupe dit des Rasta. Parmi celui-ci, la population et les victimes ont identifié des civils congolais appartenant à l'ethnie Mushi et des déserteurs des ex-composantes militaires congolaises. Le directeur de la division des droits de l'Homme a

indiqué à ce propos qu'en l'absence de preuves suffisantes, la MONUC n'est pas en mesure de donner des chiffres précis sur les effectifs ni de dégager une typologie claire des liens, des allégeances ou des dissidences au sein des groupes Hutu.

Malgré la persistance des attaques, la population de Walungu est un peu plus soulagée: A la fin du mois de mars les Casques bleus de la MONUC et les FARDC ont mis en place un dispositif renforcé de sécurisation du territoire et ont lancé, en étroite collaboration avec la population, des patrouilles nocturnes dans les zones les plus sensibles du territoire. Depuis la mise en place de ce dispositif, plus de 2000 déplacés qui s'étaient réfugiés dans le stade de la petite cité de Walungu, sont rentrés chez eux." (MONUC 31 May 2005)

UN reports cannibalism, systematic killing and rape (2003-2007)

- Two United Nations reports on human rights violations occurring in 2002-2003 in DRC point to instances of cannibalism, systematic killing, rape and looting
- Reports of cannibalism continued in 2004 in Katanga Province

"Two United Nations reports on human rights violations occurring late last year and earlier this year in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) point to instances of cannibalism, systematic killing, rape and looting, and unprecedented violence arising from the proliferation of rival factions.

One of the reports, both of which were transmitted to the Security Council by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, was compiled by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) after an investigation team visited Mambasa [Ituri] in the eastern Congo and heard testimony indicating a pattern of looting, killing and violence against women by the armed factions during fighting last October and December.

The team noted acts of cannibalism, and tactics to force family members to eat parts of their loved ones, that could be considered part of a policy of psychological torture, mainly conducted against the Nande and Pygmy populations.

In all the team interviewed 368 people -- victims and witnesses alike. One witness reported that soldiers killed his brother and four other people, including a three-year-old child, then took the heart of one of the victims and sucked the blood from it.

Another said soldiers killed his father, cut his chest open, removed the heart, cooked it and ate it in front of him. In yet another reported case, soldiers under the command of a woman executed six people out of a group of 13, pulled out their hearts and forced the other prisoners to taste the human flesh.

The second report, by the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC), on the violence in the Drodoro area in Ituri province in April, concludes that the proliferation of rival factions and militias that are manipulated by warlords and some neighbouring countries explains the unprecedented violence that has swept Ituri for a number of months." (UN News Service 31 July 03)

"With all of the negative press that Gedeon has been getting for his flesh eating and violent killing, the territory of Manono [Katanga Province], which seemed to be moving at a swift pace towards peace and pacification with at least four groups of Mai Mai having handed over their arms and waiting to integrate into the national army, is moving again towards violence.

Reports of massacres and cannibalism have been reaching the ears of the population and state authorities of Katanga since December 2003. The accused perpetrator: Colonel Gedeon, head of a group of Mai Mai originally from the Kahongo area in the Manono territory of Katanga Province.

In Manono, the local administrator as well as the 661-battalion commander, are saying that the reports of cannibalism are true. The Mai Mai lead by Emmanuel Moise who were chased from Kahongo to Manono by Gedeon in early January, say they are true. But actual witness accounts are missing. The Moise Mai Mai group have several soldiers who say their brothers or uncles were killed and eaten, and later they saw the bones. They say the Gedeon group wear amulets of hands and fingers, and when they are fighting they nibble pieces of flesh to intimidate their enemy. They say that Gedeon is so fierce, he has renamed himself "Wafwa Kuta," or "Already Dead." (MONUC 14 April 2004)

Cases of cannibalism were also reported more recently. See for example:

"In South Kivu, an FDLR Rasta combatant was for the first time arrested and handed over to the military authorities. The suspect was allegedly involved, together with other Rastas, in the killing a woman in Bulambika, collectivity of Bunyakiri on 31 December 2006 as well as in various cases of rape, killings, cannibalism and abductions in the collectivity of Bunyakiri in 2006. He was transferred to the office of the Military Prosecutor where charges of criminal conspiracy, illegal possession of a weapon of war and armed robbery have been brought against him." (MONUC, 19 March 2007)

For more information, see

International Alert, Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif, Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix, Women's Bodies as a Battleground: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls During the War in the Democratic Republic of Congo South Kivu (1996-2003), 2005
[Link below]

In July 2003, Human Rights Watch (HRW) described the ethnically targeted violence in northeastern DRC. See HRW, 8 July 03, ***Ituri: "Covered in blood" – Ethnically targeted violence in northeastern DR Congo***, [Link below]

Landmines are difficult to locate but present danger for civilian population and humanitarian workers (2002-2004)

- Kisangani, Ikela, as well as the Uvira region are thought to be heavily mined
- According to a Swiss Landmine-clearance organization, the extent of landmines in DRC is unknown, but the worse areas appeared to be in Ituri, North and South Kivu (Apr 04)
- Danish Church Aid reported landmines in Katanga Province (July 04)

"There is little information on the presence of mines in the DRC. Information gathering seems very difficult, but it is certain that most of the belligerents and their alliances have laid landmines more or less extensively, essentially along the frontlines. The presence of these mines is a risk for humanitarian workers and the civilian population." (UN 19 Nov 02, p62)

"While less of a hazard than in other mission areas, mines and unexploded ordnance are still present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most mines were planted in 1999 and 2000. In particular, the areas of Kisangani and Ikela are heavily mined. Reportedly, FAC, RCD, UPDF and

RPA frequently used mines in the Mbuji-Mayi, Kabinda, Kabalo, Pweto, Beni, Buta and Tshopo areas. As a consequence of the conflict in Burundi, landmines were planted in Kivu in the Uvira region, close to the Burundi border. It is believed that Uvira, Baraka, Makobolo and the Ruzizi Valley are mined. Reportedly, UPC has also used mines in the recent fighting around Bunia." (UN SC 18 Oct 02, para.64)

According to a Swiss landmine-clearance organisation, Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD), "the extent of landmine and UXO pollution in the DRC was unknown, but that the Mine Action Centre had catalogued 300 "dangerous area reports". These were mostly based on accident reports, he added. The areas most heavily polluted, he said, appeared to be in Ituri District, North and South Kivu provinces and in the former combat zones." (IRIN 14 April 2004)

Women

Investigation of sexual abuses committed by UN peacekeepers (2004-2007)

- During 2006, the UN investigated 176 cases of sexual abuses allegedly committed by MONUC personal
- The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services found out a pattern of sexual exploitation by uniformed personnel involving women and girls
- The Internal Oversight Office requested the concerned troop-contributing countries to take swift disciplinary action
- In a report to the UN SC, the UN SG noted that the reputation of MONUC had been severely damaged by acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by some peacekeepers against the local population
- In December 2005, the UNSG reported that as a result of the investigations, allegations had been substantiated against 78 personnel, and that mechanisms to prevent future abuses have been put in place within MONUC
- Authors of these rapes had to leave the DRC to return to their country

"During 2006, 176 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported to the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Investigations were completed against 49 personnel; as a result, three military contingent members were repatriated on disciplinary grounds. The remaining allegations are under active investigation. In cooperation with the MONUC Conduct and Discipline Team, the Office of Internal Oversight Services has made considerable progress in addressing the concerns expressed in my previous reports with regard to the length of, and delays in, investigations. However, those aspects, as well as the limited investigative capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, need to be urgently addressed." (UNSC 20 March 2007)

On 5 January [2005], the Office of Internal Oversight Services released the results of its four-month investigation into misconduct by peacekeepers serving in Bunia (A/59/661). As preliminarily indicated in my last report on MONUC to the Security Council, dated 31 December 2004 (S/2004/1034), of the 72 allegations originally reported to MONUC, eight were fully substantiated. Upon receiving the Office of Internal Oversight Services reports on individual cases, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations transmitted them to the troop-contributing countries concerned, requesting them to take swift disciplinary action. The Department has since followed up with those Member States, requesting information on the status of these cases.

The observation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that there was a pattern of sexual exploitation by uniformed personnel involving women and girls is a source of major concern, which is now being addressed in a comprehensive manner by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and MONUC. During the first week of January, at the request of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Assistant Secretary-General Angela Kane was deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to head a special investigative team, the first elements of which had been deployed in late December. The team was augmented in February by five highly skilled investigators and will be further strengthened to meet the medium-term investigation requirements. Given the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse received by MONUC in recent months, the special investigation team focused its attention on the review of those allegations and on the conduct of as many investigations as possible.

The reputation of MONUC has been severely damaged by acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by some peacekeepers against the local population.” (UNSC 22 March 2005, para.64-65, 85)

“From 25 December 2004 to mid-October 2005, 111 investigations into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, involving 167 MONUC personnel, were completed. As a result of the investigations, allegations were substantiated against 78 personnel (more than 50 per cent of the alleged perpetrators), comprising 0.4 per cent of all MONUC personnel. Allegations against all levels and categories of personnel, from support staff to senior managers and from the rank and file to commanding officers, were substantiated.[...]

In accordance with my Special Representative’s instructions on the development and implementation of regional action plans for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, eight action plans have been submitted to the Team and 77 civilian, military and police focal points have been nominated for their respective regions. Measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in all components of MONUC remain in place.” (UNSC 28 December 2005, para.62-65)

“[...] Congolese women were also victims of rapes committed by MONUC agents. More than 75 allegations were gathered in 2004, and around twenty cases were verified. The authors of these rapes had to leave the DRC to return to their country. However, we do not know whether these agents were pursued for their acts. Victims must have compensation. We regret that the Congolese State does not follow-up on these issues. The situation allowed MONUC, however, to establish a disciplinary and ethical group in order to prevent exploitation or other bad behaviour by MONUC agents.” (OMCT 15 August 2006)

For the full report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, see:

United Nations General Assembly, 5 Jan 2005, Investigation by the OIOS into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [[External link](#)]

See also: Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 28 Feb 2006

DRC: Who guards the guards? The International Criminal Court and serious crimes committed by peacekeepers in Africa [[Internet](#)]

United Nations Security Council, 23 Feb 2006

Problem of sexual abuse by peacekeepers now openly recognized, broad strategy in place to address it, Security Council told [[Internet](#)]

See also Oxfam’s special page on DRC- Rape, Destiny, Stigma and Impunity [[Internet](#)]

Rape of hundreds of thousands of girls and women by all forces in eastern DRC (2000-2005)

- Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both reported extensively on sexual violence as a weapon of war (2001 & 2003)
- Rape is a form of reprisal, but superstition of fighters plays a part too (Nov 03)
- Many women are abducted and kept as slaves in the forces' camps to provide sexual, domestic and agricultural services (2005)
- Women who have been raped are also rejected and socially stigmatized (May 2004)
- In its Oct 01 report, the UN Secretary General said that internally displaced women are often preyed upon by armed elements and have been the victims of torture, sexual and other abuses and ethnically motivated killings
- Rape and abduction of women and girls continued as of end 2003, with the report of sexual mutilation and even cannibalism
- MONUC estimates at least 25,000 cases of sexual violence a year in North Kivu (2005)
- Hundreds cases of sexual violence against women and girls and by soldiers of the national army as well as members of militia were registered in Ituri and the rest of Orientale Province, as well as North Kivu in December 2005

"Nothing better defines the de-humanization process that has developed over a decade of turmoil in eastern DRC than the culture of rape of women and girls by armed groups." (UN OCHA 26 Nov 2001, p.34)

"Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war by most of the forces involved in this conflict.." (HRW June 2002, p23)

According to Amnesty International, "Rape of girls and women of all ages has been extensively used by all forces. 'Many women have been subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence by members of the security forces,' the Amnesty report said. However, rape is seriously under-reported because of the social stigma that victims must endure." (IRIN-CEA 27 June 2001)

"The conflict has also been marked by the deliberate and widespread use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The victims are believed to number tens of thousands. In many cases rape was followed by the deliberate wounding or killing of the victims. On occasion armed political groups have committed rapes deliberately to humiliate civilian populations accused of collaborating with enemy forces. Thousands of women and girls have been abducted from their homes and forced to remain with armed groups as sexual slaves. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among combatants has added considerably to the trauma faced by these women. Victims also suffer social stigma and fear of being ostracized by their community and abandoned by their families. Medical and psychological treatment appropriate to the needs of the victims is uniformly absent throughout the DRC. Few of those responsible for these extraordinarily brutal crimes have been brought to justice." (AI 27 Nov 03)

"Most of the time, rape is a form of reprisal: when a group takes a village, they punish the women they suspect of having collaborated with the group there before. [...]
Superstition also plays a part: sex with young girls supposedly adds to a fighter's invulnerability." (AFP 13 Nov 03)

"In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where hundreds of thousands of women are thought to have been raped since 1998, sexual mutilation and even cannibalism were reported in 2003, with armed groups particularly targeting Pygmy women for cannibalism and genocide," according to a UNIFEM fact sheet." (UN News Service 4 Nov 03)

"[P]erpetrators of sexual violence are members of virtually all the armed forces and armed groups that operate in eastern Congo..[...]

In a number of cases men and boys were also raped or sexually assaulted.[...]

There were several patterns of sexual abuse against civilians. Soldiers and rebel fighters engaged in acts of sexual violence in the context of military confrontations, to scare the civilian population into submission, punish them for allegedly supporting enemy forces or to provide gratification for the fighters, sometimes after a defeat. In Ituri where armed groups of different ethnicity have fought each other for years, combatants often used sexual violence to target persons of ethnic groups seen as the enemy." (HRW 7 March 2005)

"Rape has been used deliberately and strategically to attack the fundamental values of the community, to terrorize and humiliate those suspected of supporting an enemy group and to impose the supremacy of one group over another." (AI 26 October 2004, p1)

"The combatants utilise the women's productive and reproductive capacities as a means of ensuring their own day-to-day survival. Women are abducted and kept as slaves in the forces' camps to provide sexual, domestic and agricultural services. As well as providing sex, they have to cook, wash and mend the men's clothes, cultivate small patches of land in the forest, gather firewood, fetch water and carry weapons and ammunition or other items. Often, the combatants take the women's clothes away from them so that they cannot run away. This happened to 10% of the women interviewed. Women can be confined in the camps for several months or even several years. Rape is a means of obtaining access both to produce intended for the market and to the harvest, which is mainly controlled by the women, most of whom are farmers." (International Alert & AI., 2005, p46)

"In general, refugee and internally displaced women are often preyed upon by armed elements and have been the victims of torture, sexual and other abuses and ethnically motivated killings. Rape has been used as a weapon of war. The situation is particularly dire in the eastern provinces. The recruitment of able-bodied males into armed forces and factions have left households headed by women and girls to fend for themselves in a country whose economy and infrastructure has been decimated by years of war." (UN SC 16 Oct 2001)

"Women who have been raped are also rejected and socially stigmatised". When asked if they had reported the rape to the police or other authorities all the women interviewed shook their heads. When asked why they hadn't most simply looked away and remained silent, others said; "When it happens you think this is an accident that has happened to me. You have to try and get on with your life." "Who do I tell? Where do I report this? There is no one. Nothing would happen, but people would know I'd been raped. It is better if I say nothing." "I'm not married...if people knew, if I complained no one would want to marry me." (Oxfam May 2004)

"The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) estimates at least 25,000 cases of sexual violence a year in North Kivu, one region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone." (UNSC 28 November 2005)

High incidence of rapes among displaced and other women continue (2006-2007)

- The age of victims ranged from babies to octogenarians, but the majority of victims were between the ages of 19 and 45 (over fifty per cent) whilst close to forty per cent were under 18

- Incidents of rape have risen sharply along the Kanyabayonga-Kayna road, North Kivu Province, where fighting between the army and renegade soldiers has displaced at least 70,000 people (Feb 06)
- 4,000 displaced women reported to have been raped in South Kivu (Aug 06)
- According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, 54,000 victims of sexual violence had been identified since 2004, of which 16 per cent were children (March 07)
- Despite all initiatives undertaken to counter sexual violence and the adoption of two Laws on Sexual Violence on 20 July 2006, rape continues to be widespread throughout the country
- In North Kivu, in the first half of 2006, an INGO provided medical care to 1,200 women victims of sexual violence
- In Oriental Province, many children have been raped, often by members of the security forces
- Government forces have emerged as the main perpetrators according to OCHA (2007)
- Challenges in the fight against impunity include the weakness of the judicial system and the lack of denunciation by victims due to taboos and fear of persecution

"Regarding the issue of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic, she [the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict] noted that 54,000 victims had been identified since 2004, of which 16 per cent were children. At a hospital she had met many young girls under the age of 15 who had been subject to gang rape and were pregnant. Sexual violence was a serious issue and was not decreasing -- like child recruitment, a lot of the guilty parties were Government security forces themselves. Detailed discussions had been held with the magistrates and the "auditor militaire" in the Democratic Republic to ensure that jurisprudence was up to international standards, evidence gathering procedures were adopted and women would come forward to make their complaints. It remained an absolute and serious problem." (DPI 16 March 2007)

"Rape was used as a weapon of war by all sides in the conflict, often in conjunction with abduction and sexual slavery. The age of victims ranged from babies to octogenarians, but the majority of victims were between the ages of 19 and 45 (over fifty per cent) whilst close to forty per cent were under 18.

It has been close to impossible to assess the number of rapes that took place during the war because of extreme underreporting by women. However, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands have been affected. It is extremely stigmatising to be a victim of rape. If unmarried it can mean the woman will never marry, if married she can be left by her husband, rejected by her family and become an outcast. If the rape results in a child the stigmatisation is even greater and also more traumatic for the victim, sometimes resulting in abandonment of the baby. Abortion is illegal in the DRC, the only exception is in cases where abortion is necessary to save the life of the woman, but is always illegal in cases of rape. Consequently many women choose not to report violations. The number of non-reported rapes is estimated to be far greater than the reported numbers. The number of rapes has not decreased with the end of the war." (ActionAid 17 November 2006)

"Sexual violence remained widespread throughout the country with some of the worst reports coming from Equateur and North Kivu. Only in a limited number of cases were the perpetrators brought to justice. The proportion of sexual violence cases committed by the PNC [Congolese National Police] rose from 7% of all cases in the first half of the year to 23% during the period in review.[...]

Despite all initiatives undertaken to counter sexual violence and the adoption of two Laws on Sexual Violence on 20 July 2006, rape continues to be widespread throughout the country.[...]

In Ituri, where the local population suffers hardships caused by the continuous military operations against armed groups still active in the District, the FARDC have carried out brutal acts of sexual violence in a legal vacuum without being held responsible for their actions. IDP camps, which are often located in close proximity to military camps, are inhabited mostly by women and children who easily become victims of soldiers. The IDP camp in Geti – 40 km south of Bunia (Irumu territory) – raises a particular concern, as at least three women were raped on their way home from the fields in the area in the month of November [2006] alone. A clinic in a rural area in Ituri registered 115 cases of rape committed by members of the security forces and armed groups in the month of September alone. The actual number of cases is believed to be higher.” (MONUC 8 March 2007)

“Sexual violence remains at extremely high levels throughout DRC. UNICEF notes that 25,000 cases of rape were reported in eastern DRC during 2005, and this is likely only the tip of the iceberg, with many sexual violence survivors ashamed or otherwise unable to come forward to seek help.” (OCHA 31 August 2006)

“Incidents of rape have risen sharply along the Kanyabayonga-Kayna road in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu Province, where fighting between the army and renegade soldiers has displaced at least 70,000 people, according to humanitarian workers.

"We are witnessing a quadruple increase in rape cases in the Kanyabayonga-Kayna axis this week, where victims have been treated by [Medecines Sans Frontieres] MSF-France," Patrick Lavand'homme, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Goma, the provincial capital, said on Thursday.

Kanyabayonga, Kibirizi and Kayna are towns in North Kivu's Lubero Territory. Those blamed for the rapes are suspected to members of the army and the renegades.” (IRIN 10 February 2006)

“In these territories [Shabunda, Mwenga, north of Walungu and in the south of Kabaré], according to humanitarian bodies in South Kivu, there are 120,000 to 130,000 internally displaced people, of whom 4,000 women had been raped in South Kivu in the past four months.” (IRIN 2 August 2006)

“In North Kivu, the first 6 months of 2006, an INGO providing medical care admitted over *1,200 women victims of sexual violence*. In the Oriental Province from January to June 2006, a total of 449 children were reportedly raped; 170 of these rapes are attributed to members of the security forces. During the same reporting period, in the towns of Mbuji-Mayi and Lodja in Kasai Oriental, there were 65 cases of rape of minors, 36 of those allegedly perpetrated by members of the FARDC (Congolese National Army) and the National Police.

Although government forces have emerged as the main perpetrators there has been an increase in abuses committed by civilians, proving that sexual violence is just as much a reality in post-war as in times of war. This suggests the need to understand it as a persisting reality within a wider, generalized framework of impunity and violence perpetrated against women.

Main Challenges

There are two main challenges that factor in the fight against impunity: 1) the weakness of the judicial system, including its lack of capacities, resources and the inaccessibility to judicial services in rural areas, and 2) the lack of denunciation by victims due to taboos and fear of persecution.

These taboos and fears are deeply rooted in cultural beliefs, and cultural habits of conflict resolution (such as negotiating compensation between families and as a means of avoiding judicial processes). Although the judicial system is still very weak, a major positive development was made in 2006 with the promulgation of a new law that revised the definition of rape. The new

definition of rape was expanded to include all genders and all form of penetration. The law also takes into consideration other forms of sexual violence: sexual slavery, mutilation, forced prostitution and forced marriage. This new law has also increased the penalties for those successfully prosecuted and has improved some penal procedures – such as speeding up preliminary investigations and prohibiting the settling of cases by ‘friendly’ resolutions. Other encouraging indicators include the guilty verdicts of several military tribunals in Kasai and Katanga, where members of the FARDC (Congolese national army) were condemned with severe punishments (5-18 years of imprisonment) for the rape of minors. Even more significant, in June 2006, the Military Court of Mbandaka confirmed the application of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which qualifies rape as a crime against humanity. In April 2006, the court handed down life terms to 6 FARDC soldiers for mass rape in the village of Songo Mboyo in the Equateur Province. Another 8 FARDC soldiers were also given life sentences for mass rape in Mbandaka, committed in July 2005. These rulings are very new in the history of Congo and constitute important steps in the fight against impunity. However, the judicial system needs to be reinforced in terms of capacities, and in terms of outreach to establish sufficient precedents that might serve as a deterrent against further violence.

Parallel to these efforts, the lack of denunciation and reporting needs to be addressed seriously. A better performance of the judicial system may improve the current lack of trust victims have in the system and help motivate them to rely on it. However, the taboos, cultural beliefs and traditional conflict resolution methods will only be transformed to women’s advantage through education and proper awareness.” (OCHA 31 March 2007)

For more information

IMC, 2007, Healing the wounds of war in DRC, By Margaret Aguirre [[Internet](#)]

C. Rodriguez, 25 Jan 2007, Sexual violence in South Kivu, Congo, Forced Migration Review [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 12 Dec 2006, DRC: Healing the wounds of war at Panzi Hospital, South Kivu [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 1 Aug 2006, DRC: Help and justice for raped, displaced women [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 21 Jul 2006, DRC : Survivre au viol et au déracinement [[Internet](#)]

Children

Displaced children need protection from recruitment by armed groups (2001-2007)

- Displaced children are particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment - as soldiers, domestic servants or sex slaves
- More than two years after the official launch of the national DDR plan in July 2004, perhaps at least 11,000 children – particularly girls - are still with the armed forces or groups, or are otherwise unaccounted for in the DDR programme (October 2006)
- As the national election approached, the numbers of children being re-recruited to fight, work as porters, sex slaves, cleaners, and cooks was on the increase (July 2006)
- Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the DRC noted in June 2006 that violations against children in the DRC continued to to a large extent with impunity,

including the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups, abduction, sexual violence, killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools

- Recruitment of child soldiers by militias were reported by local and international observers to continue early 2007 in Ituri, as well as North and South Kivu
- According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict: child recruitment was decreasing everywhere in March 07, except in North Kivu, where it was on the increase, mainly due to the activities of dissident rebel, Laurent Nkunda

Legal aspects:

“A) international law governing child soldiers

[...]

DRC is party to the Convention regarding the rights of the child which only partially protects young recruits, setting the minimum age of recruitment (in times of peace and in war) at 15 years and does not refer to the issue of children recruited by armed groups outside State control. An optional protocol concerning the involvement of children in armed conflicts was adopted to cover this lacuna and this expressly indicates that States must not engage children under 18 years of age in hostilities, prohibits the practice of forced or compulsory recruitment and forbids armed groups from integrating them in their troops¹. Former Zaire ratified this text on 12 November 2001.

Furthermore, Congo-Kinshasa made a commitment to respect International Labour Organisation Convention no 182 on the worst forms of child labour which qualifies as such « forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict ». Member states must « take effective and time-bound measures to prevent and eliminate » these practices « urgently ».

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which came into force on 28 November 1999, rules in a similar manner to the optional protocol cited above on the enlistment of child soldiers but unfortunately DRC has not yet ratified this.

International and regional law prohibits the use of children in conflict. Nevertheless there are no sanctions in place to punish individuals who fail to respect these laws. It is the State itself which bears most of the onus to implement the measures. On the contrary, international humanitarian law considers the recruitment and use of child soldiers under 15 years as a war crime, as does international criminal law, according to Articles 8-2-b-xxvi (international armed conflicts) and 8-2-e-vii (non-international armed conflicts) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
[...]

B) national law and the Congolese legal system

[...]

DRC has endeavoured to translate its international engagements into internal law. The law regarding the Congolese army expressly forbids the enlistment of persons under the age of 18 years in the regular armed forces. The new Constitution, even though it forbids enlistment in the armed forces, does not set a minimum age. In May 2005 the FARDC chief of staff issued explicit orders that this practice be stopped and instructed military prosecutors to pursue all offenders.

Thus although efforts have been made they have been obstructed by the dramatic state of the legal system in DRC, characterised by a lack of independence, little or no training for judges, insufficient investigative capacities, poor infrastructure and inadequate regulations to guarantee a

fair trial and the rights of the accused. Furthermore the legal system is plagued by corruption and poor management and this has led people to resort to private revenge. Moreover, the movement to prohibit the use of child soldiers is hampered by the lack of criminal measures vis-à-vis the armed forces." (JRS 13 February 2007)

In practice

"War and poverty have also led to the displacement of many children. Some are orphaned or unaccompanied and forced to live on the streets. Such children are at particular risk of recruitment into the armed forces. An independent observer told Amnesty International that all over the Kivus 'children have become cannon fodder and slaves: they are recruited to become soldiers. Girls and sometimes boys are forced to become domestic servants or wives of combatants, and sometimes they are also used for child labour and exploited without payment to work in the mines. [...]"

The break-down of the political, social and economic infrastructures (schools, communities, household, health facilities), as well as displacement, weaken or destroy children's immediate source of care and protection, making them an easy target for recruitment. Unable to adequately provide for their children's needs, some parents in the region believe that recruitment into the armed forces will offer their children the food, education and security they need, and encourage separated from their families, displaced or have limited access to education." (AI 19 June 2001)

"The armies and militias are made up mostly of young men, often with very little education or who are completely illiterate. Some were forcibly conscripted, whilst others took up arms by choice in a socioeconomic situation marked by extreme poverty and an absence of alternative employment opportunities for young men in the whole of the sub-region. For these young men without work, the rifle becomes a means of getting an income, and of gaining social promotion and power. [...]"

