DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO:

Worsening humanitarian crisis as internal displacement escalates in the east

A profile of the internal displacement situation

29 November, 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.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

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OVERVIEW

Worsening humanitarian crisis as internal displacement escalates in the east

Following major new displacement in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a total of at least 1.4 million people remained internally displaced in the DRC as of November 2007. Fighting between Congolese armed forces and dissident troops and militias, as well as widespread human rights violations committed by all groups, caused the displacement of at least 500,000 people in eastern DRC in 2007, particularly in North Kivu province. IDPs in North Kivu have been victims of grave human rights abuses committed by all the factions engaged in fighting and by other civilians. In addition, many of them could not receive assistance from international agencies whose access has been blocked by the level of insecurity.

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 also involved neighbouring states. Close to four million people are estimated to have died as a result of the conflict, and the accompanying pervasive human rights violations have included the killing of civilians, widespread sexual violence against women and child recruitment. There has also been widespread looting and burning of IDP possessions, destruction of health care facilities and use of civilian facilities for military purposes. Displacement peaked in 2003, with an estimated 3.4 million people forced from their homes, most of them in the east. Successful elections were held in the second half of 2006, but after a lull in the conflict, fighting intensified in 2007, and displacement in North Kivu was in 2007 at its highest level since the official end of the war in 2003. No specific framework or national policy addresses the rights of IDPs or returning IDPs, as provided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Background of displacement and recent developments

In 1996, and again between 1998 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (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 neighbouring states such as Uganda and Rwanda, competed to control large areas of eastern DRC. Civilians bore 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 estimated that 3.9 million people had died as a result of conflict-related causes since 1998 (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 unable to bring security to eastern DRC, where local militias continued to cause massive displacement. In 2006, millions of voters elected Joseph Kabila as President in the country’s first multi-candidate vote in over 45 years. The majority of IDPs were reportedly unable 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).

Authorised to use all necessary means to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (“Chapter VII” of the UN Charter), the 17,000 peacekeepers of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) play a crucial role in providing security in the country. About 85 per cent of them are deployed in the unstable north-east of the country (UN News, 25 May 2007). MONUC 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. MONUC’s mandate is due to be reviewed by the UN Security Council at the end of 2007, and in the absence of stability in the eastern provinces, it is essential that this mandate is extended and adequately financed.

The continued presence of 20 foreign and domestic armed groups remains the biggest threat to the population (OCHA, 17 July 2007). The policy of the Congolese government in response to this challenge is to integrate into the army over 78,000 troops from various belligerent factions through a process known as “brassage”, as well as to disarm and repatriate foreign armed groups (MONUC, 8 March 2007). However, this integration process has been marred by corruption and by conflicts between soldiers, often reflecting local ethnic divisions, particularly in North and South Kivu. 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. The government needs to complete the brassage process with the support of the international community if the security of civilians is to improve.

In North Kivu, dissident general Laurent Nkunda, at the helm of one of the Congolese rebel groups, agreed in December 2006 to a limited form of integration of his troops, called “mixage”. In many cases, Nkunda’s troops then operated nominally as members of the national army in the same regions where they had been renegade soldiers, and continued to commit widespread serious human rights violations. They are reported to have kidnapped and killed civilians accused of collaborating with a Hutu militia called the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), while the FDLR retaliated against civilians that had accepted the mixed brigades. The deal between the Congolese army and Nkunda collapsed in August 2007, leaving Nkunda in a stronger military and political position than prior to the agreement (HRW, 23 October 2007).

New displacement and return movements

The UN estimates that at least 1.4 million people are displaced in the DRC. Since December 2006, more than 500,000 have fled their homes in eastern DRC, two-thirds of them in North Kivu (OCHA, September 2007). Some 143,000 people were displaced between mid-September and mid-October 2007 alone (MONUC, 19 October 2007). Thousands more have fled to neighbouring countries. Many displaced children have been separated from their families during the latest fighting in North Kivu.

