

SECURITY COUNCIL

Topic 3: The issue of armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Research Report by Giulia Bregu

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1. Definition of Key Terms

Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC): the state organization responsible for defending the Democratic Republic of Congo.

National Congress for the Defence of the People(CNDP): a political armed militia established by Laurent Nkunda in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tutsi: one of the three ethnic groups present in Rwanda and Burundi

March 23 Movement (M23): a rebel military group that is for the most part formed of ethnic Tutsi. Based in eastern areas of the DRC, it operates mainly in the province of North Kivu.

The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR): an armed rebel group active in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. As an ethnic Hutu group opposed to the ethnic Tutsi influence, the FDLR is one of the last factions of Rwandan rebels active in the Congo. It was founded during the Second Congo War.

2. Introduction

The evolution of the socio-political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the subject of discussion by public opinion and the major international political bodies for years. Brutal attacks by armed groups on civilians and UN soldiers continue to shock viewers worldwide. Every day the people of this nation find themselves involved in situations that violate every kind of human right. Members of these armed groups are guilty of crimes such as rape, child abuse, murder of entire villages, kidnapping of children to make them child soldiers and organ trafficking. The main task of the delegates is to weigh the respective national interests and to find a balanced resolution to restore stability while ensuring human rights for a population that has seen their basic human rights denied.

3. Timeline of Events

In **June 1960** the Democratic Republic of Congo gained independence from Belgium and Patrice Émery Lumumba, leader of the nationalist movement “Mouvement National Congolais”, became Prime Minister.

Between 1960 and 1965 there was a period of political instability. On July 11, 1960 the State of Katanga (southern region of the current DRC) proclaimed itself independent. Colonel Mobutu removed Lumumba from power. The prime minister was executed. Mobutu regained control of the Katangs and the power that had been in the hands of Kasavubu, who ruled until 1965.

In **November 1965** through a coup, Mobutu ousted Kasavubu, obtaining absolute power and starting a dictatorship.

In **1971** the state was renamed "Zaire"

1994: after the genocide in Rwanda, many Hutus decided to move into eastern DRC and they formed armed groups. Numerous Tutsis and other rebel groups rose up in opposition.

The Congolese government was unable to control and defeat the various armed groups

In **1996**, a coalition of Rwandans and Ugandans under the command of Laurent-Désiré Kabila invaded Zaire, launching the “First Congo War”. They managed to defeat Mobutu who had to flee. In 1997 General Laurent-Désiré Kabila, victorious in the civil war, proclaimed himself absolute President, giving back to Zaire the name of Congo.

1998-2003 “Second Congo War”: In 1998 Tutsi rebels started a conflict against factions loyal to President Kabila, with the help of the armies of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The regular armies of six countries fought on Congolese territory to gain control of the rich deposits of diamonds, gold and coltan in eastern Congo. Congoverne was thus divided into two parts: an eastern part controlled by the rebels and a western one still in the hands of Kabila's troops. Approximately two and a half million were the victims.

2001: Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated and his son Joseph Kabila succeeded him as president.

2004-2008: there was a serious crisis between the government and a group of rebels led by Laurent Nkunda. He formed the “National Congress for the Defence of the People” (CNDP) which was engaged in the **Kivu Conflict**. This was an armed conflict against the “Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo” (FARDC)

March 2009: the DRC and Rwanda made a deal. Rwandan troops were allowed to enter the DRC and arrest Nkunda. The CNDP signed a peace treaty with the government thanks to which the CNDP became a political party and its soldiers were integrated into the national army in exchange for the release of its imprisoned members

2012: Birth of the M23 movement, which started a rebellion against the government. M23 captured Goma. On 5 November 2013, M23 declared an end to its insurgency

TODAY: M23 is once again operating in DRC, especially in North Kivu. Even though it is not the only armed group present in the area (120 groups are estimated), it is one of the strongest.



4. Background Information

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a nation in Central Africa. It has a total population of 91,640,540. The capital is Kinshasa where 17,855,000 people live. The nation has huge natural resources, such as diamonds, copper, uranium, coltan and other minerals, but it is one of the poorest countries in the world because foreign industries treasure these materials, preventing the country's economy from growing. As a result of political instability, armed groups have formed over the years that still have control over the eastern area of the country.

5. Major Parties Involved

Rwanda

From the 90s, it has been involved in the political situation of the country. The government is accused of supporting the M23 movement by giving them weapons, uniforms and ammunition. On the other hand, Rwanda accuses the DRC of supporting the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), in which some of those responsible for the 1994 genocide operate, thus endangering Rwandan national security and legitimizing Kigali's support for rival armed movements. On June 13 2022, the city of Bunagana, fifty kilometres north of Goma and a strategic commercial hub, was taken. Several shots showed columns of more than five hundred men moving around the city in a highly organized manner and equipped with uniforms and helmets similar to Rwandan ones. Even though all authorities in Kigali denied any kind of involvement with M23, the DRC expelled Rwandan Ambassador Karenga.

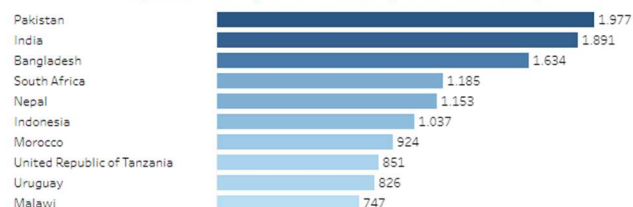
The European Union

In the past, the EU authorized some civilian and military missions alongside MONUSCO. Initially, the European Union had assisted the United Nations with the launch of a military mission called ARTEMIS. The purpose of the mission was to ensure the stability of the country. Later, two more military actions were launched at the request of the Congolese authorities: the first, EUPOL Kinshasa, had a two-year mandate from 2005 to 2007. There were two key aims: creating a new police unit, which would integrate with the Congolese national forces and the more critical one of supporting the national authorities in the fundamental phases of the political transition. At the end of EUPOL Kinshasa's mandate, the EUPOL RD Congo mission was subsequently active. It aimed to support the security sector reform, assist the Congolese police and create a collaborative network between the judicial and police systems. It ended in 2014. The European Union has recently committed, at the request of the President of the DRC Tshimbolo, to assist the country in the conduct of the 2019 general elections.

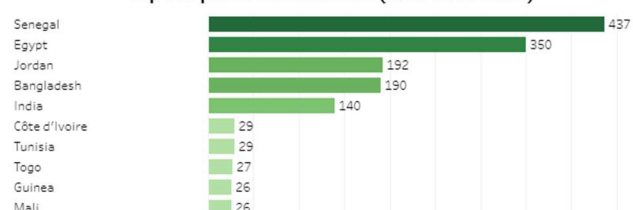
6. UN Involvement

MONUSCO stands for “*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo*” which means “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”. It is a United Nations peacekeeping force in DRC which was established by the United Nations Security Council to monitor the peace process of the Second Congo War. The UN Security Council has long mandated MONUSCO to prioritize efforts to protect civilians and support stabilization and the extension of state authority in the east. MONUSCO is authorized to support FARDC operations to counter armed groups, subject to

Top ten military contributors (as of June 2022)



Top ten police contributors (as of June 2022)



human rights vetting of local commanders. Other enduring MONUSCO tasks include the protection of UN personnel and facilities and humanitarian access, support for the demobilization of ex-combatants, and support for security sector reforms.

7. Bibliography

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<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

8. Useful links

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-20438531> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo#Independence_and_political_crisis_\(1960%E2%80%931965\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo#Independence_and_political_crisis_(1960%E2%80%931965))