The young militia recruits are initiated at the outset into violence and drug-taking through a ritual designed to strengthen their character and toughen them up. In Shabunda, for example, they are ordered to kill a member of their own family, generally their father or mother. They are also forced to take drugs." (International Alert & AI. 2005, p46)

"Exact numbers are hard to estimate, but DRC is thought to have the largest concentration of child soldiers in the world. At the height of the war, estimates suggested that as many as 30,000 children were fighting or living with armed forces or militia groups. Nine groups have been listed by the United Nations as parties to conflict that recruit or use children in armed conflict.

Children are forced into armed forces and groups by extreme poverty, abandonment, homelessness and the random hazards of war. Many are left with no choice but to join the militias who offer a modicum of protection and provisions. It is estimated that 30 to 40 per cent of children associated with armed forces and groups are girls. Many are held in captivity as sexual slaves for extended periods of time. Children are used not only as soldiers, but as porters, spies and sexual slaves.

Demobilization has been in operation since the peace agreement of 2003 and there have been signs of success. So far, 18,000 children have been released and reintegrated; however, a significant number still remains with armed groups resisting participation in the demobilization efforts. Reintegration of children in communities that were highly affected by the conflict and so have very limited prospects for children is proving to be a challenge. Faced with the choice of destitution at home or paid military service with the armed groups, the young former combatants will all too often re-enlist." (UNICEF 24 July 2006)

"As the election approaches in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the numbers of children being re-recruited to fight, work as porters, sex slaves, cleaners, and cooks is on the increase.

Despite Save the Children's preventative work and care for demobilised children in eastern DRC, large numbers of children remain in militia groups and more are being actively recruited.

Between January 2004 and June 2006 more than 19,000 children were released, we estimate that thousands more remain in armed groups and forces. Between 30-40% of those are girls, many of whom have been victims of sexual violence." (Save the Children Alliance 27 July 2006)

"More than two years after the official launch of the national DDR plan in July 2004, perhaps at least 11,000 children are still with the armed forces or groups, or are otherwise unaccounted for in the DDR programme. In particular, large numbers of girls are missing: in some areas, less than two per cent of the children passing through the DDR programme have been girls.(7) Amnesty International believes on the basis of its research that the majority of girls have been abandoned or misidentified as "dependants" of adult fighters. No efforts have been made by the DRC government to trace, recover and assist these lost children." (AI 11 October 2006)

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the DRC:

"This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1612 (2005). It is presented to the Security Council and its Working Group on children and armed conflict as the first country report from the monitoring and reporting mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of that resolution. The report, which covers the period from July 2005 to May 2006, provides information on compliance and progress in ending the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations being committed against children in situations affected by armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report notes that while some progress has been made to redress the grave violations of children's rights referred to in resolution 1612 (2005), these continue to a large extent with impunity, including the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups, abduction, sexual violence, killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools. Areas where violations have been reported include Katanga, Ituri and North Kivu Provinces. Elements engaged in these violations include Mai-Mai groups, Rwandan elements with close links to the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) but not under FDLR command, members of Congolese security forces including the police force and elements of the Congolese armed forces, and dissident or nonaligned groups that have refused to join the army integration process and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration including militia groups such as the coalition of the Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais (MRC).

The report contains a series of recommendations with a view to securing strengthened action for the protection of war-affected children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." (UNSC 13 June 2006).

See also:

United Nations Security Council, 26 Oct 2006

Children and armed conflict - Report of the Secretary-General [Internet]

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KHII-6VR2WL?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=cod>

In 2007, recruitment reportedly continued:

"The recruitment of child soldiers has continued in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), despite the government's efforts to integrate former militia into the army, a local human rights official has said.

'Armed groups have even forcibly enlisted demobilised former child soldiers,' Murhabazi Namegabe, head of a local non-governmental organisation, the Bureau pour le Volontariat au service de l'Enfance et de la Santé, said in the capital, Kinshasa.

According to a coalition of NGOs in South Kivu Province, of which Namegabe's is a member, the recruitment of child soldiers is also continuing in the northeastern district of Ituri and the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

This finding has been confirmed by the United Nations Mission in the Congo, known as MONUC, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and some international NGOs concerned with child welfare. They have discovered that the armed groups have been trying to pass off the children into the army reintegration process by falsifying ages, MONUC military spokesman Lt-Col Didier Rancher, said." (IRIN 17 February 2007)

"According to MONUC's Child Protection division, the recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups continues in the DRC, especially in the east of the country, despite the law forbidding it in the DRC constitution, and the decree of November 12 2004, relating to the general organization of the defence forces." (MONUC 14 February 2007)

According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict: "Child recruitment was decreasing everywhere, except in North Kivu, where it was on the increase, mainly due to the activities of dissident rebel, Laurent Nkunda, she said. The main issue, in that regard, was the brassage and mixage process, where child protection workers were trying to separate children from adults as they became integrated into the Democratic Republic forces. The mixage process remained a problem, however. For example, some 223 children had been identified, but had nevertheless been deployed to the front, where fighting was taking place between the mixage forces brigades and the rebel movements from the Interahamwe. A total of some 29,291 children had so far been demobilized. She hoped that number would increase, as the mixage and brassage process continued.

She noted that, while there had been some reinsertion of children into their communities with an 18-month package given by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), not all children were being successfully reintegrated. Some were recycled into regional wars, some engaged in criminal activities, yet others became street children. As a result, United Nations and non-governmental organization partners wanted to think long term about those issues. UNICEF had planned a comprehensive project. Now the attempt was to persuade donors to accept that long-term perspective." (DPI 16 March 2007)

See also:

Amnesty International (AI), 11 Oct 2006, DRC: Children at war, creating hope for the future [[Internet](#)]

Amnesty International (AI), 31 Mar 2006. Democratic Republic of Congo: Alarming resurgence in recruitment of children in North-Kivu [[Internet](#)]

IRIN In-Depth, Child Soldiers, DRC: Childhood aborted by regional war [[Internet](#)]

Save the Children Alliance, 2 Feb 2007

Child soldiers being actively recruited as frontline fodder in at least 13 countries [[Internet](#)]

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflicts documents violations against displaced and other children (2006)

"[S]ince the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict published its first report on DRC in 2003, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, some progress has been achieved. Thousands of children have been demobilized from armed forces and groups. In some areas, the number of displaced people has dropped significantly. There has been an increase in serious efforts to confront sexual violence and exploitation. Combatants from

armed groups have begun to integrate into the unified national army. Also, a new constitution was affirmed during a nationwide referendum in December 2005.

Despite these advances, Watchlist has documented continued, pervasive and egregious violations against children in DRC in each of the major categories identified by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict. These violations include killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, denial of humanitarian assistance, attacks on schools and recruitment and use of children. In addition, various other violations, such as forced displacement and torture, also continue to be committed against children and their families." (Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict 26 April 2006)

Freedom of Movement

Army restricts freedom of movement of IDPs in Central Katanga (March 2006)

"Around the small town of Dubié, there are three camps of displaced persons who began arriving in the area in November 2005 in waves. There are now some 16,000 displaced living in the three camps in an area where the only international humanitarian agency is MSF, which is being overstretched. There are excessive mortality rates, with some 10-20 people dying per week; increasing malnutrition rates due to a lack of food; and insecurity for the population in the camps.

Restricted Movement

The population explained that they were actually brought to Dubié by the army. They have also been forced by the army to return to their own fields to work and harvest them and to then bring the food back for the army. At the same time, the population noted that their movement outside the camps is restricted by the army to no more than 10km, with the restrictions being greater when moving to the South. If they want to go to a village, they need to clear it with the military. They are not, however, allowed to move between villages. Given the lack of freedom of movement, it is difficult for the displaced population to be able to find adequate means of survival. In a meeting with the displaced in one of the camps, the primary concern raised was the lack of food." (ICVA 18 March 2006)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Thousands of IDPs in Ituri go to Bafwasende to get assistance, overwhelming structures in place (February 2007)

“Environs 2049 IDPs en provenance d'Opienge sont identifiés et enregistrés à Bafwasende depuis octobre 2006. La première distribution en faveur de 1300 IDPs de Bafwasende en décembre 2006 a provoqué l'afflux d'autres IDPs qui jusque là étaient restés dans des villages éloignés de Bafwasende. Au total 16 tonnes de vivres et 1,5 tonne de NFI avaient été distribuées à ces 1300 IDPs. Le comité de soutien aux IDPs de Bafwasende lance un SOS afin qu'une forte implication de la MONUC soit faite pour la pacification d'Opienge. En effet il est plus indiqué d'assister ces IDPs dans leurs villages d'origine (dans le secteur d'Opienge) qu'à Bafwasende. Le comité de soutien aux IDPs de Bafwasende reçoit de plus en plus de déplacés, situés le long des 145 Km de forêt qui séparent Opienge de Bafwasende depuis que ceux d'Opienge et environs ont reçu une première assistance (le 23 décembre 2006). L'information sur les distributions s'était propagée de bouche à oreille et on est passé de 1000 IDPs en octobre 2006, à 1300 IDPs en décembre 2006, à 1800 en janvier 2007 et à 2094 IDPs en février 2007. Le comité de soutien aux IDPs de Bafwasende tire une sonnette d'alarme car, tous arrivent en demandant de l'aide en faisant référence aux 1300 IDPs qui avaient été servis fin 2006 et début 2007. Cependant les pourparlers entre la MONUC/FARDC/Mayi Mayi (du n'ont pas encore abouti et les IDPs hésitent de rentrer encore chez eux (les retours sont très timides). Du côté des humanitaires on exige plus de sécurité et de moyens pour organiser une assistance au retour à Opienge.” (OCHA 5 February 2007)

Major health risks and lack of food among IDPs in Ituri (January 2007)

- Clashes between Government forces and FNI militias have caused the displacement of thousands, who need food, non food items and medical care

“Civilians displaced by clashes between the army and militias in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are facing a major health risk, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has said.

“There is the risk that cholera could break out any moment in the schools and churches where the displaced are,” said Idrissa Conteh, the OCHA public information officer in Bunia, the main town in the district of Ituri.

About 4,000 displaced civilians are at Fataki, 90 km north of Bunia. Since 24 December, the area has been the scene of several clashes between militiamen loyal to the Fronts des nationalistes et intégrationnistes (FNI) led by Peter Karim, and the Congolese army, known by its French acronym, FARDC.

The clashes have affected at least 25,000 people in several villages in Fataki, according to local authorities. “The residents are at the risk of dying of hunger,” Jean Bosco Lalo, the head of the Ituri Civil Society, said.

Conteh said the displaced needed food, non-food items and access to medical care. "The health centre in Fataki was burned [during the fighting], making the situation very precarious," he said.

OCHA, the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted a joint mission to Fataki on Tuesday to negotiate with the army for a humanitarian corridor to assess the security situation.

According to aid workers, any intervention should be done in a neutral zone, without the FNI; preferably the zone secured by the UN Mission in the DRC, MONUC.

"It's difficult to convince the partners to just go to an area like that because of lack of security," Conteh said." (IRIN 4 January 2007)

Joint Evaluation of IDPs' needs in part of Katanga (May 2006)

- In Dubié, IDPs receive primary health care services free of charge assisted by MSF in a facility established by MSF
- The food situation is catastrophic and food is the first priority expressed by IDPs
- Recent surveys in the areas have shown that the malnutrition rates in these zones are very high
- Hygiene and housing conditions of IDPs are disastrous
- Considering the insufficient number of adequate water point, the population very often uses rivers and small streams as drinking water sources
- In Dubié and Mitwaba, the IDPs don't pay school fees on the contrary in Malemba-Nkulu IDPs have to pay school fees

Triangle Dubié-Mitwaba-Malemba Nkulu :

« Access to primary health care is very low in all health areas visited. In fact the utilization rate of health facilities is heavily depending on user fees. In Malemba-Nkulu where user fees are charged to displaced population as well as to the local population the utilization rate of health facilities is 10%, while in Dubié where the displaced population receives free health services the utilization rate is 40%.

In Dubié, IDPs receive primary health care services free of charge assisted by MSF in a facility established by MSF. The locale population however is treated in a confessional health center managed by the Catholic Church, where they have to pay user fees. The Ministry of Health has no functional health infrastructure in this area.

In Mitwaba health care is provided free of charge by MSF and Caritas, to all the population, IDPs and local population. The presence of the Ministry of Health (which does not have any health infrastructure) through the BCZS is extremely weak. The health zone is not functional.

In Malemba-Nkulu, neither the local population nor the IDPs benefit from assistance. Health infrastructures belong to the Ministry of Health and none is supported by any partner. User fees are charged for health services

and are applicable to the entire population, IDPs and local population. Utilization rate for health services is very low (10%).

[...]

Ante natal (ANC) and pre-school care:

Out of all preventive care, ante natal and pre schooling care have very low attendance. In Dubié, the attendance is 21.25% for ante natal care (Normal > 60%).

In Mitwaba the utilization rate of ante natal care services is 13%. Interestingly Malemba-Nkulu, has recorded 99% in the 4th quarter in 2005.

Nowhere reproductive health activities (family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention) are performed.

[...]

Uncovered needs:

- Routine EPI in IDP camps
- Reproductive Health (Family Planning, STI/HIV prevention)
- Behavior change through communication
- Absence of voluntary counseling and testing centers (VCT) for STI/HIV

[...]

Maternal Health:

The review of delivery registers reveal low birth weight of 6.3% (in Malemba-Nkulu, 2005) – 32.5% (in Dubié in the 1st quarter of 2006).

The low birth weight in newborns is mostly recorded among IDPs. In Dubié low birth weight in newborns was 38% in the IDP population compared to 21% in the local population. This is to be attributed to the high rate of malnutrition and low ante natal care utilization rate in the IDPs.

Child bearing age is generally very low. As a matter of fact, 10% of women giving birth in Dubié age below 18 years. The major consequences are that 23% of the deliveries are dystocic and 19% result in caesarian section. The incidence of vesico-vaginal fistula is very high.

[...]

a. Food situation

The food situation is catastrophic and food is the first priority expressed by IDPs. Food distribution supported and conducted by WFP does not provide the minimum daily ration in terms of kilo calorie (kcal) to the displaced population. In fact they have received only 1054 kcal/day and per person since November 2005, which is equivalent to half of the normal recommended ration (2100 kcal/day/person).

b. Nutritional situation

Recent surveys in the areas have shown that the malnutrition rates in these zones are very high. In Dubié, the prevalence of general acute malnutrition (<-2 z-score and/or presence of edema) and severe malnutrition (<-3 z-score and/or presence edema) was respectively 19.2% and 5.0%.

In Mitwaba, a survey conducted by ACF in 2004 revealed an overall malnutrition rate of 14%. Ongoing malnutrition surveillance in temporary settlement site of IDPs has shown an aggravation of the situation, 19% for overall malnutrition and 11% for severe malnutrition.

In Malemba-Nkulu, the malnutrition rates are relatively better, 4.5% for overall malnutrition and 0.2% for severe malnutrition in children of 6-59 months.

c. Access to nutritional services

Nutritional case management is performed by therapeutic feeding centers (TFC) and supplemental feeding centers (TSC). These centers are managed by international NGOs and their services are free of charge for local and displaced population.

Main problems encountered are related to logistics for the transport of nutritional supplies.

[...]

d. Food security

Overall the food security situation is worrisome. Because of the scarcity of agricultural land, very few IDPs obtain land for agricultural exploitation.

Rivers and lakes are exploited abusively with illegal fishing procedures

Low productivity, high demand resulted in an increase in market prices, all this together has made access to food very difficult for the displaced population.

[...]

Water

Two major issues:

- Considering the insufficient number of adequate water points, the population very often uses rivers and small streams as drinking water sources. This has as consequences the development of waterborne diseases such as cholera which has become endemic in these areas.

- The overload of the water supply system as in Dubié where built for a population of 10 000, the system presently supply water to 40 000 person because of the displaced population

Hygiene and sanitation

In all IDP sites, human feces are eliminated in latrines. These latrines are poorly used and their maintenance is questionable. Domestic waste collected is disposed of into non protected dirt pits. Personal hygiene of most of the IDPs is bad; soap distribution if done is irregular. Anti vector activities on sites is limited to distribution of insecticide impregnated bed nets

[...]

Shelter and non food items

Housing conditions of IDPs is disastrous. IDPs live on the ground in huts of 4 m² per family. These huts do not protect against the rain.

The food is cooked inside the hut creating a very unbearable atmosphere.

In addition to that it is extremely difficult to get non food items such as:

- Cooking utilities

Clothes

- Soap
- Etc.

From time to time there are some clothes distributions, but these distributions are far from satisfying the needs of the IDPs.

Cooking tools and dishes are really lacking and remain as one of the priorities expressed by IDPs.

In Malemba-Nkulu IDPs are not supported at all; they live with family, rent housing on their own or have no roof over their head.

Education

Very few data on education are available.

In Dubié and Mitwaba, the IDPs don't pay school fees on the contrary in Malemba-Nkulu IDPs have to pay school fees.

These exemptions of school fees in Dubié and Mitwaba are heavy burdens on these schools because these schools do not get any supports to cover their running cost." (WHO 31 May 2006)

See also:

[OCHA/ICVA Mission to Central Katanga, DRC](#), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 18 March 2006

MSF draws attention to the urgent humanitarian needs of IDPs in Rutshuru, North Kivu (Jan 06)

- MSF teams have evacuated the area
- Many people are in the bush and do not know where to turn to get protection and assistance
- Resident population under considerable strain, as each household is hosting 2 to 3 displaced families in their homes

"[T]he situation for the population in Rutshuru is particularly difficult as heavy fighting continues and humanitarian access to the population has been impossible since hostilities started two weeks ago. Looting by armed groups has led to protests by local youth, however combats have not yet stopped, putting the local population at great risk.

"The population doesn't know who is fighting who or what is going on. They are terrified and completely at a loss," says Frédéric Delmavoisine, our field coordinator for Rutshuru. "A man we know who has been displaced in the bush has been calling me several times. He can hear the fighting, the use of heavy weaponry, but doesn't know where to go or how to seek protection".

MSF teams who were working in the Rutshuru referral hospital, have evacuated and have only been able to return twice in the past week in order to provide the hospital with much needed medicine and medical material. [...]

The MSF team working in Katwiguru health centre has also evacuated but has been unable to return. Prior to the evacuation, MSF doctors carried out an average of 300 consultations a week in Katwiguru, with 50% of consultations being due to malaria. [...] The health centre in Katwiguru, which provided care for over 17 000 people, is now closed due to lack of medicine, and the referral system is not functional. The people who remain in the area are subject to looting and harassment by armed groups.

Subject to increased insecurity, unable to work

"We are extremely worried about all the people who remain hiding in the bush with no access to care," explains Jean Sebastian Matte, the MSF head of mission currently in Kayna. "The population of Kibiridzi is spending its fifth day in the bush, living in terrible conditions. All the 10 health centers on the axe between Kiwanja and Ishasha are non functional as they have no medicine left, and we are unable to supply anymore. In this zone we used to refer many children for complications linked to malaria, 60% of them requiring blood transfusions. The MSF ambulance which was referring an average of 50 patients a week no longer works, which means that people are dying at home without any chance to reach the hospital ."

MSF teams continue to work in Kayna general hospital and are still receiving wounded. Our teams have also started providing medical care for over 25 000 displaced people in Kanyabayonga. The resident population is also under considerable strain, as each household is hosting 2 to 3 displaced families in their homes. MSF teams are also providing medical care for 5000 people who fled to Uganda. But MSF is still unsure when it will be able to return to work in Rutshuru.

As Jean Sebastian concludes: “ The situation is so confusing for us that we don’t know when we’ll be able to bring assistance to the population who is still trapped in Rutshuru. Unfortunately there is no security for our teams to work properly, yet the civilians are at high risk and their situation is dramatic. Currently all we are able to do is to continue to supply the hospital in Rutshuru with medicine and medical material, and bring attention to the plight of these people so that their situation is not ignored”. (MSF 31 January 2006)

MSF draws attention to lack of food among IDPs in Central Katanga (March 2006)

“Due to decreasing food security in Dubie, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) conducted a nutrition and mortality survey among 563 households. In order to explore the issues from the perspective of the population further, the survey was complemented with 15 household interviews. Data from the World Food Programme (WFP) food distributions was also reviewed.

The mortality rates over a 90-day recall period (since Christmas 2005) were:

Crude Mortality Rate (CMR): 4.3 / 10 000 / day (CI 3.5-5.3)

Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR): 12.7 / 10 000 / day (CI 10.1-16.3)

This is above the emergency threshold of CMR > 1 and U5MR > 2 and therefore indicates a catastrophic situation.

The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (< -2 z-score and/or presence of oedema), was 19.2% (CI 15.7-23.3%) and of severe acute malnutrition (< -3 z-score and/or presence of oedema) was 5.0% (CI 3.2-7.6%). A global malnutrition of 10-15% indicates a crisis in food security. Discussions with people in the camps underline the on-going lack of food, with sporadic and limited food distributions compounded by limited working opportunities within Dubie and restrictions on movements. There is neither enough food in Dubie nor adequate access to any food that might be found outside Dubie.

WFP distributions have not only been untimely but insufficient – and significantly less than their own recommended daily intake of 2,100 kcal / person / day. In WFP’s December / January distribution to the IDPs of Dubie, only 9.9 days of food were given.

The next distribution of 1,050 kcal / person / day for one month started on 27th March – some seven weeks after the first distribution.” (MSF 28 March 2006)

See also DRC: Hungry Congolese dying in food-short Katanga camps, **Reuters**, 19 March 2006 [[Internet](#)]

At least 37,000 IDPs need urgent humanitarian assistance in North Kivu (February 2006)

- IDPs are the towns of Goma, Kanyabayonga, Kahina, Kirumba and Lubero
- In Goma, they are hosted by local villagers, in a church and in a transit site

"At least 37,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are without humanitarian relief because of continued attacks by military insurgents in North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), officials said.

"There seems to be a relative cessation of hostilities, but tensions are so high in the area that it is very difficult for us to access these populations for intervention," said Ibrahima Diarra, the head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the North Kivu town of Beni, on Thursday.

Attacks by military insurgents on loyalist Congolese army troops have been ongoing in the province since 17 January [2006]. The latest wave of attacks - on 28 and 29 January in Rutshuru territory, to the east of the province - displaced about 2,200 civilians.

According to OCHA, the 2,220 IDPS are in the main centre of Goma, the provincial capital, while the remaining 35,000 are in localities further north such as Kanyabayonga, Kahina, Kirumba and Lubero.

"In Goma, 50 percent of the displaced who arrived on Tuesday are being hosted by local villagers, 25 percent took shelter in a church, and the remaining 25 percent are in a transit site where World Vision and UNICEF [UN Children's Fund] have intervened, mainly with the supply of drinking water," said Patrick Lavand'homme, head of OCHA in Goma, on Thursday.

He said humanitarian partners had evaluated the food and non-food needs for the IDPs in Goma. Diarra said a UN interagency mission scheduled for 23-25 January to prepare for a full-scale humanitarian intervention in the area had been cancelled due to renewed attacks by insurgents belonging to the 5th Brigade of the Congolese army.

According to OCHA, some of the IDPs had started returning to Rutshuru during two days of calm preceding the attacks, but renewed fighting had pushed them back.

Loyalist elements of the 5th Brigade responded to the attacks with the help of helicopters from the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) and drove out the insurgents from the villages they had captured in Rutshuru.

However, another group of insurgents - said to be close to renegade Congolese general Laurent Nkunda, against whom an international arrest warrant has been issued - launched a new attack in the Rwindi territory near Rutshuru and Kirumba this week, creating panic and preventing the return of the IDPs.

A recent visit by Congolese Defence Minister Adolphe Onusumba to the province had not led to a resolution of the problem between the insurgents and the loyalist Congolese troops.

Haile Menkerios, the deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, has also visited North Kivu in the recent past and held talks with the local authorities, community leaders, civil society representatives and religious leaders.

MONUC reported that during these discussions there were indications that the cause of the attacks lay in the difficulties integrating former rival rebel movements into the Congolese army and a lack of trust between the various communities of North Kivu." (IRIN 3 February 2006)

Humanitarian situation per province - assessment financed by DFID (2005)

"[...] OCHA a obtenu cette année [en 2005] un financement de la part de DFID afin de coordonner une mission d'évaluation des besoins humanitaires en RDC afin de renforcer l'analyse des besoins humanitaires. Les objectifs de la mission étaient de récolter de l'information multisectorielle sur les besoins humanitaires dans les zones prioritaires en vue de faire une analyse des besoins à combler auprès des groupes les plus vulnérables et de proposer des recommandations par secteurs d'intervention et par province. » (OCHA 2 June 2005)

To see the assessments per province, please see : www.rdc-humanitaire.net/sprofilpays/irdc.htm

Health

Conflict causes degradation of the health care system (2001-2007)

- Deterioration of health system has resulted in spread of cholera, HIV/AIDS and malaria
- Very high child mortality
- Only 22 per cent of the population has access to potable water
- In 2005, the main health problems in DRC were malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhea (including cholera)
- In the context of displacement, there were many cases of cholera in Ituri, North and South Kivu, Katanga and Maniema in 2005
- UNICEF reported that measles epidemics threatened or underway in IDP concentration areas in August 2006
- Health care systems paralysed in many provinces as qualified staff have fled war-affected regions
- At least 37 per cent of the population don't have access to any formal health care
- In South Kivu, close to 4.5 million people or 30 percent of the population do not have access to health care (January 2006)
- Situation in eastern DRC is worse due to war damage
- Health personnel run the risk of being taken hostage or prisoner
- According to MSF study, the population doesn't have more access to health care in 2005 than in 2001

"LES PROVINCES de l'Est de la République Démocratique du Congo sont confrontées aux situations d'urgence générées par des conflits depuis maintenant près de dix ans. Cette situation a occasionné des déplacements massifs des populations et plusieurs zones de santé ont vu leurs activités perturbées: infrastructures détruites, personnels déplacés, accès difficile suite à la destruction des voies de communication et à l'insécurité créée par les groupes armés. Les enfants et les femmes qui font généralement partie des personnes vulnérables, sont les plus touchés. » (WHO January 2007)

"[...] due to lack of primary health services, the child mortality rate is very high with 126 deaths per 1,000 children; only 22 per cent of the population has access to potable water;" (UNHCR 13 February 2007)

"A la faveur des nombreux mouvements des populations, les maladies infectieuses ont continué à toucher les populations, causant plusieurs cas de décès. Le choléra a sévi en Ituri (à Rwampara et Songolo), au Sud-Kivu (Fizi), au Nord-Kivu (Goma, Béni, Rutshuru et sur l'axe Oicha-Eringeti), dans le district du Tanganyika (Kabalo, Moba, Kitenga et Kasenga), au Maniema

(Lubutu et Mwengue). Des cas de rougeole, de méningite et de dysenterie ont été enregistrés dans le Nord-Kivu, le Maniema, le Katanga et la Province Orientale.” (OCHA 31 December 2005)

“One baby under 12 months in three is not vaccinated against measles, UNICEF reports, despite measles epidemics threatened or underway in Katanga, Equateur, Maniema, Kasai Occidental and in IDP concentration areas.[...]