Most IDPs in eastern DRC have been displaced several times and live with host communities or hide in forests. In recent months, however, communities have been unable to cope with the massive influx of people, and IDPs have had to build makeshift settlements. In order to improve the conditions faced by some of the displaced people close to Goma, North Kivu’s provincial capital, UNHCR has set up new camps with basic necessities, while the Norwegian Refugee Council manages four other camps (UNHCR, 19 October 2007).

From January to June 2007, over 1.1 million IDPs were estimated to have returned to their places of origin in eastern DRC (OCHA, 31 July 2007). More people seemed to benefit from assistance packages in 2007 than in previous years. Still, needs are enormous, as fighting and looting have led to a complete breakdown of services, and returning IDPs often find health centres, schools and their houses destroyed. Also, land and property disputes – one of the root causes of the
conflict – have been identified as a major obstacle to return, and as a potential source of renewed conflict in the East (UNHCR, 13 February 2007).

Lack of documentation has also hindered many IDPs’ access to urgent assistance. In addition, according to local observers, IDPs without ID cards have been accused of collaborating with armed groups, and have been harassed or even arrested as a result.

**Displacement and return by region: main actors and patterns**

**North Kivu:** Attacks by militia groups and intense combat between the army and troops loyal to dissident general Laurent Nkunda displaced more than 370,000 people in North Kivu province between December 2006 and October 2007 (IRIN, 15 October 2007). Nkunda and his followers say they are defending the interests of Congolese Tutsis in ethnically mixed North Kivu. Meanwhile, local observers report an increase in inter-ethnic tensions in the province, and people often find refuge with host families of the same ethnic origin (IRIN, 8 October 2007). Most IDPs in North Kivu do not feel sufficiently protected to return to their villages, despite the dire living conditions they are facing in displacement (IRIN, 19 September 2007). After visiting the province, the European Union’s special envoy for the Great Lakes region issued a stark warning, comparing the humanitarian crisis in North Kivu to that of Darfur (AFP, 30 October 2007).

**South Kivu:** Rwandan Hutu militia and operations by the Congolese army against them caused tens of thousands of people to be displaced in the province in the first half of 2007 (OCHA, 17 July 2007). Most of them found refuge in neighbouring villages at night, and returned home during the day (OCHA, 31 July 2007). According to MONUC, security in South Kivu improved later in the year, due to successful operations by the Congolese army against local militias and Rwandan Hutu rebels (AFP, 3 October 2007). Over 100,000 IDPs were able to return to their homes in South Kivu between the end of 2006 and mid-2007 (OCHA, 31 July 2007). However, tens of thousands of displaced people from North Kivu fled to South Kivu in the second half of 2007, bringing further instability to the province (IRIN, 18 September 2007).

**Ituri:** Civilians continued in 2007 to flee attacks by militias, as well as operations by the Congolese army and by MONUC against those militias. In September 2007, some 20,000 people reportedly fled attacks by the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and thousands others fled fighting between the army and a local militia group (OCHA, 7 September 2007; 16 September 2007). Nonetheless, the security situation in the province improved compared to previous years, allowing the return of 460,000 people in the first part of 2007 (OCHA, 31 July 2007).

**Katanga:** Thanks to the improvement in the security situation of the province, over 450,000 IDPs returned home in Katanga between October 2006 and mid-2007, including most of the 300,000 people displaced by Congolese army operations against Mai Mai militias between the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 (OCHA, 31 July 2007).

**Physical security**

The protection of the displaced and other civilians in eastern DRC is an urgent concern. The Congolese army, as well as armed militias, have been responsible for increased human rights abuses in North and South Kivu in 2007, particularly since the beginning of the brassage and mixage processes, including killings, rape, sexual exploitation, abductions, forcible conscription of children, looting, plundering of crops, illegal taxation and general harassment of civilians. According to UNHCR, IDPs in North Kivu have been victims of grave human rights violations by all the factions engaged in fighting and by other civilians (IRIN, 8 May 2007). The lack of an efficient judicial system and general impunity are fuelling the violence, while the national
government has failed to take steps to protect the population. The DRC government needs to address the structural weakness of the judicial system, and bring an end to the culture of impunity.

