

# International peacekeeping challenges in the DRC:

*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose...*

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- An announcement by the DRC Government in September 2009 that the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) will withdraw from the DRC in 2011 caught many observers and role-players off guard. The role of MONUC has been pivotal in supporting the government of the DRC in the post-conflict process, especially in the post-electoral period (2006).
- This was further followed by action on the part of the UN to practically start with the dismantling of the world's largest peacekeeping mission – firstly by replacing MONUC with the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) on 1 July 2010, and revising the mandate of the peacekeepers.

## Aim:

To provide for an appraisal of the most serious challenges associated with post-conflict reconstruction and development in the DRC (post 2006) with specific reference to the following:

- (1) reconstruction and development through state building;  
and
- (2) enhancing security governance and humanitarian conditions.

## **Challenges facing the DRC in its pursuit of Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development**

- Humanitarian situation and protection of civilians
- Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) & Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR)
- Security sector reform (SSR)
- The DRC in contemporary regional context
- Strengthening democracy and the rule of law

## Humanitarian situation and protection of civilians

- ◆ The humanitarian situation remains precarious due to large-scale population displacements; human rights violations by armed men, including rapes, killings and lootings; impeded humanitarian access; and security incidents against humanitarian workers.
- ◆ Towards the end of 2010 the total number of internally displaced persons in the DRC was estimated at 1,7 million and of these, about 1,3 million were displaced in the troubled Kivus.



- ◆ In recent years the FARDC (Army) has been a constant source of instability as the soldiers served both public and private functions. They represent the state, but also serve as private actors, acting as perpetrators of crimes against the local population and as a source of insecurity. These roles are difficult to separate as they are often played out simultaneously.
- ◆ The protection of civilians in the DRC and the humanitarian situation remain among the most pressing issues and challenges, especially in the eastern parts of the country.

## Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) & Disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR)

- ◆ Two processes basically unfolded in the DRC, namely that of conventional DDR and that of disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR).
- ◆ These processes especially concern(ed) the two most institutionalised armed movements in contemporary DRC, namely the **FDLR** and the **CNDP**, both operating within the political-military landscape in the Kivus.
- ◆ As for the **CNDP**, the plan has mainly been based on integration into the FARDC (army), not demobilisation.
- ◆ The plan with the **FDLR** and some relevant CNDP elements (specifically surviving members of the *genocidaires* who fled Rwanda in 1994 and their dependents or offspring) has basically been that of repatriation to Rwanda of ex-combatants.

- ◆ The war in the DRC resulted in a dramatic change in the social organisation of the country in recent years.
- ◆ Both the CNDP and FDLR have established statelike institutions and administrative systems (tax collection system) and developed into very visible political factors in the everyday lives of people.
- ◆ The CNDP even developed into a truly global phenomenon that operates globally with networks that extended far beyond the Congolese state.

- ◆ The DRC government also faced some serious challenges from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a guerrilla group operating mainly in northern Uganda, but also in South Sudan and the eastern DRC. Like the FDLR, the LRA posed a serious threat to civilians in villages and remote areas.
- ◆ There is much unfinished business and the DDR and DDRRR processes will undoubtedly continue to pose serious challenges to the DRC Government and other role-players in years to come.
- ◆ M23 (March 23 Movement), all former members of the CNDP, mutinied against the FARDC.

## Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- ◆ SSR is based on the reform and/or rebuilding of a state's security sector and aims to develop a secure environment coinciding with development, rule of law and good governance.
- ◆ The creation of a new Congolese army should be viewed in the context.
- ◆ Practically, the challenge for role-players in the DRC is to successfully manage the process aimed at building a new army by way of professionalising the FARDC – which is heavily dependent on the process of DDR. SSR also requires that the army should be complemented by a core police capacity, given the need for law and order enforcement.

- ◆ Integration into the FARCD is incomplete, the differences in roles between the police and the military are not clearly defined.
- ◆ Congolese soldiers and police officers use arbitrary and excessive force in many regions of the country, and impunity regarding these actions still prevails.
- ◆ There is widespread lack of law and order, which is exploited by the armed groups who no longer pose a real threat to the sovereignty of the DRC, but who loot the population, carry off natural resources and kill and rape.

## The DRC in contemporary regional context

- ◆ Laurent Kabila and his Rwandan backers overthrew President Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaire, but Kabila then evicted his Rwandan allies who came straight back in force. Kabila also brought in Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia to fight the ensuing rebellions engineered by Uganda and Rwanda through two new rebel movements.
- ◆ Improved relations in recent years between the DRC on the one hand, and Rwanda and Uganda on the other stand in stark contrast to regional relations and animosity during the rule of the late Laurent Kabila.
- ◆ The DRC allowed Rwandan troops to enter its territory to carry out joint operations aimed at derailing or ending the FDLR insurgency.

## Strengthening democracy and the rule of law

- ◆ The state has in some instances effectively been replaced by non-state centres of authority that introduced new forms of exercising political, social and economic control. Artisan miners pay their taxes to the army or other armed groups who control much of the trade.
- ◆ The government faces capacity-related challenges. The justice system is weak, and courts, parliament and oversight bodies lack capacity. Democratic oversight and accountability of the security sector are indeed serious challenges. Inefficient institutions at both the national and local levels hinder the government's ability to exercise control over the entire country.

- ◆ The holding of regular free and fair elections is obviously an important step in the consolidation of multiparty-democratic system the DRC Constitution. It is also essential for the success or failure of the peace process.
- ◆ The November 2011 elections were an imperfect but necessary and important further step in the peace building process.

## Concluding remarks

- The government of the DRC pushed for an early end of the UN Mission (MONUC). This occurred in spite of ongoing insecurity, humanitarian challenges and unfinished business in the field of post-conflict reconstruction and development.
- The DRC's decision to 'un-invite' the UN mission was driven by an essentially political rationale.
- This raises some serious questions about the political circumstances under which the consolidation of fragile peace processes can be strengthened or promoted by external actors, such as the UN.

- Much about a better future for the DRC will depend on the Congolese themselves. Some observers contend that three attributes have been lacking: a real vision for the DRC's future; the competence and ability to execute the vision; and the character needed to ensure the realisation of the vision with sound judgement, integrity and equity.
- The build up to the 2011 elections was marked by fluttering flags from various political parties, but the problem is that political leaders “don't think like nationalists, but act instead as individuals”.

- Politics in the DRC is still largely viewed as a means of accumulating wealth while the state is regarded as the medium for pursuing sectional and material interest. Post-conflict reconstruction and development endeavours in the DRC will encounter difficulties in enhancing the role of the state as a provider and guarantor of social and political order.