Otherwise, malaria remains the number one cause of mortality and morbidity in DRC.” (OCHA 31 August 2006, “crisis watch”)

“In North Kivu, malaria kills four people every day, notably among the 106.000 newly displaced people who live in churches and accommodating families.” (OCHA 14 August 2006)

“Les conditions de vie précaires des déplacés et le manque d'accès à l'eau potable ont favorisé la persistance de l'épidémie du choléra et de la rougeole en Ituri, au Katanga et dans les deux Kivus. » (OCHA 31 August 2006, « situation humanitaire »)

"Malaria is the number one cause of mortality for the population of nearly 20 million in the east. There are big problems of security, logistics and infrastructure, low access to health services, no preventative activities and a real lack of standardization of approach to surveillance and treatment. [...]

Health care in DRC must be redirected from the current facility-based curative care to a public health approach focused on the main killer conditions if humanitarian interventions are to address the unacceptable mortality and morbidity evident in the country. This was the key message of a joint WHO-UNICEF mission which spent late July in DRC.

The mission found that, despite good intentions, up to 70% of the population is now excluded from accessing basic health services, while all forms of preventative public activities are severely curtailed, not least because salaries of health service workers are linked to curative care. This observation led to the mission's second key recommendation: that "health worker remuneration must be separated from payment by patients... and linked to performance of a package which directly targets the main killers, both in the health centre and at household level." (WHO 9 August 2001)

“Au Sud Kivu – environ 4.450.000 habitants -, 30% de la population est toujours privée d'accès aux soins, faute d'infrastructures de santé ou parce que ces dernières sont incapables de fournir le «paquet de services» minimum défini par l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS).” (MONUC 17 January 2006)

“More than four million new cases of malaria were registered in Democratic Republic of Congo last year, a sharp rise from 2.5 million cases in 2002, the head of the national anti-malaria programme (PNLP) said Tuesday.” (AFP 27 April 2004)

"A dearth of recent statistical data from across the country makes a full assessment of the population's access to health services difficult.[1] However, conservative estimates of the coverage of health facilities show that at least 37 per cent of the population, or approximately 18.5 million people, have no access to any form of formal health care.[2]

[Notes:

[1] Access is defined as both geographical and economic, ie being within a reasonable walking distance of a functioning health service and being able to afford to pay for the consultation and treatment.

[2] Figure published in the 8th Report of the Secretary General on the UN Organisation Mission in DRC (S/2001/572), 8th June 2001. However, OCHA estimates that the percentage could be as high as 75%, meaning that over 37 million people would be denied access to health care. (Oxfam August 2001, pp.15-17)

“Dans les 18 zones de santé du Maniema, environ 80% des structures sont à réhabiliter, environ 90% ont besoin de médicaments essentiels et déquiperment.” (OCHA 2 Jan 04, p4)

“In May [2005], the World Health Organisation (WHO) supported a health needs assessment [...]. According to the study, the main health problems in DRC are malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhea (including cholera). Malaria causes 45% of the infant mortality rate, Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), diarrhoea, and measles are the other major causes of infant morbidity and mortality. The mortality rate in several areas in the east of the country is above the threshold of more than 1 death per 10,000 people per day, indicating unacceptable ongoing levels of emergency. Infant mortality rate is double that of the sub-Saharan average, underscoring the severity of the humanitarian crisis in the east. The rate of maternal mortality in the east is estimated to be greater than 1,800 per 100,000 live births; this rate is also double the sub-Saharan average.” (OCHA 21 March 2005)

“Bien que les conflits armés aient cessé dans la plupart des régions de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), la population n’a pas pour autant plus accès aujourd’hui aux soins de santé qu’en 2001, au plus fort de la guerre civile, indiquent les conclusions des enquêtes menées dans cinq secteurs sanitaires de la RDC et publiées mardi par l’ONG Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).” (IRIN 15 November 2005)

To view MSF study: MSF, October 2005, Access to healthcare, mortality and violence in the DRC [[Internet](#)]

“On 6 January 2006, the local authorities of Uvira officially declared a cholera outbreak in Uvira, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Uvira, together with Fizi, were the territories of South Kivu Province most affected by the epidemic. [...] Generally, cholera affected the eastern provinces of DRC as the situation in some territories was characterized by insecurity linked to attacks by armed groups, resulting in internal displacements.” (IFRC 5 September 2006)

See also:

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), 22 Jun 2006. No end in sight as pneumonic plague outbreak increases in Ituri, DRC [[Internet](#)]

3.9 million people are estimated to have died as a result of DRC war, according to IRC (2006)

- DRC's mortality rate is higher than UN reports for any country in the world
- Health conditions are far worse in the east of the country than in the west
- Majority of deaths are due to easily preventable and treatable diseases
- In spite of positive trends, mortality rates in DR Congo have not improved significantly since 2002

“The prestigious British medical journal *The Lancet* has published the results of an International Rescue Committee-led mortality survey in the Democratic Republic of Congo in its January 7 issue. The article [registration required], containing slightly revised data from the IRC mortality

study initially released in December 2004, demonstrates that nearly four million people have died as a result of the ongoing conflict.

“It is a sad indictment of us all that seven years into this crisis ignorance about its scale and impact is almost universal, and that international engagement remains completely out of proportion to humanitarian need,” IRC’s health director Rick Brennan said in a *Lancet* press release.

The three previous IRC studies, conducted between 2000 and 2002, demonstrated that an estimated 3.3 million people had died as a result of the war. Latest estimates from the 2004 study highlight how 3.9 million people have died since the conflict began in 1998.” (IRC 6 January 2006)

“Over the past four years the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has documented the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in DR Congo through a series of four mortality surveys. The first three surveys, conducted between 2000 and 2002, demonstrated that an estimated 3.3 million people had died as a result of the conflict. The fourth and latest study, covering the period from January 2003 to April 2004, is among the largest ever conducted in a conflict zone. Investigators used a three-stage cluster sampling technique to survey 19,500 households in total, visiting every province in the country, and measuring mortality among nearly 58 million people (over 90% of the Congolese population). An estimated five million people were inaccessible due to security problems. [...]When analyzed in conjunction with the IRC’s previous mortality surveys, the findings indicate that from the beginning of the war in August 1998 to the end of April 2004, approximately 3.8 million people have died as a result of the crisis. The survey demonstrates that the Congolese conflict is by far the deadliest war in the world since World War II and the deadliest in Africa ever recorded.

2. Death rates are highest in the unstable eastern provinces. The CMR in the eastern regions of DR Congo (CMR = 2.3) are more than one third higher than those for the West (1.7). The five eastern provinces, where the conflict has been most intense and protracted, have a CMR of 2.7, which is 80% higher than the average rate for sub-Saharan Africa (1.5). The mortality rate for children under five years of age (U5MR) in these provinces is 70% higher than the regional norm. The eastern provinces account for 77% of the excess mortality documented in DR Congo, with 27% of eastern health zones experiencing a CMR that is higher than the accepted emergency threshold of 1 death per 10,000 per day for the entire 16-month recall period. These rates do not include the period since April 2004, during which there have been several violent incidents in the East.

3. The majority of deaths are due to easily preventable and treatable diseases. While security problems continue in the eastern provinces, less than two percent of deaths over the past 16 months have been due to war-related violence. The most devastating byproducts of the conflict have been the disruption of the country’s health services and food supplies. As a result, the vast majority of deaths have been among civilians and have been due to easily preventable and treatable illnesses such as fever and malaria, diarrhea, respiratory infections, and malnutrition. Children under five years old are at particular risk from these diseases. They account for 45.4% of the 500,000 deaths documented in this last survey period, even though they represent less than 20% of the total population.

4. Lack of security has a direct effect on the number of deaths from both violent and non-violent causes. Deaths from non-violent causes, such as infectious diseases, are highest in the most conflict-prone regions where security problems continue to impede access to health care and humanitarian assistance. In health zones where violent deaths were reported, CMRs are 75% higher than those of health zones where no violent deaths were reported. If the effects of insecurity and violence in the eastern provinces were removed entirely, it is estimated that

mortality rates would reduce to almost normal levels (from 2.7 to 1.6 deaths per 1,000 per month). In the health zone of Kisangani-Ville, for example, fighting stopped in 2002 allowing health, water, and sanitation services to be rehabilitated. Since then, the CMR has declined by 79% and excess mortality has been eliminated.

5. In spite of positive trends, mortality rates in DR Congo have not improved significantly since 2002. During the period of this survey, January 2003 to April 2004, there was a gradual decrease in the total number of deaths in eastern provinces, largely due to improvements in security that allowed for increased humanitarian access. The national CMR has reduced from 2.4 to 2.0 since 2002, but this change was not statistically significant because of overlapping confidence intervals with the previous survey. Similarly, the CMRs for both eastern and western DR Congo have declined, but -- for the same reason - are not significantly different from the survey of 2002." (IRC 8 December 2004)

IDPs in Bukavu cannot leave hospital due to lack of funds (June 2006)

« D'après le cluster santé, le phénomène de « séquestration » des personnes dans des structures hospitalières de la ville de Bukavu à cause du manque des frais pour honorer la facture médicale commence à prendre des allures assez inquiétantes. Plusieurs personnes fuyant l'insécurité dans les villages vers la ville feraient partie de cette catégorie. » (OCHA 16 June 2006)

Overcrowding and poor sanitation kills IDPs in Ituri (March 2005)

"Overcrowding and poor sanitation kills some 25 people die every day in Gina just one of eastern Congo's camps for displaced people, a senior U.N. aid worker said Wednesday.

Diarrhoea alone kills four children on a daily basis in the nearby Tche camp for people fleeing the latest violence in the Ituri district, where an array of tribal militias hold sway despite the presence of more than 4,000 U.N. peacekeepers.

"There are enormous amounts of people who are displaced and many of these are dying," Jahal de Meritens, the head of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, told reporters.

The two camps he singled out north of Ituri's main city of Bunia, are each home to some 20,000 people out of the 100,000 civilians who have fled violence in mineral-rich Ituri in the last three months." (Reuters 23 March 2005)

Lack of data on HIV/AIDS prevalence among IDPs (2006)

- Ministry of Health estimates 5% HIV prevalence in the country, but surveys of blood donors in the Eastern region show an HIV prevalence of approximately 20%
- Some finding suggest that IDPs may be more at risk to HIV than the general population in DRC.
- However, more information and data are needed before generalizations about IDPs can be made

“In contrast to Sierra Leone, southern Sudan and Angola, increases in HIV infection among the general population in eastern DRC (HIV prevalence is estimated to be between 15 and 24 per cent), primarily attributed to extensive sexual violence by paramilitary groups as well as foreign militaries (from, for example, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and a breakdown of health services, have been reported (Save the Children, 2001; Wax, 2003). However, many of the reports are anecdotal and further studies are needed to confirm these results and assess trends.” (Spiegel 2004)

“Eastern DRC, where the majority of IDPs live, is a chronic health emergency. The minimum standards for reproductive health are not being met. The Ministry of Health estimates approximately 5% HIV prevalence in the country. However, surveys of blood donors in the Eastern region show an HIV prevalence of approximately 20%, which *suggests* that HIV prevalence is higher in the rebel-controlled area of the country; much more data are needed to substantiate this claim as blood donor data are suffer from significant biases. JSI [John Snow International] reported that most facilities visited were using syndromic diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. Few health facilities had condoms and none conducted Information, Education and Communication activities on AIDS. The National AIDS Control Programme, 80% of health facilities that transfuse blood do not test donated blood for HIV, but NGOs health facilities do test for HIV. According to JSI, condoms are only available in the two family planning facilities. In Goma, all facilities use syndromic diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections, and condoms are not generally available in health facilities but are occasionally found in pharmacies. GBV is a huge problem in the country, especially as the stigma of rape and domestic violence persists, preventing many women from seeking medical help and counselling. In such circumstances, the risk of contracting HIV may increase, though there are no data to corroborate this claim.

The DRC Ministry of Health has also conducted a two-part survey of the HIV situation in the country. In July 2003, sentinel surveillance was done in 7 urban and 2 rural sites in the West of the country; from January to May 2004 sentinel surveillance in 5 urban and 3 rural sites in the Eastern regions (Bukavu, Bunia, Goma, Karawa, Kindu, Kisangani, Lodja and Neisu), where the majority of IDPs live, was undertaken. Results of the second study in the Eastern part of the country will soon be published, but there are no data to disaggregate between the general population and IDPs.

HIV serosurveys were also conducted in 2002 by a team of doctors in 4 major cities: Kinshasa, Mbuji-Mayi, Lumbumbashi (government-controlled areas) and Kisangani (under the control of rebel factions). Pregnant women, blood donors, sexually transmitted infection disease patients, commercial sex workers, as well as IDPs, were voluntarily tested. The IDP sample came solely from Kisangani (N=112), and had the highest HIV prevalence of all groups (7.1%). This finding suggests that IDPs may be more at risk to HIV than the general population in DRC. However, more information and data are needed before generalizations about IDPs can be made. There are no other HIV-specific seroprevalence data for the other IDP populations in DRC. (UNHCR/Internal Displacement Division, pp26-27)

Civil war inflicts unbearable hardship on women and children (2000-2007)

- Violence perpetrated against women a feature of the war
- Child mortality in the DRC is one of the most alarming of Africa, with 127/1000 children dying before their first birthday (2007)
- Significant number of women and girls are infected with STD through rape, the most deadly being HIV/AIDS and do not seek medical treatment

- UNICEF/DRC government study shows high level of malnutrition, insufficient vaccination of children, very limited access to prenatal care; rising infant and childhood mortality and significant decrease of number of children attending school (Oct 02)
- According to UNICEF, 1.9 million children suffer from acute malnutrition throughout DRC (May 2004)
- DRC holds the sad world record for mother-child mortality (2005)

« La mortalité infantile en RD Congo est l'une des plus alarmantes en Afrique. Sur 1000 enfants qui naissent, 127 meurent avant leur premier anniversaire (soit 304.800 sur 2.400.000 enfants de moins d'un an). Par ailleurs, la mortalité infanto-juvénile s'élève à 213%. Ce qui signifie que 5 enfants de moins de 5 ans meurent chaque minute dans ce vaste pays d'Afrique centrale de près de 60 millions d'habitants. » (WHO January 2007)

"A significant number of women and girls are infected with sexually transmitted diseases through rape and for any or all of the above reasons [such as stigma of rape] do not seek treatment unless it is absolutely necessary. The large majority of rape victims interviewed had never received any medical treatment after the rape, and often did not even tell doctors about the rape when they gave birth. Social workers and medical staff confirmed that only a small minority of victims ever get any treatment. Thus, many relatively easily treatable sexually transmitted diseases remain untreated, some causing considerable pain and inconvenience to the woman, and some causing irreversible consequences. The most deadly disease that can be contracted through rape is HIV/AIDS. Not only are the lives of HIV-positive women and girls shortened and their livelihood possibilities seriously impaired, but being HIV-positive or even being suspected of being positive adds to the stigma of rape to make for a double stigmatization of these women and girls. One woman who had been raped said that her husband rejected her, saying he was afraid that she had contracted HIV and would "contaminate" him. ¹⁷⁷ The scarcity and high cost of HIV testing makes it more difficult for women who are not infected to demonstrate this to their husbands and families." (HRW June 2002, p69)

UNICEF study on women and children:

"A new study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has shown that the condition of women and children in the has not improved since the last such study was carried out in 1995.

According to the latest "Enquete Nationale sur la Situation des Enfants et des Femmes", released on Monday, malnutrition of children and their mothers remains high, vaccination of children is still insufficient, access to prenatal care remains very limited, infant and childhood mortality are continuing to rise, and the number of children attending school has decreased significantly. In a statement, UNICEF said that the myriad of problems documented by this latest study "date back many years, and their solution was to be found in a radical change of development policy and greater awareness-raising of communities".

The information for the 'Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2' was gathered by a team of 355 people from April to October 2001 in all provinces of the country, in an effort to evaluate progress made since the 1990 World Summit for Children. 10,305 households were visited for the study, which received the technical and financial support of UNICEF and the US Agency for International Development. "" (IRIN 16 Oct 02)

For more information, see the study:

UNICEF/Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction of the DR Congo July 2002, Enquête nationale sur la situation des enfants et des femmes MICS2/2001, Rapport d'analyse, Kinshasa, [reference below]

“According to various nutritional surveys, it is estimated that over 1.9 million children suffer from acute malnutrition throughout the territory. A major effort is underway not only to establish identification and referral systems and nutritional surveillance but also to set up traditional and 'non-traditional' nutritional centres to receive and meet the immediate needs of children in these newly accessible areas.” (UNICEF 7 May 2004)

“In the first four months of this year [2005] 59,000 children have died as a direct and indirect result of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.[...]

The vast majority are dying from easily preventable and curable causes such as diarrhoea, malnutrition and malaria.” (Save the Children Alliance 27 April 2005)

“DRC holds the sad world record for mother-child mortality with 1,289 deaths per 100,000 live births, which represents a loss each year of 585,000 children. The mortality rates for under-fives are around 213 deaths per 1,000 live births. This means that one in five newborn Congolese children will never reach the age of five years. Among the under-fives, 30% of deaths are caused by malaria, which claims the lives of 300,000 children each year.” (MSF October 2005)

Nutrition and food

Food security remains issue, particularly among returning IDPs and refugees (2006)

- Food crisis due to five phenomena: insecurity and looting, leading to population displacement and the impossibility to access farmland; remoteness of regions preventing access to markets; poor quality of seeds and plants; demographic pressure; natural disasters
- IDPs have the highest needs in terms of food insecurity (Oct 06)

“Around 70% of the population of the DRC lives in an insecure food situation, mainly caused by a recent and long period of war and residual conflict in the east. The food situation is characterised by a decrease of 30-40% in food production from farms, by a decrease in the consumption of food to an average of 1650 calories per person per day versus a minimum requirement of 2300 cal/person/day, and by a serious increase in the rate of malnutrition in children and adults. The imbalance of the food ration leads in places to the reappearance of certain diseases such as konzo and noma in Bandundu and Sankuru.

This crisis was caused by a combination of five notable phenomena, directly or indirectly linked to the war:

- 1) insecurity in the east of the country and the looting of harvests (Ituri, North and South Kivu, North and centre Katanga), leading to population displacement, loss of agricultural production, and the impossibility of continuing with farm labour;
- 2) the remoteness of entire regions (Orientale, Equateur and Maniema provinces, the North of Bandundu and the two Kasai regions), preventing access to means of production and markets and resulting in a subsistence agriculture;
- 3) the age and poor availability of genetic planting (varieties, seeds and cuttings) and breeding material, leading to increased sensitivity to disease and various illnesses, a drastic drop in production and the reduction of income for households obliged to sacrifice the quality of their food ration in favour of other vital needs such as health, the education of their children and clothes (South of Bandundu, the two Kasai regions and Katanga);
- 4) the pressure of a growing demographic density relying on weak food resources;

5) natural disasters such as climatic disruption, with periods of anachronistic drought noted in the southern part of the country (Bandundu, the two Kasai regions and Katanga)." (OCHA 30 November 2006)

"Les groupes en situation de plus grande insécurité alimentaire et donc prioritaires sont les suivants: Les personnes déplacées: Les personnes déplacées par les violences armées et l'insécurité ont des difficultés d'accès à la nourriture. Elles ont dû quitter leur village et ont perdu tous leurs biens et abandonné leurs champs. Il y a plusieurs catégories de déplacés selon la destination et les lieux d'accueil: les déplacés réfugiés dans la brousse, les déplacés installés près des axes principaux mais qui ne bénéficient pas de l'aide humanitaire (pour des raisons d'inaccessibilité, insécurité, etc), ceux qui reçoivent une assistance dans des familles d'accueil, dans des campements spontanés ou organisés." (WFP 31 October 2006)

Urgent need of food for IDPs in Ituri (August 2006)

- The 45,000 displaced in Gety now live in appalling sanitary conditions and are facing severe shortages of food. The most vulnerable are malnourished children.

"In the home villages of those displaced in Gety, roughly 90% of the houses, schools, churches, and health centers have been destroyed. The 45,000 displaced in Gety now live in appalling sanitary conditions and are facing severe shortages of food. The most vulnerable are malnourished children. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned that food supplies are running out, and the new distribution needs to take place immediately.

WFP had already delivered 50 tons of food to the displaced in Gety, out of the 410 tons needed for an initial distribution, as of mid-August. A WFP official wrote to Refugees International, "We are hoping there will be sufficient food to serve the ever-increasing numbers of those displaced who are in dire need of food assistance. A monthly need for internally displaced individuals and malnourished children in Gety is 1,300 metric tons of assorted food."

Gety is not the only area in need in Ituri, however. Those caught in the crossfire during the fighting fled to other villages as well, and to the district capital, Bunia. At the moment, WFP is transferring food from other areas of eastern DRC; WFP has also had to borrow food from its stocks in Sudan and Uganda to help in the process. A WFP official stated, "If we can get additional resources, we will do all we can to feed the IDPs, malnourished and other categories of vulnerable people. The constraint of low stocks does have an adverse effect on the beneficiaries and makes it difficult to measure impact of food aid."

Due to the food shortage, WFP is forced to prioritize distributions: the primary concern is for those with special nutritional needs (malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women, and patients with HIV or AIDS) and particularly vulnerable groups (chronically ill patients in hospitals, hospitalized victims of sexual violence, institutionalized orphans, and elderly individuals with no family support). In Bunia, WFP has managed to supply food to nutrition centers, in spite of the food crisis, but the situation elsewhere is desperate.

The lack of food in Gety and other parts of Ituri is easily explained: WFP has not received the donations it needs to meet humanitarian needs. While the United States and other donors have already made substantial contributions to meet humanitarian needs in the DRC over the past several years, the crisis in Gety shows that more is needed. The elections are a positive step forward for the DRC; the world must redouble its efforts to make sure that the displaced have what they need to survive while the democratic process moves forward." (RI 25 August 2006)

Multiple displacements in North Katanga cause heightened malnutrition (August 2006)

- Level of acute global malnutrition went from 5.2 to 8.6 percent in 4 months
- Agricultural activities in the area have been completely abandoned

« En revanche, dans le district du Tanganyika (au Nord Katanga), le regain d'insécurité est visiblement constaté dans les zones minières à la suite de l'activisme des Mayi Mayi. Ceci a pour conséquence, les déplacements de populations par endroit. Au mois de juin 2006, 38.310 personnes déplacées, réparties dans 3 territoires du district du Tanaganyika, ont été recensées: près de 24.350 dans le Territoire de Manono, 8.915 dans celui de Moba et 5045 dans celui de Kalemie. Au 30 juin toute la province a comptabilisé 198.320 déplacés. Ces déplacements multiples des populations, ont pour principale conséquence une hausse significative de la malnutrition, d'autant que les activités agricoles ont été complètement abandonnées. Dans le district du Tanganyika (territoire de Kongolo), les derniers résultats d'enquête menée par Caritas Kongolo ont montré que le problème de la malnutrition qui a semblé être maîtrisé dans cette zone, au regard de l'enquête de juillet 2005, a rebondi 4 mois après. Le taux de malnutrition aigue global est passé de 5,2% à 8,6%. » (OCHA 15 August 2006)

Militia attacks and crop destruction have left IDPs and others dependent on food aid in Ituri (April 2005)

“On the surface, Ituri - a district in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) twice the size of Rwanda - is as green and fertile as ever. The rainy season has just begun and huge rain clouds that build up early in the afternoon are followed by heavy downpours, thunder and lightning.

Normally, the arrival of the rains is greeted with joyous activity in and around villages - farmers and their families prepare plots, sow maize, and plant cassava, sweet potatoes and other vegetables.

But this year, many villages - or what is left of them - are deserted. Plots are overgrown with weeds and elephant grass, and an eerie silence hangs over the landscape, where busy people should be going about their daily work. [...]

Agricultural production has plummeted, with serious consequences for the long-term food security of hundreds of thousands of people.

Agricultural NGOs and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) are calculating how much more food aid needs to be shipped into Ituri to prevent theoretically wealthy farmers from starving in the coming months.

'In the first three months of 2005, we distributed as much food aid as was planned for half a year. In a few months we will have run out of supplies and there will be a big problem towards the end of the year,' Rudi Sterz, project coordinator at German Agro Action (AAA), told IRIN in March.

'There was no way we could have planned for such a development,' he added. [...]

Since the tempo of fighting between Lendu and Hema militias increased in December 2004, the number of people fleeing to IDP camps has dramatically increased in Djugu Territory. More than 88,000 Hema fled the attacks of Lendu militias and are now cramped into five camps.[...]

During their attacks, Lendu militias burnt down homes, looted food and animals, and even destroyed crops that were growing in the fields.

'Their aim was to chase the people away and keep them in the camps,' Louis-Marie Bouaka of the UN Mission in the DRC, known as MONUC, told IRIN in Bunia.[...]

'The militias made sure that when the IDPs return they have nothing left to eat, so they will not go back to their villages and start anew,' said Aime Boyemba, an agricultural expert of AAA, based on eyewitness accounts.

'Now that many farmers live in the camps and cannot plant, the production crunch will also hit towns like Bunia,, Boyemba said, predicting that the situation would become worse in the next six months.'"(IRIN 4 April 2005)

Shelter

Illustration of decision to set up IDP camp in North Kivu (June 2006)

- Information on the number of IDPs in Kiwanja and their situation was given by NGO to Protection Cluster
- Local authorities proposed to set up IDP camp behind a military camp, but this could cause protection problems

« Kiwanja : Solidarités a reçu l'information faisant état de l'augmentation du nombre des déplacés qui logent aux alentours de l'Eglise protestante CEBCE. Les autorités ont manifesté l'intention d'ouvrir un site pour ces déplacés. L'ONG a exposé cette situation au cours de la réunion du cluster Protection. Son équipe a entamé une étude pour identifier le site qui pourrait héberger ces déplacés. Les autorités locales ont proposé de les mettre dans le site situé derrière le camp militaire de la 23 ème brigade mais celui-ci poserait des problèmes de protection.

Une équipe de Solidarités/RRM a commencé l'enregistrement de nouveaux déplacés à Kiwanja le 21 juin 2006. L'équipe a distribué des kits NFI à ces familles avant leur déménagement dans le nouveau site afin de limiter le risque d'attraction de nouveaux déplacés dans le camp de Nyongera. Ils ont enregistré un peu plus de 600 nouvelles familles. » (OCHA 23 June 2006)

IDPs in camps in central Katanga need urgent assistance (January 2006)

- Camps are over-crowded with few facilities, limited shelter and poor hygiene conditions
- Malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhea are common among the displaced, as well as malnutrition
- IDPs depend on the goodwill of the host population for food, clothes, etc.

"Today there are several sites in and around Mitwaba, including 3 camps; there are 3 camps around Dubie, and scattered displaced families around Pweto, Kabalo and Upembe Park. Supposedly safe and secure, the camps and their surroundings lack assistance and security. Despite efforts by MSF and the host communities, the camps that exist are over-crowded, with few facilities, limited shelter and poor hygiene conditions. Around Upembe Park, thousands of people live in mosquito-infested swamps or on small floating islands on the lake itself. MSF is

currently providing emergency medical care, shelter, non-food items and water/sanitation facilities across the displaced of Mitwaba, Dubie, Kabalo and Pweto; however, the effective presence of other national and international actors is thin despite the ever-increasing need.

There are large medical needs ranging from malaria through respiratory infections to diarrhea – all of which are common and treatable problems and exacerbated by pre-existing vulnerability, over-crowding and unhygienic conditions. Food remains a major challenge, with malnutrition – also preventable – rising. And the threat of violence and the reality of theft persist. The host communities have also been significantly affected. [...]

The displaced have found refuge in areas ill-equipped to receive them with little prepared for their arrival. Having arrived with nothing, they have largely been dependent upon the goodwill of host communities – for food, clothes, shoes, shelter... Yet as much as they try local populations lack the capacity to help, affected in their turn by the insecurity around them, poor infrastructure and limited resources.” (MSF January 2006)

MSF reports terrible living conditions in camps in Ituri (August 2005)

- Overcrowding, with little or no access to water and few or no latrines, lead to the spreading of diseases

“Following repeated attacks on villages, populations had no choice but to gather spontaneously, often in unsuitable locations. For instance, one camp, along the shores of Lake Albert, is accessible only by boat, while another emerged in the middle of nowhere between two hills.

The areas considered safe were very limited. As a result population density is very high, increasing the risk of epidemics and directly threatening the lives of the most at-risk population, children under five.

One of the most striking examples was the treatment of 1,633 cholera patients beginning in March 2005 for a period of seven weeks.

Extreme living conditions, with little or no access to water and few or no latrines are the direct cause of the epidemic. During the study, there were 11 times more people per latrine—or 296 people sharing the same one latrine—than is generally accepted in emergency situations.

The overcrowded conditions also encouraged the spread of measles. More than 10,000 children between six months and 15 years of age were vaccinated between February and March 2005, in three of the camps.

The deaths that occurred after populations arrived in the camps were due mainly to the very poor hygiene conditions, an inappropriate and inadequate diet, and the lack of access to health care and supplies for basic needs. People who died in the camps during this time primarily lost their lives to fevers and diarrhea (86% of reported deaths for children under five). Seen as often in outpatient consultations as in hospitalizations, malaria and acute respiratory infections are the two main pathologies affecting the displaced and are intimately linked to the unstable conditions surrounding this population.[...]

Children under five account for one third (32.4%) of hospitalizations. They arrive at the hospital very late and are in a critical condition that requires emergency hospitalization, greatly increasing the risk of death in the first 24 hours. Moreover, the fighting began at the start of the rainy season, forcing the population to leave their homes at planting time. Today, most of the displaced still do

not have access to their fields. In the coming months, they will depend on food aid from outside.”
(MSF August 2005, pp13-14)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Conflict has had terrible impact on already failing education system (2001-2007)

- Current net enrolment rate in the first grade of primary schools in the DRC is only 17 per cent (2007)
- UN says that absolute majority of IDP children have been deprived of formal and informal schooling since 1998
- Save the Children estimated in September 2006 that about 5.3 million primary aged children (6-11 years) and six million 12-17 year old adolescents are out-of-school in the DRC
- Situation is the worse in eastern part of DRC where IFRC estimates that 70% of children do not go to school at all
- 47% of children in North Kivu and 42% in South Kivu have never attended school, according to UNICEF 2002 study
- A higher percentage of girls have never attended school
- Parents lack the financial means to pay school fees and schools refuse students which have not paid the fees
- In eastern Katanga, parents pay double school fee to enable displaced children to also attend school

"[...] the current net enrolment rate in the first grade of primary schools in the DRC is only 17 per cent." (UNHCR 13 February 2007)

"The absolute majority of IDP children have been deprived of proper or any schooling since 1998. In urban areas, there is a marked increase in the number of dropouts with primary school attendance declining, as many families are unable to afford exorbitant education fees. For the first time since the beginning of the war, the CHAP 2001 will attempt to revive the importance and value of the education sector, through launching a series of primary education campaigns in areas of population displacement." (UN OCHA 26 Nov 2001, pp.47-48)

"In addition, children make up the majority of the 1.44 million IDPs in DRC, and often cannot attend school in the areas where they seek shelter. Some school buildings, especially in South Kivu, are occupied by the military, adding to the challenges for the new school year." (OCHA 31 August 2006)

"Effectively, primary education which must be free, according to international texts, continues to cost money." (OMCT 15 August 2006)

"The education system has suffered from the devastating effects of the war as well as from bad governance over the past decades. The national budget spent on education has dropped to 0.3%. It is estimated that only 30% of children attend and finish primary school and just 12% actually finish secondary education. Some children are unable to attend school either for economic reasons or the lack of any educational services and infrastructures in their region, or they have been obliged to quit school due to the war (displacement, insecurity problems, etc). This puts the future of the country in a precarious situation." (UN, 16 January 2003, p44)

“Save the Children estimates that about 5.3 million primary aged children (6-11 years) and six million 12-17 year old adolescents are out-of-school in the DRC. This is one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children in the world.” (Save the Children Alliance 14 September 2006)

"The conflict in the DRC has had a terrible impact on an education system that was already failing. In 1998, the Ministry of Education reported that 40 per cent of children of primary school age were not attending school. The situation for girls was even worse. Nationally, half of all girls were not in school; in North Kivu, the figure was 69 per cent. The investment that was made in the Congolese education system in the 1970s and 1980s has been squandered. School enrolment rates plummeted from 94 per cent in 1978 to an estimated 60 per cent in 2001. Adult literacy rates fell from 74 per cent in 1992 to 58.9 per cent in 1998.[...]

In eastern DRC, insecurity, poverty and the frequent closure or destruction of schools will have reduced attendance to a fraction of the 1998 figures. Many parents can no longer afford to send their children to school." (Oxfam 6 August 2001, p.29-30)

“Après des années de guerre et de recul économique, la situation de l'éducation est mauvaise en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) : il y a 4,6 millions d'enfants non scolarisés, dont 2,5 millions de filles. » (UNICEF 11 April 2005)

[In Malemba-Nkulu, Katanga] "Le secteur éducatif bien que bénéficiant du soutien de l'Unicef, est à l'image de toute la zone, sinistré. Bâtiments brûlés et pillés dans de nombreux villages, fuite des élèves, carence d'enseignants et non-paiement des salaires, non-paiement du minerval, absence de matériel d'enseignement (craies, bancs, tableaux), fournitures scolaires rares et trop onéreuses." (OCHA Oct 02, p9)

La proportion d'enfants n'ayant jamais fréquenté l'école primaire est élevée en RDC (31%). Elle est plus importante en milieu rural où elle atteint 39%, contre 14% en milieu urbain. Entre les provinces, les disparités sont importantes, notamment entre Kinshasa où 9% d'enfants n'ont jamais fréquenté l'école, et certaines autres provinces dont le Sud-Kivu (42%), l'Equateur (44%) et surtout le Nord-Kivu (47%).

Les filles sont plus nombreuses (35%) que les garçons (28%) à n'avoir jamais fréquenté l'école. Cette disparité entre les sexes existe également en milieu rural (44% de filles contre 34% de garçons) et dans la plupart des provinces. [...]

Deux faits complémentaires peuvent expliquer cette situation : le manque réel de moyens financiers permettant aux parents de payer les frais de scolarité, et la pratique actuelle qui consiste à ne pas admettre les enfants non en règle de paiement de minerval avec l'école. Dans certains cas, les élèves sont expulsés pour un ou quelques jours seulement de retard de paiement. Cette pratique résulte, selon les chefs d'établissements, de la nécessité d'avoir les moyens nécessaires pour faire fonctionner l'école, y compris le paiement de la « prime » due aux enseignants. Ceci pose le problème de la responsabilité de l'Etat congolais vis-à-vis du financement de la scolarisation des enfants. Sa démission et le fait de faire endosser cette charge aux parents conduisent à la non-fréquentation, momentanée ou prolongée, d'une bonne moitié des enfants congolais.

Plusieurs autres causes sont citées pour expliquer la non-fréquentation scolaire. Il y a d'abord un ensemble de causes dites « autres », que les mères n'ont pas voulu ou pu déclarer au moment de l'enquête. Il peut s'agir des causes pour lesquelles elles se sentent coupables, car il semble invraisemblable qu'un parent ne sache pas pourquoi son enfant ne fréquente pas. Il faudrait approfondir les analyses sur cette question. L'éloignement des écoles par rapport aux

domiciles des enfants est une autre cause de non-fréquentation de 9% d'enfants :11% en milieu rural et 2% en milieu urbain.[...]

Dans certains milieux ruraux, les enfants doivent franchir des kilomètres pour effectuer les va-et-vient entre leurs villages et leurs écoles. La situation serait particulièrement dramatique dans la province

Orientale, au Kasai Oriental et au Bandundu. Il se pose là un problème de la carte scolaire, c'est-à-dire de la distribution de l'offre éducative en fonction de la demande sociale de chaque milieu.

Les maladies prolongées constituent également une cause de non-fréquentation scolaire ; elles gênent indistinctement les enfants en milieu urbain et en milieu rural.

Les changements de résidence provoquent aussi la non-fréquentation scolaire, principalement dans les milieux urbains, sans doute parce qu'ils exigent de faire réinscrire les enfants dans les écoles des nouveaux lieux de résidence. Or l'inscription d'un enfant dans une école, notamment en ville, au cours d'une année scolaire n'est pas aisée." (UNICEF/Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction of the DR Congo July 02, pp75-79)

"In Eastern Katanga province, parents are actually paying double school fee to enable displaced children to also attend school, and health clinics are desperately trying to cater for the IDPs." (WV 30 July 2001)

"Only 40 per cent of children in the region are enrolled in school. In some areas, such as in North Kivu, only a third of girls go to school." (UNICEF 16 December 2004)

See also

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 12 Jul 2006, DRC: No money, no school [[Internet](#)]

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-Reliance

Most IDPs cannot be self-reliant, due to insecurity and looting (2006)

- Wars in the DRC have seriously affected agricultural production, but the country has an enormous agricultural potential
- Insecurity and looting have prevented IDPs and others to access their fields; many have lost all food stock and tools upon return
- Few markets function due to insecurity
- IDPs' coping strategies are extremely limited compared to the local population, and are not sufficient to cover even their most essential needs; IDPs do not cultivate, as few parcels are available in the Kivus and in Ituri, where most IDPs are, nor farm cattle; they don't do handcraft either
- Main source of revenue are as daily workers and small trading

« La RDC a un énorme potentiel agricole. Environ 97 pour cent des terres arables bénéficient d'une saison pendant laquelle il est possible de cultiver pendant plus de huit mois dans l'année. De plus, le pays dispose d'environ 135 millions d'hectares de terres agricoles, soit 34 pour cent du territoire national. Dix pour cent seulement est mis en valeur. Les guerres ont sérieusement affecté la production agricole. L'insécurité chronique et les pillages ont, à beaucoup d'endroits, causé des déplacements importants de populations et ont empêché ceux qui restent sur place de produire. Le simple fait d'atteindre sa parcelle cultivable constitue une aventure incertaine et coûteuse en vies humaines dans les zones à haute insécurité. Le pillage constant des biens laisse les familles dépossédées d'outils agricoles et de stocks alimentaires.

La disponibilité alimentaire est caractérisée par une pénurie de produits alimentaires, dont l'ampleur varie d'une zone à l'autre. Elle est due à:

- une réduction de la superficie cultivée à cause de la situation sécuritaire (les Kivu, Ituri, Maniema et nord et centre du Katanga) et des mouvements des populations agricoles qu'elle entraîne et l'exode vers les zones d'exploitation des minerais,
- les difficultés d'évacuation des produits agricoles à cause du mauvais état des voies de communication (routes, rivières et fleuves et voies ferrées) qui conduit à une agriculture de subsistance,
- le faible rendement des cultures lié à l'insuffisance d'intrants agricoles de qualité,

Bien que certaines zones n'aient pas connu de choc récent, les populations ne sont pas encore remises des effets de la guerre et sont dans une situation de pénurie chronique.

Les déficits de production sont importants comme par exemple au Nord Kivu, en Equateur, et au Maniema où le niveau de production des cultures vivrières a baissé par rapport à la période d'avant guerre.[...]

Le fonctionnement des marchés

L'est du pays (l'Ituri, le Nord et le Sud Kivu et le Maniema) est globalement déficitaire en produits vivriers. L'insécurité alimentaire y est toujours très grande et cette région reçoit l'essentiel de l'aide alimentaire distribuée en RDC. Les conflits civils, l'insécurité et les risques de vol qui en découlent n'encouragent pas les paysans à cultiver de grandes superficies. Cette situation se

répercute sur le fonctionnement des marchés locaux qui sont peu pourvus en produits agricoles.[...]

[Coping Strategies]

Les stratégies de vie qui s'offrent aux déplacés sont limitées comparées à celles de la population locale. Les déplacés ne cultivent presque plus et ne font pratiquement plus l'élevage ou même d'artisanat. Leurs principales sources de revenus sont leur travail comme main d'oeuvre (58%) et le petit commerce (33%). Pour ces activités, les déplacés entrent en concurrence avec la population locale. S'il y a suffisamment de terres disponibles, ces ménages peuvent, en obtenant des intrants et outils, produire, après une saison, une certaine quantité de produits agricoles.

Il y a en général suffisamment de terres disponibles au Congo, sauf dans certaines parties du Nord et Sud Kivu et de l'Ituri où se trouvent malheureusement la plupart des déplacés. Les stratégies de résilience des déplacés sont néanmoins le plus souvent insuffisantes pour couvrir même les besoins les plus élémentaires.

[...]

Les stratégies de survie dépendent de chaque groupe de déplacés et sont décrites dans les paragraphes précédents. Une stratégie de survie assez généralement pratiquée par les déplacés est la cueillette (fruits, légumes, tubercules sauvages, champignons).

Comparés à la population locale, les déplacés envoient plus souvent les enfants travailler en échange de nourriture, réduisent plus fréquemment le nombre de repas par jour et passent parfois des jours entiers sans manger. » (WFP 31 October 2006)

Populations hosting IDPs are generally less vulnerable than IDPs they are hosting (October 2006)

- Increase in the number of IDPs per host family
- While comparatively well-off host families use IDPs are a cheap source of labor, poorer ones are in direct competition with IDPs for the work as laborers or traders

« Les conséquences de la violence politique affectent non seulement les familles déplacées mais également celles des villages d'accueil où la situation est plus ou moins stable. La population hôte partage gratuitement ou en échange de services, ses vivres avec les déplacés arrivés chez elle.

Comme le commerce de vivres est souvent problématique, la disponibilité réduite affecte également cette population locale. On a aussi constaté une augmentation des personnes déplacées, dans les familles hôtes et du nombre d'orphelins et de personnes handicapées qui peuvent représenter respectivement jusqu'à 5 et 10 pour cent des membres d'un ménage. Ceci a pour conséquence une augmentation de 70% du ratio de dépendance en Ituri. Il convient aussi de nuancer l'impact de l'arrivée des populations déplacées. Les membres les plus entrepreneurs et prospères des populations hôtes disposent ainsi d'une source supplémentaire et peu onéreuse de main d'oeuvre parmi les déplacés. Par contre les membres les plus faibles, qui dépendent de leur travail comme main-d'oeuvre et du petit commerce sont maintenant en concurrence directe avec les déplacés. Dans l'exemple de Dubie, ci-dessus, la population hôte est également vulnérable mais nettement moins que les déplacés qui y séjournent." (WFP 31 October 2006)

Agencies conduct household economy studies, livelihood analysis in eastern and northeastern DRC (July 2004)

- In Masisi, North Kivu, the displacement of many of the large livestock owners made it possible for some people to extend their area of cultivation in 1999 into abandoned pastures
- In Goma, the fall in household incomes following the volcano eruption in 2002 hit IDPs and non-displaced equally
- Around Bunia, Ituri, surveys found that local administrators have expropriated land from the largely Lendu population in the south to sell to wealthier Hema cattle owners from the North

Eastern Masisi, North Kivu, DRC (1999–2003)

Assessments conducted

Household economy studies were carried out by SC-UK in 1999 and 2002. WVI and Asrames carried out assessments in 2001 and 2003 respectively. SC-UK also commissioned a livelihood study focusing on land. One agency made an impact assessment of a road building project. Several nutrition surveys were carried out by SC-UK, WVI and MSF-H (in September 2001, May 2002, October 2002, and April, May and October 2003).

Livelihoods analysis

The system of land control means that the 'poor' (40–50% of the population) cultivated just one quarter to half a hectare, supplementing their crops by selling labour. In addition, insecurity of tenure meant that there was no investment in soil conservation and soil fertility. Yields were therefore low, exacerbated by the new cassava mosaic virus. The displacement of many of the large livestock owners made it possible for some people to extend their area of cultivation in 1999 into abandoned pastures. Middle-income households (30–35% of the population in 1999) hired labour to work their fields (usually around two hectares), and engaged in trade. In 2000, the rapid rise in price of the mineral coltan attracted many young people to work in mining, where they remained despite the price fall the following year. With relative recovery between 1999 and 2002, the number of livestock increased, reaching around 10% of pre-1993 levels by 2003. The middle economic group replaced the poor as the majority by 2002, the poor were able to grow more of their own food (up from 60% to 70%) and work for food became rare. On top of the constraints to livelihood security [...], one study also identified the importation of food aid by donors as a factor depressing farm-gate prices.

In 2002, the cash income of the poor remained at the 1999 level of \$160 per household per year. They had few sources of income locally apart from selling labour or selling parts of their harvest at low prices. They resorted to charcoalmaking, seasonal migration to towns, migration to mines, and reducing their spending on health and education. With the introduction of school fees payable in cash (rather than in beer, as previously), fewer poor households sent children to school. Nutrition surveys found under-five malnutrition rates between 3% and 9% for moderate and severe (marasmus) malnutrition combined, but rates of kwashiorkor were unusually high (3–11%).

Goma town, DRC (February–July 2002)

Assessments conducted

The provincial authorities carried out a needs assessment though this was not used by agencies – they requested quantities of food that would have been enough to feed the entire population of 400,000 for 18 months. A needs assessment of the displaced was carried out. SCUK made a household economy assessment within a month of the eruption (SC-UK 2002), which widened attention from a focus on destroyed infrastructure and housing to the overall economic situation.

Monitoring and impact assessments were carried out by SC-UK and by the DEC (DEC 2002, 2003).

Livelihoods analysis

Before the crisis, poor households (15–5% of the population) frequently depended on the income from just one person – the smallest-scale trade or women’s daily labour. The whole household would only earn \$25–50 a month, half of which went on food. Capital enabled people to earn significantly more by expanding trade: with capital of \$50–100 (35–40% of the population) and two people working, a household could earn \$50–90 a month, the same as a teacher or a male labourer’s household. With over \$150 (15–25%) a household could earn \$100–150 a month, similar to a skilled artisan. The fall in household incomes following the eruption hit the displaced and non-displaced equally. The urban

economy proved to be more resilient than rural ones, with a wider range of economic options, and quicker returns on work.

Bunia suburbs, Ituri District, DRC (2003)

Assessments conducted

A rapid assessment was conducted in July 2003, followed by a household economy study in October 2003. This study excluded the population in the camp by the MONUC barracks as they were receiving much more humanitarian support. OCHA made a survey of the number of displaced in 2003.

Livelihoods analysis

By October 2003, insecurity still restricted access to fields in the southern peri-urban areas; instead, people cultivated small plots of 0.1–0.2ha around their houses in town. Local administrators have expropriated land from the (largely Lendu) population in the south to sell to wealthier (Hema) cattle owners from the north. These two factors meant many people were almost totally dependent on the market for food, at least until garden crops were ready in early 2004. Finding employment was more difficult for those living in the south (who could not easily reach the commercial centre in the north). Daily contract workers (30–35% of the population) could make \$30–90/month, and artisans and small traders (45–65%) \$60–120. These latter would have around \$100–200 working capital invested. Most households spent just over half of their net income on food. Spending on services and household items was very small, because of humanitarian aid and deliberate economy. (HPG July 2004, pp.24-25)

Vulnerable IDPs who lost all possessions during volcano eruption did not receive any assistance (2002-2005)

- Eruption of Mount Nyiragongo near Goma in Jan 2002
- As a result of the disaster, assessments indicate that around 15 per cent of Goma town has been destroyed, 120,000 people have been made homeless and 147 have died
- With their property destroyed and their livelihoods wiped away, the entire Goma population has been affected

"Perhaps among the most unlucky are those who fled violence only to be forced to flee again from Goma as the Nyiragongo erupted: chased away one more time but by natural disaster. [...]"

The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo near Goma, on January 17 [2002], has caused a severe natural disaster in an area that has already suffered from years of conflict and distress. The lava flowed into the city and nearby Lake Kivu, causing fires, devastating the area, and generated an estimated 350,000 people to flee towards neighboring Rwanda. The vast majority of those who fled the town on January 17 returned home as early as Sunday 20 January and decided to stay in

Goma despite fear due to a number of heavy earthquakes, continued eruptions, opening of fissures by earth tremors and serious risks of lethal gasses emission.

As a result of the disaster, assessments indicate that around 15 per cent of Goma town has been destroyed, 120,000 people have been made homeless and 147 have died.

With their property destroyed and their livelihoods wiped away, the entire Goma population is affected. Relief agencies and local authorities continue to debate options for the support of affected families. Possible options include moving to sites near Goma, resettling in neighboring towns, or returning previously displaced people to their areas of origin. The Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD), which controls the area, has banned any reconstruction on top of the recent lava flows and has announced that two sites outside of Goma (Lac Vert and Mugunga) would be available for resettlement. However, a survey of homeless Goma residents by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) revealed strong resistance to settling in the outside of Goma or in other towns.

The specificity of this natural disaster is that it has happened in a stateless area, ravaged by war and this situation has further complicated the response by the humanitarian actors. For example, the extent of the distrust between the two populations has been a factor leading to a much earlier return of the population to Goma and the suspicion of "hidden motives" about declaration and advice from RCD have also created a specific dynamic to the crisis. " (UN OCHA 28 Feb 02, pp.4 & 14)

"However, those who are dirt poor by Goma's standards - arguably those who should have received particular attention - have proven to be those who have suffered the most. They needed a long-term solution that never came. This is the case of the community of Virunga-Majengo, a stone's throw away from the runway of Goma's airport, and one of the fourteen villages that were completely destroyed in the eruption.

Virunga-Majengo is today littered with rows and rows of small, black wooden homes that each reassembles a child's version of a one-dimensional house. But instead of the standard-fare green blades of grass, each box springs forth from charcoal-coloured lava. There are no garages, no chimneys, no gardens, or even trees nearby. Certainly there are no roads, electricity poles, water pipes or tanks.

The families with multiple children who live in these houses are known as les sinistrés: French for "the disaster-stricken." These destitute - and largely unemployed people - are only now, three years later, starting to grow new roots in the lava.

The very fact that they have attempted to rebuild at all is an initiative lauded by provincial governor Eugene Serufuli, who on the occasion of the third anniversary of the volcano's most recent eruption took the opportunity to commend their collective spirit of determination and resolve.

Governor Serufuli didn't however promise any new financial assistance, nor make any promises of connecting these sinistrés to the city's energy supply, water utilities, or roadways. Not that anyone expected he would, three years after the international event, and at a time when the country has moved on. Concurrently - apart from the work of scattered NGOs on the ground - news agencies, politicians and the philanthropists remain united in their resolve to adequately address today's global crises." (MONUC 27 January 2005)

Loss of livelihoods and assets due to conflict and displacement in Bunia, Ituri (Nov 03)

- Before 2003, most of the population depended on fields outside of Bunia.
- Bunia town also depended heavily on trade with villages in Ituri and civil service were other important sources of income for Bunia town
- Impact of Ituri conflict has been catastrophic with regard to loss of livelihoods and assets
- More economic options in northern than in southern neighborhoods, which have suffered more internal displacement as well

"Before the 2003 attacks, the majority of the population was made up of small to large merchants/traders, artisans, daily workers and a smaller percentage of state employees. Most of the population also depended on fields outside of Bunia – either in the periphery areas or farther in the rural interior. Often those who depended primarily on trade either farmed early in the day and managed their commerce for the remainder of the day or would hire farm help. Agriculture was an important source of food for household consumption and, to a lesser extent, for income. Bunia Town also depended heavily on trade with villages and production centres in the rural interior for cash. In addition, important market exchange took place with larger towns such as Kisangani, Goma, Beni, Butembo, and Kampala in Uganda. Mineral exploitation cannot be neglected as an important source of income and in particular gold extraction. However, this activity benefited an elite minority and has been heavily taxed by combatant forces since the onset of the war in 1999.

The civil service was also an important source of livelihood for a considerable number of households. State employees were more or less present all over Bunia. Most public jobs were in Mudzi Pela where there is a concentration of schools and health facilities (also location of main hospital). Bankoko neighbourhood was the home of retired Mobutu military. The neighbourhood of Lumumba, the commercial heart of Bunia, also contained a number of administrative bodies as well as larger scale private enterprises and the UN and NGO community – good sources of salaried employment. Overall, the southern suburban neighbourhoods were typified by a more monolivelihood culture – leaning towards agriculture (commerce and artisanal activities existed on a smaller scale) –, while the northern and eastern suburbs were of a more multi-livelihoods nature, carrying out agricultural, trade, artisanal, and livestock activities. Certain neighbourhoods in the suburbs were known for brick-making activities.[...]

Insecurity and Socio-Political Divisions Today

The Ituri conflict has had a semi-paralysing effect on Bunia Town. Most neighbourhoods were systematically pillaged and militia destroyed (burnt) some houses. In general, the impact of the conflict with regard to loss of livelihoods and assets was catastrophic. Sporadic shootings and killings still occur in Bunia. This has led to temporary displacements from some neighbourhoods (most often in the southern neighbourhoods) as the population flees to seek refuge in surrounding villages, only to return to homes that have been pillaged once again. Bunia can be divided into two political zones. A red line cuts across the city – a separation characterised by a predominantly Northern Hema (equally known as 'Gegere') and allied groups and pro-UPC population in the northern neighbourhoods and a predominantly Lendu (and allied groups) population in the south. As a result of this division, the population encounters great difficulties in crossing from one side to the other.[...]

Today, the population has limited access to its fields. Exchange networks, although having survived to some extent the crisis, have been greatly reduced. The lack of labour opportunities has significantly decreased the population's purchasing power. Reduced access to land has meant that households depend heavily on the market to meet their food needs. The unavailability

of cash has created a vicious cycle where lack of cash reduces labour and income-generating opportunities, in turn leading to a poor monetary circulation. Noteworthy, pessimism in the evolution of future events also prevents people from spending.

A greater diversity of economic options is present in the north than in the south. In the north, activities centre around medium and small trade and work contracts – gold digging in Shari, small- and medium-scale import and sale of food and non-food items, artisanal activities, daily work contracts, civil services (education and health sectors), contracts with church structures, etc. Due to the presence of the main central market in the north, households can also access more labour opportunities. The south depends principally on small trade, which revolves around the purchase and sale of staple food items and vegetables and the production and sale of local beer, and on daily work contracts. Medium- to large-scale commerce is rare. Artisanal activities exist but are limited when compared to the north. Jobs as civil servants are almost non-existent. The influx of the displaced population has put an economic strain on residents of certain neighbourhoods as well as on the limited land within the town itself. This is especially true for the northern neighbourhoods where mainly better-off households host two or more displaced persons.[...]

Livelihoods in Bunia centre on daily work contracts – e.g. construction, assistants of artisans, carriers, etc. – artisanal and technical activities – e.g. ironwork, carpentry, construction, etc. - and small trade – e.g. production and sale of local beer ('mandro' -made out of maize or 'Kaikpo' – made with cassava), purchase and resale of staple food items (especially cassava flour, beans, palm oil, vegetables, etc.), sale of diverse items (e.g. soap, salt, petrol, sugar, bread, coal, etc.) at home or in small stands, etc.

Most households have two or more members involved in income-generating activities. The woman in the household often manages a trade activity. However, profit from trade is usually insufficient to cover all household needs or sustain the business. Often the man or a second person in the household is involved in a secondary activity. This is often an activity characteristic of the two other groups – i.e. artisanal or daily work contracts. The same logic applies to the groups of artisans and daily contract workers. Artisanal activities are usually the main source of income for the artisans, followed by an equal or secondary activity of trade carried out by other members of the household. In most cases, daily contract workers do not have sufficient start-up funds or profit to increase the size of trade activities of the second member of the household. Trade in daily contract worker households is, therefore, on the lower end of the income ladder for the group of small traders. Very little to no income of all groups comes from the sale of harvests, which is mainly for household consumption needs. [...]

Coping Strategies

Households have developed the following range of coping strategies to deal with changes in accessibility to food and income:

- _ Diversification and intensification of economic activities within the household;
- _ Huge consumption of fruits such as mango, avocado, guava, and papaya during the months of June/July (one person could eat up to 20 mangoes a day);
- _ Sale of remaining assets – livestock, clothes, shoes, household equipment, production tools, etc. This is done during displacement or on return/arrival to Bunia. However, generally, the sale of assets brings in negligible quantities of income;
- _ Destruction of abandoned houses for use and sale of material;
- _ Reduction in investment costs – for businesses, for the rehabilitation and construction of houses, and for certain household equipment;
- _ Risky movements – attempts to cultivate in fields and many travel to production areas in the rural interior;
- _ Increased garden production;
- _ Increased consumption of vegetables;

- _ Cultivation of crops with short growing cycles (e.g. sweet potatoes and cassava varieties);
- _ Premature harvesting of crops (especially beans and maize).(SCF-UK Nov 03, Pp11-25)

FAO analyses coping mechanisms of IDPs and other vulnerable populations in eastern DRC (Aug 03)

« **Est de la RDC : Les mécanismes de survie développés par la population sinistrée suite à la guerre.** Les communautés qui ne s'adaptent pas en changeant de manière de vivre quand les conditions de leur environnement changent sont vouées à la disparition. Cela s'observe clairement dans la vie courante. La crise engendrée par les guerres, en anéantissant le tissu socio-économique, a frappé toute la population, incluant même les familles qui ont pu rester chez elles. Les déplacements massifs, l'enclavement de certaines provinces et grandes villes, l'absence de revenu et donc une baisse considérable du pouvoir d'achat, ont contraint les populations à développer des stratégies de survie suivantes. » (FAO 31 Aug 03)

Strategies described in the report include developing gardens and handicraft, reducing costs allocated to health, clothing and schooling, to ask religious associations for assistance, to become a daily laborer, etc.

The report also analyses mechanisms specific to certain provinces.

Deteriorating socio-economic situation due to the war (2001-2007)

- According to the World Bank, the DRC is probably now the poorest country in Africa (2007)
- Little health and education and road infrastructures existing before the two wars of 1996 and 1998 are in a state of collapse
- June 2001 WHO/UNICEF study reported that majority of Congolese live on 20 cents US a day, and consume less than two thirds of the calories required to meet basic needs
- Devaluation of currency and cost of imported goods (kerosene, salt) has eroded people's purchasing power
- Agricultural production has dropped and in mineral-rich areas, farmers have abandoned agriculture to dig for coltan, gold or diamond
- Deprived of state support, with little access to income, and without meaningful external aid, the resources and resilience of Congolese households have simply run out
- As a result of years of mismanagement, corruption and war, the DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita annual income of about \$98 in 2003
- Majority of the population survives on informal economic activities, mainly carried out by women (Feb 2002)
- The average Congolese is 53% poorer than 30 years earlier (2005)

"Situated on the Equator, the DRC has a wide climatic variety and immense agricultural resources. However, only ten percent of fertile land is being exploited. Due to four years of war, worsened by several natural disasters as the eruption of volcanoes, drought, etc., the agriculture sector has suffered immensely and the production has decreased as never before. The low population purchasing power and the lack of sufficient and balanced food have led to endemic malnutrition in the population.

Ever since the beginning of the war, the original trade circuits have been cut and roads and other infrastructure have further deteriorated. In addition, populations have abandoned their fields as a

result of displacement or in order to look for other means of subsistence. Others turned to subsistence agriculture only.

The most affected zones, especially the Kivus, northern Katanga and Ituri, used to be the main agricultural production areas in the country. Presently, the agricultural production of these parts of the country is estimated at ten percent of the pre-war production.

In the relatively stable areas the weak purchasing power and the destruction of infrastructures turn the farmers to survival cultivation. They actually lack the most basic essential agricultural inputs (tools or seeds) to resume their activities or to increase production." (UN 19 Nov 2002, p56)

"The little infrastructure that existed prior to the two wars of 1996 and 1998 has crumbled. Health and education systems are in a state of collapse, continuing to rely on support from the churches, local organisations, and international agencies to provide limited services to the population. The poor state of the roads all over the country, compounded by insecurity in the east, impedes trade and makes the delivery of humanitarian assistance difficult and costly. Of the 145,000km of roads, no more than 2,500km are asphalt. Many of the remaining roads are often impassable during the rainy season. The threat of armed attack leads many business people to abandon road traffic completely. River-transport connections along the Congo River and its tributaries, once the crucial highway of the DRC, have also been severed. In many places, access is only possible by air, putting many basic necessities, including medicines, beyond people's reach. The movement of food and other supplies from rural to urban centres has completely ceased, resulting in large food deficits in towns and reduced production in the rural hinterlands.

In eastern DRC, the war has reduced the poorest sections of the population, both displaced and host/local communities, to an extremely marginal existence. Conflict continues between the various armed groups and insecurity has worsened, particularly in rural areas. The devaluation of the currency and rise in the cost of imported goods such as kerosene and salt has eroded people's purchasing power. In isolated areas of rebel-held territories, such as Shabunda, Kindu, and East Kasai, which can only be reached by air, the cost of items such as salt, oil, soap, and even clothes has become even more prohibitive.

Agricultural production has dropped across the east of the country, meaning that some formerly surplus producing areas no longer grow enough to feed their populations. Insecurity, limited access to markets, cassava blight [1], and difficulties in making enough money from the sale of crops, all discourage people from cultivating. [...]

In mineral-rich areas such as Walikale, Punia, and Kalima, the short-term benefits of mining have also encouraged some farmers to abandon agriculture. Instead of working in their fields, they prefer to dig for coltan, gold, or diamond. This will have long-term implications for communities' access to food."

[1] Cassava is the staple for 70% of the Congolese population. Over the past 7 years, cassava crops across the country have suffered from viral and bacterial diseases that have totally wiped out production in some areas such as Bandundu. The war has hindered the application of measures to control the diseases and provide healthy disease-resistant varieties to farmers] (Oxfam August 2001, pp.9,24)

"International attention has focused on those areas and populations directly affected by the war but the reality is that the vast majority of Congo's 50 million people live on around 20 cents per person per day and eat less than two thirds of the calories a day needed to maintain health. Long deprived of state support, with dramatically reduced access to income, without meaningful

external aid, the resources and resilience of Congolese households have simply run out." (WHO 29 June 2001)

"In the economic front, the situation throughout the country continues to deteriorate rapidly, poverty and unemployment having reached intolerable levels. The economic purchasing power of the population is extremely weak and the majority of the population survives on informal economic activities, mainly carried out by women." (UN OCHA 28 Feb 2002, pp.18-19)

"The average Congolese is 53% poorer than 30 years earlier. GDP is lower now in real terms than at independence in 1960, having declined from US\$360 per head to US\$119 per head in 1990 and to US\$115 per head in 2004. This economic disaster definitely affects the defence integration and DDR process." (ISS 31 December 2005, p18)

" DRC is one of the poorest countries in Africa, with two-thirds or possibly three-quarters of the population living below the poverty threshold of a dollar a day. Some regions have poverty levels above 80 percent.

But as DRC has become more stable over the last year, there have been promising signs for the economy. GDP growth remained above 5 percent in 2006. More than US\$1 billion in foreign direct investment flowed to DRC in 2006 despite its ranking as the worst country in the world according to the "Doing Business Indicators."

Though the country's formal economy virtually collapsed in the last few decades, DRC is rich in natural and human resources: fertile soils, ample rainfall, and mineral resources. Mining of copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, zinc and other metals, as well as petroleum extraction, once accounted for 75 percent of its GDP." (The World Bank Group 8 March 2007)

Many displaced women have become the head of the household and pay an very heavy price (2001-2006)

- War had devastating effect on women's economic and social activities, and produced large number of widows and displaced women who became the head of the household
- In Maniema, at Kalonge, at Bunyakiri, at Shabunda, in northern Shaba, more than 60% of displaced families are headed by women
- Women, who often hold the household together, are paying an extraordinary price
- Female-headed households are generally the most vulnerable (2006)

"The war has had a devastating effect on women's economic and social activities. The already meagre resources and revenue of grassroots women's organisations, as well as their means of production, have been destroyed or looted. In addition to the volatile security situation, women also face basic structural problems that exacerbate their impoverishment. First of all, it is difficult for them to have access to land because of over-exploitation and overpopulation of fertile lands, and because of patriarchal traditions; on top of this, the economic infrastructure that would have enabled them to carry on productive activity has been destroyed, or did not exist anyway. Moreover, the heavy taxes imposed during the period of administration by the Rassemblement Démocratique Congolaise (RCD), especially on economic activities, have helped to erode women's incomes in particular.

The war has produced a large number of widows and displaced women who have become heads of household without their having had any preparation for this role. They live below the poverty line and depend largely on food aid (when it is available) for their survival. There are high rates of HIV/AIDS, partly owing to the widespread incidence of rape committed against women by forces fighting on the ground. War and poverty have also forced many women and girls into prostitution as a means of survival, and this makes them particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. This has been described as 'survival sex' and creates conditions "... in which abusive sexual relations are more widely accepted and where many men, both civilians and combatants, regard sex as a service that is easy to obtain by means of coercion". At the same time, domestic violence has increased, as a result of tension caused by the upsurge of unemployment among men, as well as fear and uncertainty regarding the country's political future." (International Alert & Al., 2005, pp.25-26)

"The heavy displacement of populations mostly lead to dislocation of various families. Separated, women become responsible for their children future and have the obligation to guarantee the survival of the family in such a chaotic situation. According to various sources, in Maniema, at Kalonge, at Buyakiri, at Shabunda, in northern Shaba, more than 60% of displaced populations are from families of which husbands have ran away or have been enrolled in the army or in armed militia. In Maniema, they are estimated to be 80%. The monoparental system as imposed on women is a source of permanent tension. Moreover, it is to be feared that this extended conflict will have side effects in establishing a culture of violence considered as normal lifestyle of which women are actually victims. [...]

[However] Far from being uniquely silent victims of the present conflict, women have progressively granted themselves a leadership role trying to ward off the consequences of the conflict on their families and attempting by all means to reduce the side effects of the war on their communities." (OCHA 6 March 2001)

"Women, who often hold the household together, are paying an extraordinary price. This year over 42,000 will die in childbirth alone. Under-nourishment, forced and economic prostitution, overwork for pathetic recompense, untreated ill health and the psychological strain of maintaining large families are exacting a terrible toll." (WHO 29 June 2001)

"The war has exhausted the reserves of the people of eastern Congo. The burden of trying to survive and assure that others in the family survive fall heavily on women. As the socio-economic situation worsens, more women and girls are resorting to trading sex for food, shelter, or money in order to provide for themselves and their families." (HRW June 2002, p21)

« Les ménages déplacés dirigés par les femmes sont généralement plus vulnérables que les autres car ils ont moins de stratégies de résilience disponibles. Ces ménages manquent généralement de personnes actives qui peuvent travailler pour subvenir aux besoins du ménage. Dans les quatre provinces où une étude a été conduite récemment, l'indice de stratégie de survie des ménages dirigés par les femmes est constamment plus élevé, ces ménages sont plus vulnérables, que ceux avec un chef de ménage masculine [...]. En plus, les pourvoyeurs des ménages menés par des femmes n'ont généralement qu'une faible éducation ce qui les rend encore plus vulnérables [...]. » (WFP 31 October 2006)

Public Participation

IDP committee in Ituri appeals for UN protection (June 2006)

“Le président du comité des déplacés Ngiti à Komanda a informé OCHA le dimanche 11 juin d'une attaque, que les membres de la communauté Lese s'apprêtaient à lancer contre les déplacés Ngiti du site anglican. Le BANBATT, contacté par la MONUC/Bunia, est vite intervenu pour calmer la situation. Pour rappel les Lesé avaient été délogés de leurs villages par les Ngiti. C'est en guise de représailles que les Lese veulent attaquer les Ngiti. Les autochtones de Komanda ne veulent pas de la présence des Ngiti dans leurs villages. C'est pourquoi, les Ngiti sollicitent la protection des acteurs humanitaires et de la MONUC.” (OCHA 16 June 2006)

Some registration centers for future electors opened in IDP camps of eastern DRC (December 2005)

- Registration of electors was major challenge in the context of a weak state lacking basic infrastructure, and in the absence of reliable data
- Registration was however successful, despite delays and a few security incidents
- Information campaigns on the registration and election process have had mixed results

L'élaboration de listes électorales constituait un défi majeur dans un contexte de faiblesse de l'Etat et des infrastructures de base, et en l'absence de données démographiques fiables. En dépit du retard engendré par des difficultés techniques et logistiques considérables, l'enregistrement des électeurs marque un succès incontestable, traduisant l'intérêt manifeste de la population. Le 15 décembre dernier, avant correction des données, un peu plus de 25 millions d'électeurs étaient enregistrés, sur une population éligible estimée à un maximum de 28 millions.

Débutées à Kinshasa le 20 juin 2005, les opérations d'enregistrement ont été étendues de façon séquentielle aux autres provinces, afin d'optimiser l'usage des ressources disponibles. L'utilisation d'une technologie avancée, avec collecte des données biométriques, permettait d'assurer la délivrance immédiate des cartes d'électeurs et de minimiser les risques de fraude. Les difficultés de coordination, l'absence d'infrastructures et de moyens de transport, les diverses pannes techniques et les actions de protestation d'agents électoraux payés avec des retards importants ont ralenti l'ouverture des 9,119 centres d'inscription répartis sur tout le territoire. Dans les provinces de l'Equateur et du Bandundu, les opérations n'ont ainsi pu débuter que le 25 septembre – quelques bureaux n'ayant été ouverts que fin novembre, et ont été poursuivies jusqu'au 15 décembre, atteignant des résultats comparables à ceux des autres provinces. En raison de ces retards, la détection des fraudes et erreurs relatives à l'enregistrement par contrôle des données biométriques n'a pu être réalisé que sur les listes des électeurs inscrits à Kinshasa. Dans les autres provinces, les listes électorales ne seront rendues définitives qu'avant les prochaines élections, après

correction des « doublons »

Quelques

centres spéciaux ont également été ouverts, dans le Sud Kivu pour les populations réfugiées en provenance de Tanzanie, ainsi que dans les camps de déplacés en Ituri, dans les Kivus et dans le nord du Katanga.

[...]

La loi référendaire confiait à la CEI la responsabilité de traduire le projet de Constitution dans les quatre

langues nationales (Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili) et d'en coordonner la diffusion et la vulgarisation.

La CEI et le PNUD/APEC ont travaillé de concert pour produire une série d'instruments de vulgarisation

mis à disposition des formations politiques et des organisations de la société civile. Leur diffusion, qui

devait être assurée par le financement de projets d'acteurs non étatiques, a été sérieusement retardée par la

complexité des procédures de financement du PNUD et le manque de capacités propres des acteurs non

étatiques. En dépit des initiatives diverses d'organisations de la société civile et du rôle important joué par

les églises dans les efforts de vulgarisation du projet de Constitution et d'information des électeurs sur les

procédures de vote, la campagne de sensibilisation a eu un impact fort limité. On notera cependant que les

projets sélectionnés portaient sur l'ensemble du processus électoral et pas seulement sur le référendum. Ils

pourront donc être mis en oeuvre pour assurer l'éducation civique et la sensibilisation électorale des

électeurs d'ici la tenue des prochaines élections.[...]

Le referendum constitutionnel s'est déroulé dans le calme sur l'ensemble du territoire de la République

Démocratique du Congo, à l'exception de quelques incidents signalés dans les provinces du Kasai, du Nord

Kivu ainsi que dans la Province Orientale. Les électeurs congolais, venus en nombre, ont généralement pu

exprimer leur choix librement." (Mission Electorale de l'UE en RDC 21 December 2005)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

Most IDPs were not able to vote on July 30 (2006)

"[...] pour la majorité des personnes déplacées, notamment celles se trouvant dans la partie Est de l'Ituri, au Nord-Kivu et au Centre Katanga, le 30 Juillet n'était pas un jour de vote. La plupart ont perdu leur carte électorale confisquée par les hommes armés ou égarées lors de leur fuite. Pour des raisons d'insécurité empêchant les déplacements, des IDPs n'avaient pas pu se faire enregistrer. D'autres ont tout simplement refusé de rentrer chez eux pour exercer leur droit civique par crainte de faire face aux exactions des groupes armés. Les communautés vivant dans les zones instables du sud de l'Ituri et dans la partie centre et nord du Sud-Kivu ont éprouvé d'énormes difficultés pour accéder aux bureaux de vote étant donné que l'insécurité empêche les mouvements de la population." (OCHA 15 August 2006)

« OCHA a rencontré le Viceprésident, Jean Pierre Bemba, le 19 juin 2006 afin de lui exposer les problèmes humanitaires dans la province. OCHA lui a expliqué les difficultés des humanitaires à répondre à l'ensemble des crises humanitaires et les contraintes sécuritaires et de protection pour les populations déplacées. Le Viceprésident a remercié les humanitaires pour les efforts qu'ils déploient. Il a également voulu s'assurer que les IDPs aient accès aux urnes lors des élections. » (OCHA 23 June 2006)

See also :

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 3 Aug 2006, DRC: Hear our voices - "Why we didn't vote"- displaced persons [[Internet](#)]

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 30 Jul 2006, DRC: Militiamen stop voters from going to polls [[Internet](#)]

Reuters Foundation, 29 Oct 2006

Congo army blocks thousands from voting – observer [[Internet](#)]

Registration of IDPs for national election (April 2006)

- According to article 7 of Law of 24 December 2004, registration must be done in area of principal or temporary residence
- Difficulty for IDPs to provide I.D. or five witnesses confirming their identity
- Difficulty for IDPs who return home following the registration process, and who are only registered in their area of displacement
- Some officials misinterpreted article 7, and decided that IDPs had to return home to be registered
- NRC advocated on behalf of IDPs and helped them to find solutions
- IDP camps could have benefited from the opening of registration centres in the camp

« La loi sur l'enregistrement des électeurs et les déplacés

La phase d'enrôlement des électeurs a été régie par la loi n° 04/028 du 24 décembre 2004 portant identification et enrôlement des électeurs en RDC. [...]

Chaque candidat électeur doit se faire identifier dans le centre d'inscription du ressort de sa résidence. En effet, selon l'article 7 de cette loi, les électeurs sont identifiés et enrôlés dans le centre d'inscription situé dans le ressort de leur résidence principale. Toutefois, l'individu en séjour hors du ressort de sa résidence principale peut se faire identifier et enrôler dans le centre d'inscription de sa résidence temporaire. Le ressort de résidence, détermine le même article, s'entend comme le territoire couvert par le centre d'inscription et incluant le lieu de résidence de la personne à identifier et à enrôler.

De la résidence

Cette disposition semble prendre en compte le problème des déplacés en ceci qu'ils peuvent se faire enrôler dans le milieu où ils se trouvent, qu'ils y aient trouvé une solution définitive (réinsertion, milieu de retour) ou qu'il s'agisse d'une installation provisoire (milieu d'accueil – une famille ou un camp -, situation de transit, déplacement à court terme). Le souci était que des personnes ne puissent pas manquer la phase d'enrôlement pour le seul motif qu'ils ne se retrouvent dans leur milieu de résidence habituelle. Mais elle a l'inconvénient, pour les déplacés en situation provisoire, de les considérer comme installés dans le ressort du bureau où ils se sont faits enregistrés parce que, ayant été inscrits dans un bureau, ils n'apparaîtront sur la liste des électeurs que de ce bureau.

Des pièces à présenter

Une autre disposition qui crée un problème pour les déplacés est l'article 10 de la même loi, évoquant les pièces à présenter pour justifier l'identité et l'âge de l'électeur. Il s'agit du certificat de nationalité ou l'attestation tenant lieu de certificat de nationalité, de la carte d'identité pour citoyen, du passeport national, du permis de conduire national sécurisé, du livret de pension congolais délivré par l'Institut National de Sécurité Sociale ou par toute autre institution congolaise légalement reconnue en tenant lieu, de la carte d'élève ou d'étudiant, ou de la carte de service. A défaut de l'une ou l'autre de ces pièces, sera pris en considération le témoignage fait devant le bureau du centre d'inscription par cinq témoins déjà inscrits sur la liste des électeurs du même centre d'inscription et résidant depuis 5 ans au moins dans le ressort du centre d'inscription.

Cette dernière éventualité a été envisagée afin de permettre aux personnes ne possédant pas l'une des pièces exigées par cette disposition de pouvoir se faire enregistrer et délivrer la carte d'électeur, celle-ci jouant d'ailleurs le rôle de carte d'identité provisoire. Et parmi les personnes ne disposant pas de titres, on pense facilement aux déplacés, mais aussi à plusieurs citoyens qui n'avaient pu obtenir des cartes d'identité, celles-ci n'étant plus délivrées depuis belle lurette.

b) L'intervention du IDPs Protection/ICLA Programme

Pour plusieurs déplacés, la phase d'enregistrement des électeurs ne s'est pas passée sans difficultés. D'une part, ils ne possédaient pas les pièces exigées par l'article 10 pour leur enregistrement, d'autre part, dans certains milieux, il leur était interdit de se faire enregistrés, au motif qu'ils devaient rentrer se faire enregistrer dans leur milieu d'origine.

De façon générale, la situation des déplacés se présente telle que pendant la fuite, ils perdent souvent leurs titres de propriété ou même les documents en rapport avec leur identification : soit qu'ils les abandonnent dans leur habitations, soit qu'ils les perdent durant leur périple pour l'exil ou des scènes de pillage, soit qu'ils ont été détruits de suite des intempéries. Dans ces conditions, les DP's n'ont pu être enregistrés qu'en recourant à la procédure des témoins, ce qui

souvent n'était pas facile étant donné qu'ils étaient nouveaux et peu connus dans le milieu. Il en a été ainsi pour les déplacés dans le territoire de Masisi, au Nord Kivu.

A propos des pièces à présenter pour se faire enrôler, dans certains milieux, le Programme IDPs Protection /ICLA est arrivé à un compromis avec la CEI pour que celle-ci admette l'enregistrement des déplacés sur présentation des jetons d'identification. Ce compromis a trouvé terrain d'application notamment dans le territoire de Beni au profit des déplacés venus de l'Ituri. Plusieurs d'entre eux avaient perdu leurs titres d'identification lors des événements ayant occasionné leur fuite ou tout au long de leur déplacement. Grâce à l'intervention du Programme IDPs Protection/ICLA, l'autorité locale leur avait octroyé des jetons qui servaient de pièce d'identité. [...]

D'un autre côté, la plus grande menace à l'égard des déplacés est venue de l'interprétation que certaines personnes (des agents de la CEI, des autorités locales et même des leaders d'opinion) ont fait de l'article 7, notamment du concept « lieu de résidence de la personne à identifier et à enrôler ». La perception de ce concept était telle que le fait d'avoir été enrôlée en un endroit conférait à la personne enrôlée la qualité d'originaire du milieu. A ce titre, tous les déplacés devaient retourner se faire enregistrer dans leur milieu d'origine. Ainsi, dans les premiers jours de l'opération d'enrôlement, dans certains endroits, il a été observé un refus d'accès aux bureaux d'enrôlement pour les déplacés.

Le programme IDPs Protection/ ICLA n'est pas resté inactif face à ce problème. Il a saisi l'autorité administrative locale, en lui rappelant sa responsabilité d'aider les déplacés à obtenir des pièces d'identité ou leur remplacement. Comme nous l'avons déjà évoqué, la carte d'électeur joue aussi le rôle de carte d'identité. Il était donc de l'obligation de l'autorité locale d'intervenir en faveur des déplacés afin qu'ils obtiennent les documents dont ils avaient besoin pour pouvoir exercer leurs droits civils et politiques, conformément au PD 20, alinéa 21.

Concrètement, pour les déplacés du camp Kabutonga, au Nord Katanga, dans les périphéries de Kalemie, il ne leur était pas accordé d'accéder aux bureaux d'enregistrement, la plupart d'eux étant venus de la province du Sud Kivu, du territoire de Fizi principalement. En compagnie de l'autorité locale, le Département ICLA/ NRC de Kalemie, ont rencontré les agents de la CEI et de leur entretien, il a été reconnu le droit pour les déplacés d'être aussi enregistrés.

Par ailleurs, le Programme IDPs Protection /ICLA aurait aimé que les déplacés soient considérés d'une façon particulière par rapport aux autres citoyens, compte tenu des difficultés et de la situation précaire. Ainsi, d'une part ils auraient bénéficié de plus de sensibilisation avant l'enrôlement, comme il en a été organisé pour les autres couches de la population. D'autre part, des bureaux d'enregistrement auraient dû être ouverts dans les camps des déplacés. En effet, le nombre des bureaux d'enregistrement était fonction de l'estimation des personnes enregistrables dans un milieu, en raison d'un bureau pour 700 personnes. Certains camps des déplacés atteignent facilement ce chiffre, comme le camp CECA 20 de l'axe Eringeti, qui comptait 564 ménages en décembre 2005, ou le camp Tuha aux environs de Beni qui, lui, abritait 1211 personnes. Dans ce milieu, la stratégie a été d'implanter des bureaux aux environs des camps des déplacés. Au Nord-Katanga, où existent des camps abritant plusieurs milliers de ménages, aucun bureau n'a été ouvert dans ces camps. Les déplacés non plus n'ont dénoncé aucune difficulté liée à l'absence de bureaux électoraux dans leurs camps. » (NRC April 2006)

62% of women in DRC marry under customary law and cannot get inheritance priority (Oct 2001)

"A national campaign to inform people of the advantages to officially registering their marriages was launched last week by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Family (Ministere des Affaires sociales et Famille) of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in collaboration with UNICEF.

According to a statement from UNICEF in Kinshasa, a widow and her children are given inheritance priority under state law, as opposed to customary law, where other family members may make claims of the deceased assets. A woman is also entitled to greater protection against spousal abuse under state law. An estimated 62 percent of women in the DRC marry under customary law, while only 25 percent officially register their marriages with the state." (IRIN 1 Oct 2001)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Land and property disputes identified as major obstacle to return (2007)

“The vast majority of IDPs is eager to return home and is expected to do so as soon as basic security is restored. It is therefore necessary to create and maintain a protective environment in return areas in 2007. Land and property rights disputes have been identified as a major obstacle to return, and as a potential source of renewed conflict in several provinces.” (UNHCR 13 February 2007)

North Kivu: land and ethnicity as a cause of conflict (September 2005)

- Local authorities have manipulated the tension around ethnicity and land issues as a means of securing power base and control over economic resources
- Traditionally, the distribution of land was primarily in the gift of the local customary chief, who would extract some form of tribute from the tenant
- During their rule, the RCD-Goma and RCD-ML ensured its officials controlled the civilian administration system and replaced a number of customary leaders, strengthening their control over land

“Ethnicity in North-Kivu, as in other densely populated areas of the DRC, is closely linked to the issue of land tenure and political power. Throughout recent history, local authorities have manipulated the tension around ethnicity and land issues as a means of securing their power base and their control over economic resources, be this agricultural, forestry or mining land. Land or the lack of it remains the strongest factor governing the economic survival of most people in North-Kivu, and has contributed at different times to the creation of ethnic-based militia and outbreaks of ethnic violence.

Traditionally, the distribution of land was primarily in the gift of the local customary chief, who would extract some form of tribute from the tenant. Belgian colonial rule did not fundamentally alter this system, although the colonial scheme to transplant Rwandans to North-Kivu did disrupt traditional land-holding patterns by allocating the Rwandan newcomers plots of land within a specified area purchased from the local Hunde chief, and placing this area under the authority of a Rwandan chief. Towards the end of colonial rule, the Rwandan chiefdom was abolished and the Banyarwanda placed under Hunde tribal authority. This, and demographic growth over time, combined to make land tenure increasingly uncertain, conflictual and bound up with ethnic identity(28).

Post-independence, these pressures led to a series of small-scale ethnic conflicts over land, most notably a 1963-65 conflict which pitted the Hunde, Nande and Nyanga against the Banyarwanda, who were seeking greater political autonomy in the zones in which they were established. A gradual shift in land use from crop agriculture to more extensive cattle-farming, especially in Masisi and Rutshuru territories, concentrating large areas of pasture in the hands of a small number of mainly Tutsi owners at the expense of (often Hutu) smallholders created additional resentments. A new land law in 1973, which finally abolished traditional customary control of land,

further undermined the authority of mainly Hunde and Nyanga tribal leaders(29). These developments deepened tensions over land between the "indigenous" ethnic groups and the Banyarwanda, as well as between Hutu and Tutsi populations.

Ethnic tensions in North-Kivu became particularly inflamed as President Mobutu rule began to crumble. This was notably so after President Mobutu launched the "democratisation" process - a transition to multiparty democracy - in April 1990. Political office (which from the Mobutu period to the present day has generally served its holder for private profit) lay primarily in the hands of the Hunde and Nande. Alarmed at the prospect that democratisation might lead to loss of power, Hunde and Nande politicians moved to exclude the Banyarwanda from participating in national debate and elections by labelling them as "foreigners". At the same time, Hutu Banyarwanda(30) began a campaign of resistance to Hunde and Nande political control. Ethnic-based militia were formed, and in March 1993 violence erupted when Hunde and Nyanga militias massacred Hutu and Tutsi civilians in Masisi and Walikale territories. Reprisal succeeded reprisal and by September the violence had left an estimated 7,000 dead and 200,000 displaced.

In July 1994, the arrival of more than one million Hutu refugees from Rwanda further aggravated an explosive situation. Armed Hutu militias attacked Tutsi and other ethnic communities in North-Kivu, raiding cattle and agricultural property and establishing control over large areas which were once ethnically mixed. Much of this fighting appeared designed to drive out the remaining Tutsis from the area. The Zairian authorities failed to control the fighting and offered little protection to civilians. Landowners on all sides were reported to have hired armed groups and/or Zairean government forces to protect their land and property.

The situation changed again after the fall of President Mobutu and the subsequent Rwandan and Ugandan invasion in August 1998. During this period, the RCD-Goma, with Rwandan government assistance or acquiescence, organized the clandestine return of Congolese Tutsis living in refugee camps in Rwanda to North-Kivu. Years of violence and massive population displacement, however, had by this stage removed any certainty about who owned or held title to particular pieces of land. Among the non-Tutsi populations, many suspected the Tutsi returnees of harbouring Rwandan Tutsi and accused the Rwandan Government and RCD-Goma of masterminding a systematic, illegal Tutsi "land-grab" of areas of North-Kivu. A number of legal cases about land tenure were submitted to the North-Kivu courts during this time, but the judicial authorities, under the control or menace of the RCD-Goma, failed to resolve them.

During its rule, the RCD-Goma also ensured its officials controlled the civilian administration system, in the process replacing a number of customary tribal leaders with Banyarwanda. The RCD-ML similarly ensured that its loyalists controlled northern North-Kivu. The new structures ensured RCD-Goma and RCD-ML control over land, natural resources and lucrative customs revenues in their respective zones, all of which were directed towards the continuation of conflict and the private profit of leading officials." (AI 28 September 2005)

Lack of access to land is seen as a structural cause of the conflict in eastern DRC (March 2005)

- In Ituri and in Masisi (North Kivu), contested purchase and expansion of agricultural and ranching concessions have been identified as one of the causes of violence
- The present conflict has radically changed land access patterns, through forced displacement and shifts in the level of authority enjoyed by different customary and administrative leaders

"The complex conflicts in the Eastern DRC have numerous sources. In addition to various economic and political issues, ranging from the military and economic strategies of Western

powers and neighbouring countries, the weak nature of the state in DRC, and the historical relationships between ethnic groups, these include natural resources of much greater value, and much more 'lootable' character, than agricultural or pastoral land - such as diamonds, gold, cobalt, cassiterite, and coltan.

Nonetheless, land remains important for several reasons. First, insecure or insufficient access to land in many parts of the East is a significant factor in the impoverishment of thousands of rural people, and is seen by many as a 'structural' cause of conflict.

Second, in the case of Ituri Territory, contested purchase and expansion of agricultural and ranching concessions have been identified as one of the proximate causes of violence; and the same may be true in Masisi. Third, the present conflict has radically changed land access patterns, through a number of mechanisms including forced displacement and shifts in the level of authority enjoyed by different customary and administrative leaders. Conflict is producing new competition for land, as part of a wider renegotiation of the local economic space and re-drawing of ethnic, class, and other 'boundaries' between groups. Land is no longer merely a source of conflict, but a resource for its perpetuation.

In the DRC, a 'modern' system of land administration for white settlers, enabling them to establish their plantations, was superimposed on traditional systems, with compensation paid to the customary leaders (mwami), rather than to the people, and leading eventually to an undermining of both the customary and statutory systems.

Colonial promotion of migration also generated conflict over resource access. After the First World War, the Belgians brought Rwandan farmers into parts of Eastern DRC (such as Masisi) to provide the necessary labour for the newly created agricultural plantations and mining centres. When denied equal access to land after independence, they finally started purchasing land, but local chiefs continued to expect customary tribute. This explains the first major conflict: the 'Guerre des Kinyarwanda', which lasted for two years, was the first rebellion against chiefly abuse and the first step of a spiral of unending local violence.

The independent Zairian state introduced a land law emphasising individual ownership in 1973, removing the legal status from land occupied under customary rule. This enabled those in political or economic power to appropriate any land not yet titled. The traditional authorities became the privileged intermediaries for the sale of land. Rewarded with ministerial posts and newly armed with Zairian citizenship, immigrants from Rwanda were able to concentrate a large number of former colonial estates in their hands. In Ituri Territory, similar developments could be observed. Here, it was members of the Hema who profited from their easy access to education and to employment opportunities within the local colonial administration, the mines and plantations.

With a peasant population under growing stress in the land-scarce areas of Eastern DRC, one might have expected more (or earlier) protest or regular outbursts of violence by peasant farmers against those responsible for land alienation. To understand why this did not happen, the traditional authorities need to be the focal point of analysis. In order to guard their position, and avoid blame for land sales, ethnic discourse proved to be a perfect instrument. This significantly raised ethnic tensions. In North Kivu, a wave of inter-ethnic violence which erupted in March 1993, lasted for more than six months and killed between 6,000 and 10,000 people, while more than 250,000 people were displaced.

The fragile 1993 peace settlement in North Kivu lasted until the arrival of more than one million Hutu refugees from Rwanda and the settling of the ex-Armed Forces of Rwanda (ex-Far) and Interahamwe militia in camps in Masisi and the Ruzizi Plain. A new coalition between the refugee-leadership and militias, shifted the balance of power, creating the concept of 'Hutu-land' and leading to persecution of the local Tutsi population.

Historical analysis of land access dynamics before 1994 suggest that even if the conflict-related changes could be rectified, and 'law and order' restored in Eastern DRC, a return to the status quo will not lead to an equitable outcome. Only a reform of land laws and institutions, along with some form of land redistribution, could achieve that." (ODI 1 March 2005)

Dual land system and resources like coltan have increased tensions in eastern DRC (August 2002)

- DRC has two land tenure systems, the modern and the customary
- In eastern DRC, land ownership is still believed to belong to the traditional king who distributes the land to its subjects
- Many fields have been left unattended as a result of forced displacement or the involvement of some section of the population in coltan digging

"The DRC has two recognised land tenure systems: the modern and the customary. Under the modern system, the government owns all land. The right to use land is thus assigned or allocated by the government through the Department of Land Affairs, Environment, Nature Conservation, and Tourism.

Under the customary land tenure system, land ownership is collective: groups or clans hold land. The group, through its appointee, assigns land for use to its members. Land used by a family over a long period of time is recognized by the group or clan as belonging to that family, but the family may not sell the land because, in practice, land ownership rights belong, ultimately, to the national government.

However, in places where strong chieftaincy exists, land ownership is believed to belong to the traditional king (Mwami) who then distributes it to his subjects through a sophisticated system of reward and punishment. This system is still very much alive in the eastern parts of the DRC, especially in the South Kivu Province where many traditional chiefs command authority. Allegiance to this system may also explain why the land issue is linked to the control of power and has become a sensitive matter. In particular, this aspect was improperly dealt with during Mobutu's regime. Indeed, Mobutu used to buy the cooperation of the Bamis – allowing them to continue exercising their traditional powers, while the official laws and regulations of the country said otherwise. The Banyamulenge factor in the war in DRC found its meaning around the struggle for land ownership and recognition of Mwami power. In this sense, the issue of citizenship (which sparked off the Banyamulenge violent uprising against the Mobutu regime) was just another way to claim the right to land ownership.

Agriculture's contribution to exports has declined sharply over the 40 years since independence. In particular, the illegal exploitation of natural resources (including coltan) has impacted on agricultural production. Many fields have been left unattended as a result of forced migration or the involvement of some section of the population in coltan digging. Agricultural productivity has thus declined – with resultant food shortages in urban areas and soaring food prices.

Across the east of the country, formerly surplus producing areas no longer grow enough to feed their populations. Reasons include insecurity, limited access to markets, cassava blight, and difficulties in making enough money from the sale of crops. Moreover, the mine exploitation has diverted the existing manpower from agricultural activities to mine exploitation, especially coltan. In mineral-rich areas such as Walikale, Punia, and Kalima, the short term benefits of mining have also encouraged some farmers to abandon agriculture. Instead of working in their fields, they prefer to dig for coltan, gold, or diamonds. In addition to the already high level of food insecurity in places in South and North Kivu, there is an additional problem posed by armed groups from all

sides, who sustain themselves by stealing the limited food and crops from communities who are already struggling to survive.” (ACTS August 2002, pp.170-171)

Local NGO Aide et Action pour la Paix published a brochure to help IDPs know their property rights (2004)

- While the land of IDPs is often occupied, few know where to seek justice and recover their property
- The local NGO Aide et Action pour la Paix (AAP) published a simplified version of the property law of 1973, with the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council

« Parmi les obstacles majeurs au retour des déplacés dans leur milieu d'origine figure la dépossession par ruse ou par violence de leurs champs par des riches. Les personnes déplacées dont les champs sont occupés illégalement ne savent pas à qui se confier pour recouvrer leurs droits, et cela, à cause de l'ignorance de la loi dite foncière.

C'est pourquoi, Aide et Action pour la Paix, AAP en sigle, a pensé que la vulgarisation de la loi de 1973 à travers sa publication Etude Juridique pourrait contribuer à la protection des droits des déplacés dont la vulnérabilité expose à beaucoup d'abus.

Le Conseil Norvégien pour les Réfugiés / Goma, dans sa dynamique de protection et d'assistance aux personnes déplacées, a accepté d'appuyer la production et la multiplication de cette brochure et nous lui en remercions.

La présente publication ne reflète pas l'intégralité de la loi de 1973, mais tente de présenter les grands principes en matière foncière.

Cette brochure servirait de guide et renforcerait le travail amorcé en faveur des personnes déplacées. Tout citoyen pourra savoir la garantie du droit foncier par la Constitution de la Transition, les institutions de l'Etat qui interviennent en matière foncière, les catégories des terres qui existent en République Démocratique du Congo, comment acquérir le terrain, les obligations du concessionnaire et de l'Etat, la procédure en cas de conflit foncier, la succession et la prescription en matière foncière.

Que nos lecteurs trouvent, dans les lignes qui suivent, une perspective pour protéger et assister les personnes déplacées. » (AAP 2004, introduction)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

There are more people returning than newly displaced (2006-2007)

- Nearly half a million IDPs went back to their places of origin in 2006
- Over 10,000 families recently returned home in Mitwaba territory, Katanga (March 07)

“The optimism is not just based on the fact that elections have been held but also on the fact that partners have recorded definite improvements in malnutrition rates and mortality rates throughout DRC and that far more people are returning home from displacement than are fleeing their homes.” (ECHO 14 February 2007)

“Despite some returnee movements continuing in central Katanga and North Kivu, most of the country’s 1.48 million IDPs will be unable to return home during September, many of them missing the upcoming planting season.

Returning IDPs in Katanga and returning refugees in South Kivu face enormous difficulties to restart their shattered lives – their home villages have been destroyed, basic services are often non-existent, and livelihoods eroded. Funding for vital humanitarian programmes targeting returnees is often limited.[...]

Over 80.000 IDPs in the central Katanga are also returning home for planting season, posing significant humanitarian challenges to restore basic services and livelihoods in home villages. This challenge is amplified by a lack of funding and limited capacity of operational actors to undertake basic rehabilitation, unlikely to be resolved during September.[...]

High levels of returnee movements are being noted in areas such as the Territory of Djugu, in Ituri, and the central Triangles area of Katanga. Mitwaba, once a town hosting a major concentration of the Triangle’s IDPs, has seen nearly half of its IDP population return home in July and August. In September, more returnee movements are likely. IDP return movements in Katanga have been motivated both by an improvement in security, following the disarmament of Gédéon’s Mayi-Mayi group, and the need to return to fields for the planting season. The challenge for the humanitarian community, and particularly for the Early Recovery cluster, is to ensure that the returnees are sufficiently supported, to ensure that they can restart their shattered lives.

Often, however, this is not the case. Insufficient funding for returnee projects, coupled with the limited capacity of operational actors in returnee areas, continue to lead to delays in rehabilitating basic services and difficulties in providing the necessary assistance to restart livelihoods. This is also the case in refugee return areas. In South Kivu, UNHCR has now resumed the repatriation of the Congolese refugees from Tanzania to South Kivu, after having suspended these operations during the first presidential round. Some Congolese refugees expressed their desire to postpone their return in order to assess the evolution of the political situation following the clashes in Kinshasa, however convoys are likely to continue through September. Challenges for the humanitarian community to properly reinsert these returnees into their communities will be

exacerbated by physical access constraints during September, as flooding and other damage is expected on the few roads in the region during the rainy season.” (OCHA 31 August 2006)

“The situation in return areas is usually worse than the national average, as fighting and looting have led to a complete breakdown of public services and IDP returnees often find health centres, schools and their houses destroyed upon their return.” (UNHCR 13 February 2007)

See also:

Refugees International (RI), 28 Dec 2006, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Front-line communities need help recovering from years of war [[Internet](#)]

Refugee Return update (February 2007)

“Since October 2004, some 89,000 Congolese refugees have repatriated * mostly to Equateur, South Kivu and Katanga provinces.” (UNHCR 13 February 2007)

“With today's return, the total number of Congolese returnees to the DRC this year has passed the 22,000 mark. Of them, more than 14,000 went to South Kivu province and some 7,300 to Equateur province in the north-western part of the country. There are still more than 350,000 Congolese refugees in need of solutions. Most of them are hosted by neighbouring Tanzania, Zambia and Republic of Congo.” (UNHCR 1 September 2006)

“Suite à un recensement initié par l'ONG locale ACP, au courant de ce mois de mars 2007, sur 95% des zones de retour à travers le territoire de Mitwaba, 10.816 ménages des retournés ont été enregistrés Suivant les informations relayées par l'ONG NRC, environ 20 ménages expulsés de la Tanzanie ont été identifiés à Kabimba (60km Nord de Kalemie) Le HCR a été saisi des cas de 54 ménages des déplacés internes se trouvant dans les sites de Katuba et Kamalondo en pleine ville de Lubumbashi et d'un autre groupe de déplacés internes se trouvant à Kasomeno (120 Km sur l'axe Kilwa) qui désirent rentrer dans leurs villages d'origine. Le HCR entrevoit procéder prochainement à leur identification et vérification.” (OCHA 23 March 2007)

Thousands return to homes in North Kivu (January - February 2007)

- The villagers are returning as dissident general Laurent Nkunda's fighters are being reintegrated into the national army, following talks between his rebel movement and the government
- 60 per cent of the people displaced in December 2006 in Sake had returned home by January
- Upon return, they found their fields looted by government troops and high food prices

“Thousands of people displaced by fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo's northeastern province of North Kivu have started returning home, humanitarian officials said.

Andrew Zadel, the communications officer at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Goma, the main town in the province, said those returning had sought refuge southwest of Rutshuru territory and in villages to the west of Rutshuru.

The villagers are returning as dissident general Laurent Nkunda's fighters are being reintegrated into the national army, following talks between his rebel movement and the government. Nkunda has led a rebellion in North Kivu since 2004, against what he perceives as the persecution of members of his ethnic community, who are originally from Rwanda.

Two of Nkunda's brigades, the 81st and 83rd, are being integrated into the national army, while three integrated battalions have been redeployed.

At least 1,700 people have returned to the villages of Luke and Murambi, 36km southwest of the territory of Masisi, the scene of fighting on 20 January.

'Perhaps the process of reintegration into the army has had a positive effect on the situation of the displaced because they now have enormous confidence to return to their villages,' Zadel said.

Meanwhile, the security situation in North Kivu remains precarious due to fresh fighting on Monday between the newly reintegrated brigades and rebels of the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, who have been in the region since the Rwandan genocide in 1994, according to humanitarian agents.[...]

Most villagers had already fled several times after several battles in the area. After the fighting on 27 December 2006, at least 11,855 people fled Runyoni and Jombe villages in Bunagana, on the border with Uganda, when Nkunda's men attacked regular army positions. Another 21,450 left their villages in Rubare, Kalengera and Rutshuru centres after fighting broke out at the end of November 2006." (IRIN 7 February 2007)

"Selon les informations recueillies par la mission d'évaluation du cluster Sécurité Alimentaire ce jour auprès du se-crétaire du chef de groupement de Sake, 60% de la population serait retournée.

Sur le plan de la sécurité alimentaire, la population avait fui les affrontements de décembre dernier (période de récoltes de maïs et haricot), laissant derrière elle les récoltes dans les champs, que les militaires FARDC ont pil-lées, à l'exception de la plantation de café près de Sake. A leur retour à Sake, la population s'est contentée de glaner ce que les militaires ont laissé dans les champs. Conséquences : pas de vivres disponibles en stock ; la période de semis (saison culturale) interviendra d'ici fin janvier et début février et la population n'aura rien à semer ; hausse des prix des denrées alimentaires (maïs, haricot, patate douce, etc.) et la population mange désormais une fois par jour contrairement à la situation avant la crise ; l'influence de l'éruption du volcan Nyamulagira sur l'agri-culture a contribué à la baisse de la production agricole. Besoins ressentis : houes, semences et vivres." (OCHA 9 January 2007)

100,000 returnees in Katanga Province find no schools, no health centres and nothing to eat (2006)

- According to inter-agency assessments in July 2006, close to 80 percent of IDPs returned home without assistance in May-June

"Over 100,000 displaced people are flooding home as militias disarm in southeast Congo but with many houses destroyed they pose a fresh humanitarian challenge for the devastated country, a U.N. official said.

[...]

Mai Mai fighters, drafted to repulse rebels backed by neighbouring Rwanda during the war, had until recently refused to participate in a U.N.-backed disarmament programme.

But breakthroughs in the last six months have brought greater stability to Katanga, Congo's copper heartland, and more than halved the number of displaced people there from 200,000 to an estimated 80,000 today.

"The situation in Katanga has greatly improved. The new challenge is to assist people who are returning home," Gerson Brandao, the local humanitarian affairs officer for U.N. aid coordination office OCHA, told Reuters late on Tuesday.

"There are 100,000 people in Katanga starting to return home but their homes do not exist any more. We do not have the resources to help these people."

[...]

"The people returning have absolutely nothing: their villages have been destroyed by the militias or the Congolese army. There are no schools, no health centres and nothing to eat," he said.

The task of providing aid is complicated by crumbling infrastructure worsened by years of conflict and neglect even before the 1998-2003 war, which killed 4 million people.

In the rainy season aid convoys can take up to five weeks to travel 500 km (300 miles) from the regional capital Lubumbashi." (Reuters 30 August 2006)

"The UN refugee agency handed out aid packages to more than 6,300 people during the first 10 days of an operation to help displaced people who have returned to their homes in remote areas of Democratic Republic of the Congo's Katanga province.

UNHCR's return assistance project, conducted by implementing partner HI-Atlas Logistique, began on September 25 with distributions in three villages located in the Sampwe area, some 350 kilometres north of the provincial capital Lubumbashi.

Almost all of the inhabitants of the villages had fled their homes to escape fighting between central government forces and the Mayi-Mayi tribal militia in the vast province. Most of the more than 6,300 people to receive aid packages were returnees.

"I am happy to see that we are not forgotten," a village chief told the distribution team. It took three days for four UNHCR trucks from Lubumbashi to reach the remote villages in the savannah. But the wet season has begun and heavier rains will likely make much of the region impassable in October.

"The start of this project is a manifestation of UNHCR's commitment to implement our new responsibilities for IDPs [internally displaced people]. For the first time, we are providing return packages to IDP returnees in a geographical area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that does not coincide with refugee returns," said Eusebe Hounsokou, UNHCR's regional representative.

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies have put a priority on supporting the return home of IDPs in eastern areas of the province. Inter-agency assessments carried out last July revealed that up to 80% of IDPs had returned home by their own means in the previous two months. The number of people in the IDP settlements in the towns of Mitwaba and Dubie has fallen considerably.

The UNHCR return package helps to meet the immediate needs of the internally displaced once they get back to their villages – often to find their homes and possessions have been destroyed. The returnees in Sampwe received kitchen sets, mosquito nets, blankets, plastic sheets, jerry

cans, cloth and house-building tools. Other UN agencies provide food, seeds and agricultural tools.” (UNHCR 5 October 2006)

See also:

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 3 May 2006

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Aid distributed to returnees in the Lake Upembaarea [[Internet](#)]

UN Assesses IDPs’ return to eastern Katanga (July 2006)

- The returnees from Sampwe returned to a scene of devastation, with over 80 percent of the housing and infrastructure of their villages burned or destroyed

“A joint UN interagency assessment mission which visited eastern Katanga Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 12 and 14 July has found that in the Sampwe area, about 80 percent (some 2,200 families) of people internally displaced by violence over the last year have spontaneously returned to their villages of origin in recent weeks. Returnees said they were going home because they wanted to get their fields prepared ahead of the rainy season starting in October. Food supplies are chronically short in the region and missing the planting season would have a disastrous effect in areas of displacement and return.

The mission team talked to returnees, local officials and non-governmental sector and learned that displaced people may be returning home in other regions of Katanga province as well. An estimated 170,000 people (from Katanga) are displaced within Katanga province. Following the recent surrender of Mayi-Mayi militia leader, the violence has significantly subsided in the province.

The returnees from Sampwe returned to a scene of devastation, with over 80 percent of the housing and infrastructure of their villages burned or destroyed. The previous harvest had been destroyed or looted by militia groups. The assessment mission visited a number of return communities and identified the priority needs for returnees as shelter, basic household items, clothing, food rations, seeds and tools. The returnees need assistance before the rainy season to prevent extreme hardship. UNHCR plans to distribute return packages and shelter construction kits to returnees with partner agencies helping with assistance for other needs.

While the return movement is encouraging, the risk of destabilisation in the return areas in Katanga remains high. Main concerns are continued reports of human rights violations committed by militia groups and government soldiers, although their frequency has dropped notably.” (UNHCR 25 July 2006)

Many IDPs in Ituri are afraid to return, fearing armed forces and militias (July 2006)

- MONUC insists that measures be adopted to stop and punish extremely grave human rights violations committed by the Congolese army
- It also said that many IDPs could not go home due to the current climate of violence

“Meanwhile, the situation in Gety remained critical. OCHA’s Ituri information officer, Idrissa Conteh, said on Friday: ‘The problem is not only in Gety. There are emergencies everywhere in Ituri and returnees have nearly the same needs as the displaced. They lost everything during the fighting and on their return must begin life from scratch.’

A displaced woman, who declined to be named, said, ‘We have not returned because we are afraid of militiamen who have taken to raping us on the roads and in the fields.’

The militiamen belong to the FRPI and the MRC. Brig-Gen Mbuayamba Nsiona, the Congolese army officer sent to secure Ituri for the elections against these militia, had ordered his troops to provide safe corridors to enable people to return to their homes. However, this had failed to allay the fears of residents in the area.

'These soldiers are no different from the militiamen. They suspect us of being militiamen and steal from us,' Jean Androzo, a teacher at a camp in Katoni of 16,000 displaced people, said." (IRIN 31 July 2006)

« Le processus de brassage, qui fait partie de l'Accord global et inclusif, devrait s'achever avant la fin de la transition. Bien que quelque 40.000 soldats aient été brassés et redéployés, la MONUC est préoccupée par le comportement de beaucoup d'entre eux. Elle insiste pour que des mesures urgentes soient prises afin d'arrêter et de sanctionner les violations extrêmement graves des droits de l'homme fréquemment commises par les FARDC. Beaucoup de ces violations ont été commises dans le contexte d'opérations militaires continues contre les groupes de milices qui restent actifs dans l'Ituri, les Kivus et dans le Katanga [...].

Cette situation de violence et d'insécurité empêche les civils déplacés de rentrer à leurs lieux d'origine. » (MONUC 27 July 2006, p10)

45,000 IDPs return to Kibirizi, North Kivu (2006)

- People had fled in February 2006 and had lost most of their belongings due to lootings
- ICRC is distributing non-food items and facilitates family reunification

"Entre le 15 et le 19 mai, le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (CICR) a distribué des secours à 45 000 personnes retournées dans la localité de Kibirizi (province du Nord-Kivu).

Suite à la dégradation de la situation sécuritaire à Rutshuru et ses environs depuis le mois de février de cette année, les habitants de la région avaient massivement fui leurs villages pour se réfugier, soit dans le sud de la province, dans les localités de Kanyabayonga, Kayna et Kirumba, soit vers Butembo et Béni, plus au nord. Dans leur fuite, ces populations avaient perdu l'essentiel de leurs biens à cause des pillages. Avec le retour progressif au calme, près de 70% de ces populations ont commencé à regagner leurs villages.

Après plusieurs évaluations conduites dans la région pendant les mois de mars et d'avril, et en complémentarité avec d'autres acteurs humanitaires, le CICR a décidé d'aider ces familles en leur fournissant une aide sous forme d'articles de première nécessité, pour qu'elles puissent subvenir à leurs besoins vitaux. C'est ainsi qu'il a distribué sur place des milliers d'assortiments d'ustensiles de cuisine, des couvertures, des seaux, du savon, des houes et des vêtements.

Parallèlement, le CICR a observé qu'environ 200 enfants étaient séparés de leur famille. Dans ce contexte et quand cela est possible, l'institution s'efforce de faciliter les retrouvailles familiales dans les plus brefs délais. En outre, des problèmes d'approvisionnement en eau potable ont été constatés, dans les localités d'accueil surtout. Le CICR étudie actuellement une solution durable à ce problème dans les localités de Kirumba et Kayna. En ce qui concerne la santé, le CICR a apporté en mars aux deux centres de santé et à l'hôpital de Kirumba une assistance ponctuelle composée de matériel médical et de médicaments suffisants pour une durée de trois mois. Une autre assistance d'urgence a été livrée au centre de santé de Kibirizi. Cela a permis aux quatre structures médicales de continuer de fonctionner et de réduire l'afflux de patients vers la localité de Kayna." (UNSC 22 May 2006)

IDPs and refugees return home in South Kivu with little assistance (April 2006)

- Many returnees do not manage to reach their villages of origin, becoming de facto displaced, forced to stay with relatives or residents
- Humanitarian actors humanitarian groups have often been unable to assess conditions in return areas, first due to security concerns and then to logistical constraints
- According to Refugees International, returning IDPs have particular needs related to shelter and protection that are being ignored

"Refugees and internally displaced people are returning home in South Kivu Province of the Congo, but face enormous difficulties: basic assistance and services in their communities are minimal or nonexistent. Donors and humanitarian agencies must coordinate their interventions, especially to provide the seeds and tools essential for self-sufficiency, and increase community capacity to absorb returnees.

The southern part of South Kivu, like other parts of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was engulfed in the 1998 - 2002 conflict. Civilians were caught up in the fighting between the Rwanda-backed RCD (*Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie*) and local Mai-Mai militia, and targeted by the Rwandan army during its occupation of the area. From Uvira southwards, hundreds of thousands abandoned their homes. Those living close to Lake Tanganyika crossed over and sought safety in Tanzania, gaining refugee status, while others scattered to the west, depending on residents of remote villages (often recently displaced themselves) for land and shelter.

The gradual improvement in security following the withdrawal of the Rwandan army and the disengagement of Mai-Mai militia has now allowed some of the 153,000 Congolese refugees in Tanzania to return. [...]

Many returnees do not manage to reach their villages of origin, becoming de facto displaced, forced to stay with relatives or residents who agree to take them in. Some choose to stay in Baraka or other towns; others search for shelter near drop-off points after the UNHCR trucks depart. Some families sell their cooking utensils or other parts of their return kit to pay for onward transportation to their village. The food ration distributed by UNHCR also runs out very quickly. A recently returned woman told Refugees International, "The three-month food ration we received lasted only for a few weeks. We needed to share it with those who are hosting us."

Even for those who reach home, however, the returnees have little to help them restart their lives and become self-sufficient. In an area where 90% of the population is rural and the main economic activity is agriculture, there is no comprehensive effort to supply refugees with seeds and tools. [...]

Helping returning refugees and managing the process of return has been far easier, however, than responding to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Often living in remote areas, humanitarian groups have been unable to assess conditions, first due to security concerns and now to logistical constraints. Nevertheless, preliminary results from a recent survey commissioned by UNHCR indicate the presence of around 300,000 IDPs, of whom 60% have already returned to their villages. Around 60% of villages do not have access to clean water, while in 70% of the surveyed areas villagers do not have access to medical care. Where they exist, health centers lack medical personnel and basic medicines. The situation in the education sector is less disastrous, although some half of the children of school age does not attend primary

school. Clearly, conditions in areas of return are precarious for residents and displaced alike. Still, the displaced have particular needs related to shelter and protection that are being ignored.

The lack of basic services revealed by the survey in communities throughout the southern half of South Kivu also points to a dangerously low capacity to absorb large numbers of returning refugees and IDPs. In an area that experienced communal and tribal violence during the war and where security remains tenuous, this weak absorption capacity could easily lead to increased tension and conflict. Refugees International interviewed a 20-year old refugee who said, after coming back from Tanzania on his own, "I came this January with my family and I did not get any assistance. Only those living in the camps are helped, but we all need the same things here." After returning, refugees and IDPs also find their houses destroyed or occupied by others. In some cases, houses and land have been sold through the complicity of family members or local authorities.

The scarcity of available resources and the lack of basic services will put extreme pressure on the current capacity of communities to manage and resolve conflict. Monitoring of the situation, though, is incomplete due to the fact that UNHCR is just now deploying protection officers to the area. Unless returnees and local residents feel that external assistance is provided based on need, regardless of status or origin, the efforts of the humanitarian community could lead to renewed conflict." (RI 28 April 2006)

IDPs return due to improvement of security in Maniema and Equateur (2006)

"According to USAID/OFDA field reports, no serious security incidents have been reported in Maniema since November 2004. By December 2005, all of the nearly 260,000 former IDPs and ex-combatants in the province had returned home, and humanitarian actors can now access all areas without impediment. USAID/OFDA partner Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin) continues to support the health care system, although the private sector has begun to fill the gap. Through a USAID/OFDA-funded food security program, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has contributed to the increased availability of reasonably priced food, and GAM rates are below emergency levels.

Security and humanitarian access also have significantly improved in southern Equateur, and IDPs have returned home and are currently engaged in livelihood activities. USAID/OFDA partner Action Against Hunger (AAH) has increased food production capacity and reduced the traditional yearly food shortage period from seven to three months. According to USAID/OFDA reports, both provinces are ready for a transition to development assistance." (USAID 16 May 2006)

UNDP Pilot programme supports the return of IDPs to Orientale and Equateur Province (2005)

- The returnees received food, non-food aid and money

"Some 1,600 internally displaced people (IDPs) began their journey home on Thursday along the mighty River Congo, from Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to the provinces of Equateur and Orientale, according to a UN official.

In a statement, Jens Laerke, the information officer in the post-conflict unit of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), said on Friday the IDPs boarded a Congolese naval vessel at the Kinshasa harbour, marking the start of the operational phase of a joint UN pilot project aimed at providing protection and security for 67,554 IDPs.[...]

Laerke said being a pilot project, the operation would seek new knowledge 'by testing different methods, tools, and approaches in the reinsertion process, for instance in terms of identification, registration, protection, and assistance provided to the returnees'.

In addition, host communities would be prepared for the influx of IDPs, he said. Lessons learned from the project would, at a later stage, be incorporated in the search for durable solutions to the IDP problem on a national scale.

In January 2005, the first reinsertion of 350 IDPs took place in Equateur. In April, Laerke said, an additional 300 IDPs, who had taken refuge in Kinshasa, were reinserted in and around Kindu, the main city in the central province of Maniema.

He said the IDPs received a kit comprising basic necessities, foodstuff, a bicycle, and a cash grant of \$55 to \$90, depending on the number of people in a household." (IRIN 23 May 2005)

"Some 1,000 people who had fled their homes to live in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa, for six to nine years have returned to their villages in the provinces of Equateur in the northwest of the country and Orientale in the northeast, humanitarian aid workers said on Thursday.

The returnees, travelling in two convoys, left Kinshasa in October, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which supports the Congolese government's repatriation programme for war-displaced people.

'Some 200 of them arrived on Wednesday in Basankusu, some 300 others arrived four days earlier in Mbandaka (capital of Equateur), while others groups are still on their way to different directions, to Lisala and Bumba farther north in Equateur Province, and to Kisangani in Orientale Province,' Joseph Désiré Kasiwa, an assistant in UNDP's post-conflict programme, told IRIN Thursday.

He said another 100 people were still travelling on the River Congo and were scheduled to arrive in Lisala and Bumba in two weeks. Another group of 250 went further northwest towards villages along the Ubangi River.

'There are teams of nurses in case people need care and policemen, deployed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, are present on the boats in order to support the displaced people,' Kasiwa said.

The UNDP said the repatriation of the displaced was part of the government's programme. However, the government still has to come up with a reintegration programme for the displaced.

The UNDP, through the Jesuit Refugee Service, an NGO, provided funds for the displaced people to buy household goods to help them resettle in their villages.

"The money was given according to the size of the family, to enable each family to buy goods it needs to settle back in its village," Kasiwa added.

The director of public information in the UN Mission in the Congo, Kemal Saiki, said the UN World Health Organization provided aid kits to support the local Red Cross who had launched a vaccination drive against measles for children between aged up to six years in Mbandaka.

Saiki said on 11 November, the returnees received food, non-food aid and the money from the UNDP and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) while MONUC provided them with drinking water.

Kasiwa said three camps for the displaced in Kinshasa had been emptied since the departure of the convoys to Equateur and Orientale.

'The camp set up in Tata Raphaël stadium is totally empty, while people in the camps of Nganda Mosolo and Sicotra, around Kinshasa, are waiting for planes to go back to Kivu, Katanga, Isiro and Bunia districts, in the northeast of the country,' he said." (IRIN 18 November 2005)

900,000 IDPs estimated to have returned home from end-2003 to mid-2005

- Continued insecurity, ethnic conflict and poor road conditions hamper rapid return

"The Congo's transition may be failing in some respects, but for hundreds of thousands of people the option of returning to their towns and villages of origin is more attractive than that of remaining displaced, either in camps or with host families. In spite of the continued violence and human rights abuses, there are also pockets of stability where in many cases small-scale recovery projects have already started.

OCHA estimates that some 900,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin since the end of 2003. While it is difficult to verify this figure, it is clear that large-scale returns have taken place and continue to take place. While it is difficult to verify this figure, it is clear that large-scale returns have taken place and continue to take place. In some cases, people who have been displaced for relatively short periods of time (up to two years) are returning, as in the case of IDPs returning from North Kivu to Ituri." (OCHA, 8 June 2005)

"A visiting United Nations team including IDP specialists traveled to South Kivu to discuss with partners possible improvement of the return and subsequent reintegration of Congolese IDPs and refugees as well as ex-combatants. This involves need assessments and a common response strategy. The humanitarian community cited continued insecurity, poor road conditions and ethnic conflicts as the main reasons hindering a rapid return of IDPs and refugees to South Kivu." (MONUC, 23 May 2005)

Many IDPs return to troubled Ituri region (2003-2005)

- Over 100,000 people returned to Mahagi territory (March 04)
- One of the two camps in Bunia closed down following the return of IDPs (Sept 04) 10,000 returning families are now in Komanda-Lolwa-Ngeleza zone in Ituri (Sept 04)
- Of the 100,000 Ituri IDPs who fled to North Kivu, over half have now returned (Aug 04)
- Over 7,000 IDPs remained at Bunia airport as of May 05
- Some IDPs in Ituri say their houses are occupied by armed groups (July 04)

In September 2003, some IDPs started to return home in Ituri

"On 1 September [2003], the UN peacekeeping force, known as MONUC, took over control of Bunia from the French-led multinational force deployed in June to restore order. Unlike the

multinational force, whose mandate was confined to Bunia, MONUC is authorised to enforce peace throughout Ituri.

WFP said it did not know how many people were still hiding in the forests of Ituri, fearful of armed groups that have terrorised the region for months. However, some, encouraged by recent political developments and improved security, were returning to their homes, it said." (IRIN 15 Sept 03)

Increased pace of return at the end of 2003

« Les retours des populations se poursuivent en provenance du Nord-Kivu plus précisément de la cité de Beni et des sites d'Eringeti. Les départs de Beni se font surtout en convoi, les mardis et vendredis, et les candidats au retour arrivent à Komanda (territoire d'Irumu, district de l'Ituri) après 3 jours de marche. Selon OCHA-Beni, le nombre des retours est encore inconnu, mais certaines ONGs avancent le chiffre de 4.000 personnes, avec une fréquence d'environ 30 personnes par jour. 90 % de ces déplacés retournent à Komanda et Irumu. Selon OCHA-Bunia, plus de 500 retournés ont été identifiés à Bunia en provenance du Nord-Kivu.

Les raisons qui les poussent à retourner sont : la sécurité qui revient petit à petit en Ituri ; les marchés qui ont repris dans certaines localités et la vie dure qu'ils mènent dans les camps et/ou dans les familles d'accueil. Dans le site d'Oicha, les déplacés attendent la distribution des vivres du PAM pour commencer à retourner alors que dans d'autres, ils attendent de connaître la position du Gouvernement de transition sur l'Ituri ainsi que la réhabilitation de la route Beni-Bunia. » (UN OCHA 21 Nov 03, p1)

Survey showed that people in Bunia IDP camp were hesitant to return home as of Dec 03

« Enquête : pourquoi les déplacés du camp de Bunia ne veulent pas retourner chez eux ?

Voici les résultats de l'enquête sur les raisons du non-retour des déplacés, réalisée par la Commission pour la Prévention et le Contrôle des Conflits :

- 28% du fait de l'insécurité ;
- 23% en raison de maisons incendiées ou détruites ;
- 15% pour des raisons économiques ;
- 13% à cause de l'occupation de leurs maisons ;
- 11% pour d'autres raisons ;
- 10% pour des causes politiques. »" (OCHA 26 Dec 03, p1)

"Environ 35.000 IDPs et plus de 100.000 retournés sont identifiés dans le territoire de Mahagi, dans le district de l'Ituri. L'ONGI AAA a identifié de janvier à mars 2004 6.978 ménages de déplacés et 22.971 ménages de retournés au nord du territoire de Djugu et au sud de Mahagi. Les IDPs qui avaient fui l'insécurité sont installés à Panduru (80 km de Mahagi), Shari (70km de Mahagi), Simbi (à l'ouest de Mahagi), Mokambo (au sud-ouest de Mahagi) et à Mahagi port. Ils sont originaires des territoires de Djugu, Tchomia et Kasenyi. Les retournés reviennent de l'Ouganda et de la périphérie de Mahagi. Ils sont dans les différents endroits du territoire de Mahagi (Nioka, Ngote, Nyarambembe et Ame)." (UN OCHA 12 March 04)

As of August 2004, 33 percent of IDPs from Ituri had returned home

"According to OCHA, 83,000, or 33 percent, of IDPs in Ituri District are estimated to have returned home since June 2003. Of the 100,000 Ituri IDPs who fled to North Kivu, over half have now returned, though those from Bunia and areas north of Bunia have largely remained." (USAID 20 Aug 04)

« 10.000 familles des retournés se trouvent présentement dans la zone Komanda-Lolwa-Ngeleza en Ituri, dans la Province Orientale. Selon l'ONGI Première Urgence, on enregistre chaque semaine l'arrivée à Komanda de 100 à 200 familles des retournés en provenance de Beni. » (UN OCHA 3 Sept 04)

General trend of return to places of residence in Ituri

“There seems to be a generalised trend of IDPs returning to their former places of residence. Those in Bunia returning to their homes either within town or outside, those in Beni (North Kivu province) trickling back to Bunia [For this category of IDPs from Ituri who fled for safety to Beni, there appears not to be an organised and coordinated action by anyone or organisation/agency to ship them back into Ituri. Most of the returnees so far have come back on their personal initiatives, using their financial means. However, some efforts are being made to correct this situation. For instance, in June,, a meeting was held at the Bunia OCHA office to strategise on how to help the Ituri residents, now IDPs in Beni, to come back to Ituri.] and those who have been hiding in the bushes are returning to their villages. In addition, displaced peoples from Bogoro, on the Uganda shores of Lake Albert, are willing to return home. Bogoro is currently an FNI/FRPI-controlled territory, and most of the people who fled away from this area are ethnic Hemas. Three meetings of customary dignitaries from this area took place in Bunia during the second fortnight of June to plan and secure from all local stakeholders (including representatives of different ethnic groups) a safe return of all those that had been displaced.

For those in the IDP camp near the Bunia airport, Atlas Logistics, an international French NGO, is facilitating their return and their resettlement by first surveying the security conditions of the places they want to return to and then by providing those leaving the camps with a support kit made of food rations for a one-month period and tools for land tilling. (E.g. hoes, machetes)

This trend is indicative of significant improvements in security conditions in most parts of Ituri district compared to when Ituri got partitioned into different areas, each controlled by different ethnic armed groups.” (FEWER 4 July 2004)

Most of the displaced of Mambasa, Ituri returned home without any assistance (May 2004)

- Massive human rights violations occurred during the ruthless military operation called “Effacer le Tableau”
- Widespread killings, rapes and looting of civilians, as well as report of cannibalism
- 20,000 people have returned to Mambassa, despite trauma and lack of assistance

« Ville de l'Ituri dans la Province Orientale, à l'Est de Bafwasende, Mambasa est situé à environ vingt minutes de vol de Bunia et trente minutes de Beni (Grand Nord Kivu) sur la route de Isiro au Nord. Les habitants de cette ville (entre 25 000 et 30 000 âmes) doivent leur relative prospérité aux activités d'exportation de riz, de bois mais aussi d'une petite quantité de la ressource aurifère. En automne 2002, la guerre qui ravageait la République Démocratique du Congo depuis pratiquement six ans déjà était arrivée à Mambasa et l'enfer y a élu domicile jusqu'en janvier 2003. [...]

[S]urvint l'éclatement du FLC (Front de libération du Congo) qui fut une alliance entre le MLC de Jean Pierre Bemba et le RCD/KML de Mbusa Nyamuisi. Le premier a juré d'« effacer » le second de la carte congolaise et du coup joindre l'Equateur à l'Ituri. Cette «opération » de suppression mise aux prises du MLC à l'UPC de Thomas Lubanga, autre transfuge du RCD/ML. Ainsi fut lancé la fameuse « Opération effacer le tableau », une opération militaire de grande envergure menée conjointement par le MLC et le RCD-N qui plongea toute la localité dans une

indescriptible désolation. Mambassa qui, jusque-là, abritait des milliers de réfugiés qui fuyaient les affres de la guerre en Ituri perdit son statut de havre de paix. [...]

A la fin du mois de décembre début janvier, encore une fois, les forces coalisées du MLC et du RCD-N auxquelles se sont ajoutées les forces de l'UPC reviennent dans une violente contre-attaque qui éclate à Komanda pendant qu'une partie de la coalition était en progression vers Beni. Les actes de pillage, de viols de filles, aussi préméditées que systématiques étaient légion sur les territoires conquis. Même les paisibles pygmées n'étaient pas non plus épargnés. Les atrocités étaient gratuites. Mourir ne suffisait plus pour en être « épargné ». On risquait même d'être mangé. Des rapports font état d'une déclaration d'un chef de guerre qui, à partir d'un pays étranger recommandait à ses hommes « d'émasculer tout soldat du RCD-KML qu'ils auraient tué. »

A partir de décembre 2002 et janvier 2003, explique un témoin, « Mambassa était devenue une ville fantôme, vidée de sa population, enveloppée dans un silence de mort où règne une atmosphère de terreur qui donnait la nausée.[...]

Le retrait des troupes du MLC et du RCD-KML obtenu grâce à l'Accord de Gbadolite du 26 décembre négociée par Mme Sundh, Représentante Spéciale Adjointe du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies pour la RDC, avait permis l'arrêt des exactions. L'équipe des Droits de l'Homme de la MONUC avait effectué une enquête qui confirmait les viols systématiques des femmes, le rapt d'enfants, le pillage maison par maison de la localité, les tortures contre les hommes, et les témoignages de cannibalisme, y compris le cannibalisme force.

Un an après, les victimes pensent toujours leur plaie avec très peu d'aide extérieure

Un an après, le cauchemar s'est estompé et la délégation de la Monuc qui s'est rendue à Mambasa a eu l'agréable plaisir de voir la ville reprendre pied et se reconstruire. Les enfants ont réappris depuis à sourire. La nombreuse population qui a fui la ville y est revenue. Même vu du ciel, les changements sont évidents. Les maisons sont reconstruites, tout paraît normal, finie la vision cauchemardesque de décembre 2002, janvier 2003. Selon le père Silvano Ruaro, l'âme de Mambassa, plus de 20.000 habitants, sur 30 000 auparavant, sont rentrés et s'attèlent à la reconstruction de leur vie brisée. » (MONUC 19 May 2004)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Humanitarian workers at risk in the DRC (2005-2006)

- DRC was one of the most treacherous places for UN and NGO staff in 2005

"Last year [2005], one of the most treacherous places for the UN was DRC, where 13 staffers were killed. It was also the site of one of the bloodiest attacks that produced the largest number of fatalities among the world body's personnel when unidentified militia members ambushed and murdered nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the country's eastern Ituri district in late February of last year. The blue helmets, who had been trying to protect a camp for internally displaced persons from harassment by local militias, lost their lives in the worst-ever attack against the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)." (UN News Service 5 January 2006)

"In January 2006, After three NRC-drivers were taken hostage by the governmental army, Norwegian Refugee Council warns that the situation for humanitarian workers seems to be worsening in eastern parts of DR Congo." (NRC 26 January 2006)

"A recent kidnapping of aid workers and continuing violence against civilians have forced the French medical charity Doctors Without Borders to stop field operations in Congo's lawless Ituri district. Their decision to limit operations to an emergency hospital in the main town, Bunia, will deprive 100,000 displaced civilians of basic healthcare and highlights the on-going trouble in Ituri.

The aid workers were released unharmed 10 days after they were captured in June by gunmen in the rolling hills of Ituri. But after months of continuing violence against civilians, a French medical charity has decided it has had enough and stopped much of its operation in the field." (VOA 2 August 2005)

"Medair strongly condemns the repeated acts of physical aggression, looting and hostage taking that the humanitarian community of Ituri has been subjected to by armed groups operating in this region, located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Medair will suspend its humanitarian activities for 9 days as a sign of protest against this violence." (Medair 17 June 2005)

"In Orientale, MONUC said the NGO Atlas Logistique temporarily suspended its rehabilitation of the 244-km Kisangani-Lubutu road because a Mayi-Mayi militia has been harassing some 2,000 people working for the NGO in the area." (IRIN 27 April 2005)

"[D]uring March [2005] humanitarian workers have been specifically targeted by armed militiamen. The latest case in point is that of the French INGO Solidarites whose staff, including an expatriate, were violently bullied around and beaten up by guntotting UPC-L militiamen near the village of Lopa, over 50 Km North of Bunia on 24th of this month. This is not an isolated incident as there have been others. On March 11, a death threat was made to a German Agro Action (AAA) staff member and their humanitarian cargo was looted at Katoto while they were heading to do food distribution to the IDPs at Tche, some 60 Km Northeast of Bunia. On March 17, a team from Atlas Logistique was attacked between Boga and Bukiringi, some 45 Km

southeast of Bunia. Their communication equipment and other personal belongings were taken from them." (Africa Initiative Programme 1 April 2005)

"Supply lines to an estimated 54,000 civilians living in camps to which they had fled, and who were relying on aid agencies, and on the protection of UN forces, have been cut by the rise in violence.

The entire corps of international aid agencies working in Ituri withdrew their staff from the sites earlier this week, after the killing in preceding days of nine UN peacekeepers in a militia ambush.

Humanitarian organizations have had to temporarily suspend their relief efforts in critical areas such as health, water and food distribution. In one large camp, a water source maintained by aid agencies had broken down, but aid agencies were not able for several days to safely reach the site." (UNICEF 4 March 2005)

Killing of peacekeepers by militias in 2005-2006

"An armed, unidentified group killed eight peacekeepers from Guatemala and injured five others on Monday, during an ambush in Garamba National Park, in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) near the borders of Sudan and Uganda, according to the United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC).

MONUC spokesman Kemal Saiki said the ambush occurred in Aba, north of Bunia, the main town in Ituri district, Orientale province.

'We have yet to confirm the identity of those behind the attack,' Saiki said, "but we have received reports of the presence of fighters from the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army [LRA] in the region.' [...]

In February 2005, an unidentified armed group killed nine MONUC troops Ituri. In all, 12 peacekeepers were killed in military operations in the DRC during 2005." (IRIN, 23 January 2006)

See also:

United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), 8 Jul 2006
Captured UN peacekeepers released in DRC [[Internet](#)]

Humanitarian access remains difficult in eastern DRC (2005-2006)

- UN Secretary-General noted increased access to vulnerable groups in key areas thanks to the improved security situation, but still difficult to access others in need in other areas (December 2005)
- Access in central and northern areas of South Kivu remained limited in mid-2006
- MSF suspended activities in war-torn area of North Kivu (January 2005)
- Looting of logistical base of NGO in North Kivu (March 2005)
- Administration requires NGOs in South Kivu to pay taxes, which they refuse to do (2005-2006)
- MSF said the Congolese army had been stopping them from entering the conflict zone itself in Katanga Province (2005)
- In April 2006, members of Congolese troops hampered humanitarian access to some 10,000 IDPs in Mitwaba region, Katanga Province (June 2006)

- Airlifts to deliver food in Katanga due to lack of roads/railroads (September 2006)
- In September 2006, MSF aid workers assisting over 40,000 IDPs in a camp in Gety, Ituri District, were attacked by armed groups and had to flee; Congolese army representative said that the army was providing security in the camp, but that militiamen were hiding amongst the displaced population

“In Ituri and parts of South Kivu, there has been an encouraging return of internally displaced persons and refugees and increased access to vulnerable groups in key areas thanks to the improved security situation. However, the continued presence of uncontrolled armed groups in the east, coupled with harassment of civilians by unpaid Government soldiers, often hinders the delivery of critical assistance to vulnerable populations. MONUC has continued to support the activities of humanitarian agencies throughout the country, facilitating the delivery of critical assistance to inaccessible areas and providing security.” (UNSC 28 December 2005, para.42)

“Significant progress was made towards improving the security situation in early 2005 in the eastern provinces. Several events have led to this positive evolution: a more aggressive approach by MONUC, disarmament in Ituri and deployment of FARDC troops all contributed to internally displaced person (IDPs) returning home.

As a result, large areas of eastern DRC became accessible to humanitarians, a stark contrast with earlier years. Thus more sustainable programming to reduce vulnerabilities was implemented in place of pure emergency distributions.

However, the second phase – reaping the benefits in newly-stabilized zones, and disarming the remaining hardliners – became increasingly difficult and protracted in the second half of the year. In addition, as previously isolated communities with urgent humanitarian needs became accessible in other areas, total requirements to be met were higher than initially planned.” (OCHA 13 February 2006, Chapter 1 1.1)

Kivus

“Humanitarian access to vulnerable people in the Kivus remains difficult, following military operations against renegade armed groups and other related attacks on civilians. This is particularly an issue in the central and northern areas of South Kivu, where access, even for emergency distributions to IDPs, remains limited.” (OCHA 21 July 2006)

“Au Sud-Kivu, la direction de l'Impôt, sur ordre du Procureur de la République, a scellé les bureaux de sept ONG internationales et de trois autres nationales qui réclamaient ainsi le paiement de taxes et impôts. Plusieurs rencontres ont eu lieu entre les ONG, OCHA, MONUC/HAS, le Gouverneur et les responsables des services des impôts pour régler cette crise. à Mwenga, les FARDC et les FDLR ont érigé des barrières où ils exigent des populations le paiement de taxes illégales à chaque passage.” (OCHA 30 November 2005)

“Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has suspended aid activities in one of the most war-torn areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s North Kivu Province after people in army uniform attacked the charity's facility late Tuesday.” (IRIN 20 January 2005)

“NGOs in Bukavu [South Kivu] continue to be harassed by taxation authorities, an issue that is proving difficult to resolve during the current electoral cycle, but will hopefully be solved in September, in order to ensure the continuation of humanitarian action for 1.5 million beneficiaries.” (OCHA 31 August 2006, crisis watch)

« La délégation de la Commission européenne en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) suspend deux projets dans la province du Nord-Kivu suite aux pillages de la base logistique de l'organisation non-gouvernementale (ONG) Agro action allemande (AAA) dans le territoire de Nyabondo, a-t-elle annoncé ce mardi.[...]

'La décision fait suite aux pillages systématiques survenus à la base logistique de AAA à Nyabiondo, entre le 20 décembre 2004 et le début de janvier 2005'» (IRIN 1 March 2005)

"Those aid organisations that are able to work near the conflict zone [in Katanga Province], like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), say the Congolese army has been stopping them from entering the conflict zone itself.

'We are asking for access so that we can assess the situation,' Laurence Sally, the coordinator of MSF's emergency team in the DRC, told IRIN from Kinshasa in early December." (IRIN 3 Jan 06)

Katanga

"L'ONGI IRC se retire du District du Tanganika, dans la province du Katanga, à la suite du pillage dont elle a été victime. Le désengagement de l'ONGI IRC intervenu le lundi 28/02. Une dernière distribution de médicaments dans les centres de santé des zones de santé de Nyunzu et Kabalo a toutefois eu lieu. Des tracasseries et des pillages de matériels ont été rapportés au cours de l'évacuation des différentes bases (Kalemie, Nyunzu et Kabalo). Le départ de l'ONGI laisse un vide au sein de la communauté humanitaire, étant donné le nombre limité de partenaires présents dans le district du Tanganika." (OCHA 14 March 2005)

« The United Nations World Food Programme said today that it has recently started airlifting urgent food aid to at least 8,800 needy people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, although it has not yet received any funding pledges for next year's operations.

More than 70 nutritional centres, run by NGO partners, desperately need food supplies for children, pregnant mothers and returnees. The situation prompted WFP to contract several commercial airlines to bring a total of 1,450 metric tons of food into the provinces of North Katanga, Maniema and South Kivu, where road and rail transport is virtually non-existent." (WFP 26 September 2006)

"The United Nations began airdrops of food relief on Wednesday to tens of thousands of people displaced by fighting between the national army and Mayi-Mayi militiamen in Katanga, the south-eastern province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a UN official said.

"With the logistical problems of transport and the very bad state of the roads, as well as the prevailing insecurity in the region, we are obliged to proceed with aerial food distribution," said Claude Gibidar, a senior official for the World Food Programme (WFP), on Wednesday.

Airdrops are being made to 40,000 displaced people in the villages of Dubie, Mitwaba, Sampwe and Kasongaji, he said. Some 80 tonnes of food, mostly flour and beans, would be parachuted in over 10 days, at a cost of US \$1,200 a tonne. "We are facing a very serious situation, which is why we have resorted to such an expensive operation." Gibidar said. "Truck convoys have been trying to get to the zone for months." (IRIN 6 April 2006)

"In April 2006, during the FARDC operation against Mai-Mai leader Gédéon, officers of the 6th Military Region under the command of General Tshimbumbu and of the 63rd Brigade commanded by Major Ekembe hampered humanitarian access to about 10,000 internally displaced persons in Mitwaba region, Katanga Province. In the same month, in Kasungaji (35 km from Mitwaba) in Katanga Province, soldiers of the 63rd Brigade looted a UNICEF convoy of bicycles transporting humanitarian kits for internally displaced persons." (UNSC 13 June 2006)

Ituri

"Aid workers have fled Gety, in the Ituri District of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), after attacks by armed gangs. They have retreated to Bunia, the district capital, 60 km northwest, and are trying to find a way to continue assisting more than 40,000 displaced people, an official said.

"We were attacked by armed groups and it could happen again at any time," Patrick Albert, the head of Médecines Sans Frontières (MSF) in Gety, said on Friday.[...]

The area 30 km south of Gety is teeming with fighters from the Front résistance patriotique en Ituri and their Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais allies. Their presence has made it impossible for many displaced persons to reach humanitarian organisations in Gety.[...]

The army is in the area. In Bunia, the army spokesman for Ituri, Capt Charles Boyeka, said on Friday: "We are providing security in the camp and a two-kilometre area around it but the problem is that there are militiamen hiding amongst the displaced population." He said the army had not yet been informed of Monday's attack." (IRIN 1 September 2006)

Improved access to IDPs and returnees in Katanga thank to railroads (October 2006)

"A train loaded with a total of 587 metric tons of food aid left Lubumbashi in the southeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo today, in what is believed to be the largest amount of food aid dispatched on a single train in the DRC in years, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said.

On arrival in the river port of Bukama, 400 kilometres northeast of the capital of Katanga, the 15 railway wagons of food will be transferred to barges and trucks to continue the journey to usually isolated parts of Katanga Province to help feed both displaced people and returnees.

'This humanitarian aid train represents hope for more than 200,000 people who need food aid in Bukama, Manono and Malemba-Nkulu territories,' said Charles Vincent, WFP Country Director in DRC. 'Those people who were able to plant will only start harvesting in January.'

The same train and wagons will head back to Lubumbashi and return several times, bringing another 1,663 tons of WFP food – one month of rations for the people of central Katanga Province – to Bukama for onward transport. Other aid trains will use the same route in November and December.

[...]

For nearly a year, it has been an enormous challenge to get food aid to the displaced people and returnees in Katanga. Obtaining wagons and locomotives proved particularly difficult. WFP now plans to send several thousand tons of food by rail over the next two months.

"In March, we had to resort to airdropping food in Katanga to stock vital supplies in various places. The transport cost was US\$1,200 per ton, but it would have been much lower, about US\$340, if we had been able to combine railways, road and water transport," said Vincent.

Out of 200,000 displaced people in Katanga, more than 135,000 have returned home so far this year. Food aid will help them through the annual 'lean season' when food is scarcest before the next harvest." (WFP 13 October 2006)

UN Joint Logistics Centre supports logistics capabilities of humanitarian agencies in the DRC (2005-2006)

“1.1 The United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) was created to complement and coordinate the logistics capabilities of co-operating humanitarian agencies during large-scale and complex emergencies. A standing UNJLC has been established in Rome, with the status of an inter-agency unit with technical and administrative support provided by its host Agency, The World Food Programme (WFP). For specific operations, the UNJLC is activated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee – Working Group (IASC-WG), following an established protocol.

1.2 The activation process for the UNJLC (as agreed at the IASC-WG in Geneva on 25/26 November 2002) is triggered through the IASC-WG upon request of one of the agencies or the Humanitarian Coordinator / United Nations Country Team (HC/UNCT) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and stipulates that a formal consensus is required among the participating agencies. [...]

2.2 A generalized lack of infrastructure constitutes the main obstacle to aid delivery. The country's sparse and rarely maintained transport network and capacity is poorly suited to the country's expanse and leads to a difficult and costly relief supply chain, as indicated by operational agencies and manifested in the expansive use of air assets for cargo transportation instead of surface transport. This situation calls for a strengthened logistics coordination structure in support of and under the supervision of the HC and further elaboration of the system in place when deployed. The lack of synergy in GIS and Information Management reduces operational efficiencies significantly. There is the absence of economies of scale in every aspect of the logistics operations. The involved agencies' and organizations' specific logistics requirements will, in a situation as complex as the prevailing one benefit greatly from a well established coordination structure.

2.3 The resurgence of violence in the East, and rising tensions following the postponement of long-awaited elections add to the complexity of the situation. In addition, the large number of humanitarian actors, including WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), including its military component, calls for a coordinated approach to logistics operations.

2.4 In DRC, a UNJLC has been called for by the HC and UNCT following the recognition that, given this context, current resources are not sufficient to develop and improve logistics systems while at the same time remaining operational in aid delivery.” (UNJLC 8 October 2005)

For more information on the UNJLC Special Operation in the DRC, see [[Internet](#)]

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National Response

Ministries in charge to respond to the needs of IDPs and returnees (2005-2007)

On a provincial and national level, the Congolese government has so far played little role in responding to the needs of IDPs and returning IDPs (RI, 17 October 2006). Nominally, the Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs has the primary responsibility for responding to the needs of IDPs. According to local observers, the Ministries of Interior and of Defence are also involved in protecting IDPs and returning IDPs, but their role in practice is far from clear. According to UNHCR, there is an urgent need for a national framework or strategy for solutions to displacement which outlines the rights of returning IDPs and refugees and facilitates their reintegration (UNHCR, 13 February 2007).

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At a regional meeting on internal displacement held in Botswana in August 2005, a representative of the Ministry for Social Affairs noted that the absence of a legislative framework based on the *Guiding Principles* as well as coordination problems were curtailing progress under the current institutional arrangements. (Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 26 August 2005, p11)

Early September 2006, representatives of states of the Great Lakes region attended a conference on peace and security to consider for adoption a draft model on the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children, and another on the property rights of returning IDPs and refugees. A regional meeting held in the Central African Republic capital, Bangui, in February developed the protocols to be adopted at the national level and implemented regionally (Heads of States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, February 2006).

International Response

UN Coordination

As per the recommendations of a multi-donor mission visit to DRC in May 2002, humanitarian coordination mechanisms were restructured, both at the strategic and operational levels, in order to enhance and improve the humanitarian response capacity of the UN system and the NGO community to adequately address the new needs and challenges (OCHA 18 Nov 03, p36).

In November 2004, the UN Secretary-General appointed Ross Mountain, a national of New Zealand, as his Deputy Special Representative for the DRC. In this capacity, he also serves as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the DRC and is responsible for ensuring

a strategic and coordinated response to internal displacement in the country (UN SG, 18 November 2004). In 2006, the Humanitarian Coordinator will also manage a "Pooled Fund" which aims to cover funding gaps in the humanitarian response, through an emergency intervention fund, financing of under-funded strategic projects and short-term loans pending funds from traditional donors (OCHA, 13 February 2006).

Since 2003, OCHA, the coordinating body for the UN system, has been strengthening its field presence in eastern DRC, and providing more regular monitoring on access and information on the humanitarian situation in DRC. In 2006, OCHA opened an antenna, in the locality of Mitwaba, in the center of Katanga, in order to facilitate the intervention of humanitarian actors, notably the strengthening of emergency programs, towards vulnerable people estimated at more than 165,000 internally displaced people (IDP) during these last months and living in a precarious situation in the DubieMitwabaSampwe "Triangle". (OCHA, 4 May 2006). The Humanitarian Advocacy Group (HAG), and the Inter-Agency Standing Committees (IASCs) –its equivalent at the Province level – has the role to set humanitarian policy and to seek to eliminate gaps in the humanitarian response. The HAG is chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator and meets weekly. In 2005, OCHA also created an IDP section to address issues such as IDP identification, appropriate humanitarian support, and protection issues. The IASCs are chaired by OCHA (OCHA, 13 February 2006).

The UN Inter-Agency Displacement Division (IDD) (and its predecessor, the Internal Displacement Unit), undertook several missions to DRC to support the UN's response to internal displacement. The latest mission, which occurred in May 2005, aimed to review activities related to the return and reintegration of IDPs, including a UNDP-funded Pilot Project (Projet de Protection, Réinsertion et Reclassement Social des Déplacés de Guerre). The mission recommended the set-up of Protection Working Group in Kinshasa and in eastern DRC. .

In 2006, the UN introduced a "cluster" approach in order to strengthen coordination in the DRC and better respond to humanitarian needs. Each cluster includes UN agencies and NGOs. UNCHR leads the cluster on protection, including IDPs, and UNCHR/UNDP leads the cluster on early recovery which focuses on return/reintegration. According to OCHA, the protection cluster has been one of the most active in the DRC. Protection clusters at the national and local level have allowed the development of a common advocacy policy on protection issues. Working with the MONUC military, they have managed to reverse FARDC decisions to force IDPs to return home, launch investigations of FARDC troops accused of violating the human rights of civilians, and facilitate the establishment of thematic sub-groups to deal with issues such as SGBV and child protection. Agencies have begun to intensify training of integrated FARDC brigades on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, humanitarian principles and SGBV. The Early Recovery Cluster, established in May 2006, carried out a mapping of UN and non-UN reintegration/post-conflict/poverty reduction programmes to identify gaps, which was then used for the *UN common strategy on reintegration in the DRC* (OCHA, 9 March 2007). This document is still being developed. In 2006, NGOs remained sceptical regarding the objectives of the cluster approach, which is often perceived as another attempt by the UN to control them. This scepticism continued to limit their full participation in establishing the approach (OCHA 30 November 2006). So far, local authorities and local NGOs do not seem to have been included in the clusters (RI, 17 October 2006, p30).

For more information on the clusters in the DRC see:

http://www.rdc-humanitaire.net/nwcluster/cluster_home.html

and

[OCHA/ICVA Mission to the DRC to Support Implementation the Cluster Approach \(6-18 March 2006\)](#), Internal Displacement Division (IDD), 18 March 2006

At the end of September 2006, MONUC announced to humanitarian agencies that their opinion would be taken into account in the planning of military operations, in order to reinforce collaboration.

In July 2006, the Security Council extended the scope of possible sanctions in the DRC to “political and military leaders recruiting and using children in armed conflict in violation of applicable law” and to “individuals committing serious violations of international law involving the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict,” including forced displacement. Resolution 1698 also empowered the Sanctions Committee on the DRC to include named individuals responsible for such violations on the list of persons subject to targeted sanctions, such as travel bans and asset freeze (UNSC, 31 July 2006).

Following the first round of the presidential elections, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, met in September 2006 with IDP communities in eastern DRC, as well as members of the government and of the international community, to draw attention to the still terrible humanitarian situation of IDPs and other vulnerable people (MONUC, 6 September 2006).

UN and NGO activities

One of the major problems in DRC is the lack of operational capacity to assist vulnerable groups, like IDPs and returnees. Due to the shortage of operational partners, when humanitarian assistance does arrive in favour of vulnerable groups, it rarely meets international standards, such as those outlined in the Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project). Also, some provinces receive less attention than others. It is particularly the case of the Provinces of Maniema, Oriental and of the Tankanyika district in Katanga Province.

Humanitarian activities related to the return of IDPs have until now focused mainly on transport assistance and the distribution of return packages, mainly for lack of funding for other projects, such as the rebuilding of infrastructure and basic services in return areas. UNHCR distributes return packages and shelter construction kits to returning IDPs (UN News Service, 25 July 2006). UNHCR indicated in October 2006 that for the first time, it was providing return packages to returning IDPs in a region in the DRC that did not coincide with refugee returns (UNHCR, 5 October 2006). UNHCR also reported in February 2007 that it was seeking a further \$15 million to provide protection and assistance for IDPs. It projects that as many as 950,000 of the IDPs could return to their homes in 2007. The extra funds will allow UNHCR to establish protection-monitoring mechanisms in the areas of displacement and return, and to conduct early warning and prevention activities. Security permitting, UNHCR will support the establishment of mechanisms to settle land and property disputes, providing humanitarian assistance to IDP returnees and promoting inter-ethnic coexistence (UNHCR, 13 February 2007)

UNICEF is assisting, through NGO implementing partners, returning some 175,000 returning IDPs with essential non food items, shelter and education (UNICEF, October 2006)

In North Kivu, the Norwegian Refugee Council has developed a project that links rapid reconstruction of village infrastructure through a public works project that will provide returnees with income, with specific measures to protect them from violence in the still-volatile area (RI, 17 October 2006, p21). MONUC has also played a role in helping displaced people return to their villages of origin. MONUC patrols in places such as Malumbi or Tshushubo (North Kivu) have given the population enough confidence to leave their temporary camps and begin rebuilding their lives in the villages. It is however essential that MONUC maintain close contact with humanitarian

actors in planning for such operations in order to avoid instances of forced, politicised, or uninformed returns (OXFAM, 16 February 2007).

According to OCHA, there is a real gap in terms of addressing return and reintegration needs of IDPs in DRC. IDPs have been returning home in areas throughout eastern DRC, but they continue to be confronted with problems related to insecurity and lack of basic services. Without adequate reintegration support, they could soon be forced to leave their homes yet again. Returnees need help with reconstructing homes, rehabilitating health and education infrastructure, and resuming agricultural activities (OCHA, 21 July 2006).

The humanitarian community also responds to the needs of new and longer-term IDPs, providing food and non-food items, seeds and tools, health care, and emergency education. WFP reported that in June 2006, it had provided food to more than 83,300 IDPs in Katanga, using stocks built up through a series of air drops in April (WFP, 25 July 2006). It also said that it planned to feed 1.7 million people in the DRC, focusing on IDPs, from July 2006 to June 2007 (WFP, 20 July 2006). UNICEF said it had supported schools through the distribution of educational supplies and the rehabilitation of classrooms, the distribution of school supplies to 208,000 internally displaced children and 4,000 teachers. UNICEF leads five of the ten clusters established in the DRC since 2006: water and sanitation, nutrition, education, non-food items/emergency shelter, and emergency telecommunications. UNICEF is the child protection focal point for the protection cluster and participates actively in the health, early recovery and logistics clusters (UNICEF, 29 January 2007). ICRC reported that in 2006, it conducted a number of emergency relief operations to assist people who were newly displaced inside the country, mostly on account of military offensives. ICRC also organized awareness-raising sessions on the basic principles of IHL for FDLR representatives, who continue to occupy parts of eastern DRC (ICRC, 23 February 2007).

A Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), managed by UNICEF and OCHA, supports vulnerable communities hosting large numbers of displaced families, by providing emergency assistance. The project also supports IDP returnees in the case where they were not served during the period of displacement, or when needs are severe and life-threatening (OCHA, 13 February 2006). The mechanism is largely implemented by three operational INGO focal points: Solidarités, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and CESVI, which cover North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri respectively. A partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has just been concluded to ensure rapid response capacity for the province of Katanga (UNICEF, 4 July 2006). Agencies helped some 500,000 IDPs in 2006 through the RRF (OCHA, 21 July 2006).

UNICEF and NGOs work to protect women and children against sexual violence. Since mid-2003, the NGO DOCS has identified close to 4,000 rape survivors, 17% of whom were children. The center has provided medical, surgical, and psychological care to over two-thirds of them. UNICEF is establishing an outreach program to monitor the conditions of their return once they have been cared for, in order to insure that women can recover fully and go on to lead a full life. (RI 16 November 2005). UNICEF and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC), with other national and international partners, are also implementing UNSC resolution 1612 to monitor and report on violations against children in 7 countries, including in the DRC. This work focuses on six categories: the killing and maiming of children, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, sexual violence, child recruitment, and the denial of humanitarian access in conflict areas (UNICEF, 24 July 2006).

UN agencies and NGOs respond to the needs of IDPs, and MONUC often provides logistical support.. UNICEF's response has been focused on shelter and non-food items, health and nutrition, education, protection and water and sanitation. It has distributed school supplies to 200,000 internally displaced children and trained teachers (UNICEF, 4 July 2006). WFP provides food to IDPs, but warned in August 2006 that most WFP sub-offices could not distribute food to their beneficiaries due to lack of food donations (WFP, 25 August 2006). In 2006, UNHCR started

to provide assistance and protection to IDPs, for example to 4,000 IDPs in June 2006, who escaped militias in Ituri (UNHCR, 22 June 2006).

In IDP camps around Beni, North Kivu, a local NGO—Programme de Soins de Santé Primaire (PPSSP)—focuses on provision of primary health care to displaced communities. Their programme focuses on public health education, water and sanitation, distribution of mosquito nets, trauma counselling and enhancing the capacity of local health centres/hospitals. Education for peace and reconciliation is part of the trauma-counselling component. Children are also brought together through games that help them keep busy and joyful. Solidarite Feminine Pour La Paix et Le Development Integral (SOFEPADI) focuses on promoting women and children's rights, democracy, peace education, HIV/AIDS and STI prevention and socio-economic empowerment.

Other NGOs, such as, Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), MSF, Merlin, Oxfam, Samaritan Purse, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children (UK), and Faith Based Organisations are providing a range of services including distribution of food and non food items, education, water and sanitation, child protection, vaccination and medical treatment to internally displaced people including children. Centre Resolution Conflict (CRC) implements activities that include peace education for communities, conflict prevention and management, supporting reconciliation processes, trauma counselling and promotion of human rights (WVI, 27 February 2007).

Local human rights groups have been monitoring human rights abuses against IDPs and other civilians. They also offer counseling and assistance. Most operate with almost no money and work in incredibly dangerous conditions. Human rights activists in eastern DRC have been beaten, detained and killed. In addition, international agencies rely increasingly on local NGOs, particularly the Catholic Church and its network (RI, 17 October 2006).

Donor Response

According to UNICEF, in general, the major constraint in implementing emergency activities in the DRC has been a combination of both low response to funding appeals and extraordinary levels of need throughout the country (UNICEF, 24 March 2005). In July 2006, UNICEF urged the international community to first fund measures to save the lives of displaced people and others affected by the conflicts and then to help them return to some sense of normalcy in the coming months (UNICEF, 24 July 2006). In October 2006, Refugees International said that while humanitarian response for both displacement and return is dependent on funding, funding for the crisis in the DRC is completely inadequate (RI, 17 October 2006).

In order to strengthen the response to the crisis in the DRC, the humanitarian community has requested over \$686 million through its DR Congo 2007 Humanitarian Action Plan. One of the main objectives of the plan is to support the return towards self-sufficiency for IDPs and refugees (OCHA 30 November 2006). The main funding source for this plan is a mechanism called the "Pool Fund", a multi-donor humanitarian fund. DRC is the country getting the largest amount of money -- \$36.6 million out of some \$85 million for the first half of 2007 -- from the Central Emergency Response Fund, as part of its grants for under-funded emergencies (OCHA, 7 February 2007). The 2006 Action Plan was 50 percent funded. While this rate of coverage is relatively low, the absolute amount of funds received is 2.5 times the entire amount of funding for all of 2005 (OCHA, 30 November 2006).

DRC is the second pilot country, with Burundi, to benefit from Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHDI) which was launched in Stockholm in June 2003. 18 donors have pledged to: improve the flexibility of their financing; provide funds based on needs; reinforce local capacities to prevent crises; respond rapidly; and support the transition from emergency to development through appropriate funding. In July 2006, OCHA reported that from the donor point of view,

achievements of the GHDI include: 1) announcements of contributions by some donors have been made earlier than in previous years; 2) support for a full NGO participation in the Action Plan process; 3) major efforts to strengthen coordination at provincial levels amongst UN agencies and between the UN and NGOs in order to set priorities, reduce duplication and to improve the effectiveness of programs for beneficiaries; 4) intensified coordination through the Humanitarian Advocacy Group at national level, and the provincial Inter-Agency Steering Committees/inter-cluster mechanisms, all involving the UN, NGOs and donors; 5) decision of some donors to contribute to a new Pooled Fund as a mechanism which incorporates the Rapid Response Fund and the Pooled Fund; 6) improved quality of dialogue and the capacity of donors to assess crisis needs. Unfortunately, with the exception of three donors, additional support for humanitarian needs has not been forthcoming (OCHA, 21 July 2006).

The Pooled Fund, DRC's multi-donor humanitarian fund, aims to strengthen coordination and increase the extent to which funding is allocated to priority humanitarian needs. The mechanism is consistent with the principles of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative for which the DRC is a pilot country, and is also part of wider humanitarian reforms.

In 2006, the Pooled Fund has become the main funding source for the DR Congo 2006 Action Plan. At the end of August, the Pooled Fund had received contributions of 80 million USD, with almost 68 million already committed to 160 projects; including 55 NGO managed projects. DfID, the Netherlands and Sweden are the main Pooled Fund donors, with other contributions received from Canada, Norway and Belgium. Funding decisions result from a participatory process. Provincial CPIAs (Inter-Agency Standing Committees) supported by clusters, recommend projects for funding based on provincial strategies and priorities. The projects are then reviewed by national-level clusters to verify that they ensure maximum possible impact on the national humanitarian situation, while avoiding overlapping or duplication. Finally, the Humanitarian Coordinator asks the Pooled Fund Board, a joint initiative with NGO, UN and donor membership, to provide advice on the final shortlist, before taking the final funding decision.

DRC is the country getting the largest amount of money -- \$36.6 million out of some \$85 million for the first half of 2007 -- from the Central Emergency Response Fund, as part of its grants for under-funded emergencies.

OCHA's Planning Unit and UNDP are in charge of the overall management of the Pooled Fund. Further information on the Pooled Fund can be obtained at: www.rdc-humanitaire.net/pooledfund/pooledfund.htm (OCHA, 31 August 2006; DPI, 30 August 2006)

The European Commission finances humanitarian aid in the DRC to the people most in need via an aid package that amounted to some €50 million in 2006 (European Commission – ECHO, 4 September 2006). In 2007, ECHO said that activities to be funded will aim to provide a package of assistance to displaced people, returnees and targeted vulnerable host communities affected by the conflict in the DRC (European Commission-ECHO, 14 February 2007).

The largest donor of humanitarian aid to DRC is the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office, ECHO. Key areas of ECHO's intervention include the health sector, food aid, nutrition and support for rehabilitation and resettlement activities to assist returning populations and pave the way for sustainable recovery (OCHA, 15 March 2004, p17). In 2006, the European Commission funded relief operations in Katanga and throughout the DRC for €45 million. In October 2006, it allocated an additional €5 million to assist the most vulnerable people affected by the recent conflict between the army and irregular militias in Katanga, i.e. displaced people, returnees and host communities (EC, 4 October 2006).

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of April 2007)

- Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

While there is no reference to the Guiding Principles in the DR Congo legislation, DRC is one of the states part of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which established a series of protocols, including an IDP protocol. For more information, see the following documents (links below):

- African Union, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the International Conference Process on the Great Lakes Region, 13 March 2007-04-25

- International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, 14 and 15 December 2006 (also in French below)

- Protocol on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs, October 2005

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Date: October 2002
Documents: IDP Unit Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo, 7-10 October 2002 [Link below]

UN Inter-agency mission focuses on IDPs and emphasises the training needs on the Guiding Principles within the humanitarian community and authorities
Date: February 2003
Documents: Inter-agency mission on internal displacement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 26 January – 8 February, 2003 [Link below]

Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

The GP are available in Swahili (DRC)
Document: GP in Swahili [Internet] http://www.idpproject.org/training/guiding_principles/Guiding_principles_Swahili_DRC.pdf

Training on the Guiding Principles

Protection cluster organises training on the Guiding Principles for Congolese armed forces

Date: 2006

<p>A regional seminar on internal displacement was convened in Gaborone, Botswana, hosted by the Government of Botswana and co-sponsored by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. It was the first seminar of its kind focused on internal displacement in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.</p> <p>The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the phenomenon of internal displacement in the SADC region, the needs of the displaced, and effective national, regional and international responses. The meeting brought together over 100 participants representing: the SADC member states; the SADC Secretariat; the African Union; the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; national human rights institutions; local, regional and international non-governmental organizations; the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations; and donor governments; as well as experts from research institutions.</p> <p>The meeting resulted in a set of recommendations for action at the national, regional and international levels to improve responses to internal displacement in the region.</p>
Date: 24-26 August 2005
Documents: Regional Seminar on Internal Displacement in the Southern African Development Community [Internet] http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/SADC_rpt.pdf

<p>NRC and OCHA IDP Unit have undertaken a training program on the Guiding Principles for authorities, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, and IDPs. See list of sources for NRC document containing conclusions and recommendations. Since then, NRC has continued the diffusion of the Guiding Principles to authorities, churches, NGOs, local populations and international agencies.</p>
Date: 2003-Present
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