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 as their villages 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 act as slave porters, causing many to flee their villages (MONUC, 19 March 2007).

Despite all initiatives undertaken to counter sexual violence, rape continues to be widespread throughout the country. Government soldiers and rebel fighters have committed widespread sexual violence, 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). 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). The adoption of two laws on sexual violence in July 2006 has made no difference, due to the weakness of the judiciary system and the lack of protection for rape victims.

According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, 54,000 victims of sexual violence were identified from 2004 to March 2007, 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 North Kivu, many women fled due to the risk of being raped when fighting between Nkunda and the DRC army resumed in mid-2007 (IRIN, 16 October 2007). Many others could not escape or have been raped while displaced by government troops, Nkunda’s followers or militias (HRW, 23 October 2007). In the first half of 2007, over 2,000 cases of rape were reported in North Kivu and 4,500 in South Kivu (IRIN, 15 October 2007; IRIN, 14 September 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 armed groups, and thousands of them remain in militias. According to local and international observers, including by the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, recruitment of child soldiers by militias continues in 2007, and is even increasing in North Kivu (DPI, 16 March 2007; IRIN, 8 October 2007; UNSC, 28 June 2007). Hundreds of children are reported to have fled following attempted recruitments in schools in North Kivu in the second half of 2007 (OSRSG-CAAC, 19 October 2007).

**Humanitarian conditions**

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. Many IDPs, particularly female-headed households, suffer from food insecurity (WFP, 31 October 2006). In 2007, malnutrition rates rose in North Kivu, as IDPs lacked access to assistance and to their fields due to ongoing fighting (IRIN, 8 October 2007). Many missed planting and harvesting seasons. Close to Goma, provincial capital of North Kivu, four camps were home to 45,000 IDPs as of early October 2007. The camps were in a field of rubble, and IDPs lived in hastily constructed straw huts, and subsisted on a little drinking water and boiled cassava leaves (DPA, 8 October 2007). When visiting the camps, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator said it was neither normal nor acceptable that IDPs had to live this way (OCHA, 9 September 2007).
Every day, 1,250 people die in DRC above what is considered a “normal level” for the country. Although malaria remains the primary cause of mortality, over 70 per cent of these “additional” deaths are due to easily preventable and treatable diseases (IRC, 6 January 2006). With DRC’s healthcare structures collapsing, displaced people are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases, such as cholera, measles, bubonic plague, due to their precarious living conditions and lack of access to clean drinking water (MONUC, 5 March 2007). In North Kivu, cholera epidemics broke out in IDP camps around Goma, and aid workers feared further measles and cholera epidemics among IDPs who could not be reached by humanitarian agencies due to fighting (OCHA, 2 November 2007; IRIN, 18 October 2007). Displaced people are also exposed to HIV infection, as they usually lack the means to protect themselves and do not have information about its transmission (WHO, 31 May 2006; UNHCR/IDD, January 2006).

Humanitarian access

Humanitarian action in eastern DRC is significantly restricted, due to military operations against uncontrolled armed groups and related attacks on civilians by militias and undisciplined Congolese troops, as well as the harassment of humanitarian workers. In North Kivu, 150,000 IDPs were reported in October 2007 to be in desperate need of protection and assistance, as insecurity had prevented humanitarian agencies reaching them since August (MONUC, 10 October 2007). Only 30 per cent of Ituri was accessible to humanitarian assistance in mid-2007 (OCHA, 31 August 2007). Other factors hampering the delivery of support to displaced people and returnees include the sheer size of the country, the absence of roads and the high degree of geographical dispersal of IDPs.

National and international response

The central government and provincial authorities have so far played little part in responding to the needs of IDPs in displacement and those returning home. Nominally, the Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs has the primary responsibility to respond to the needs of IDPs. 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 people recently displaced in eastern DRC, as well as transport assistance and return packages to returning IDPs.

In 2006, the UN set up “clusters” in the DRC, aimed at making relief efforts more systematic and predictable. 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 Protection Cluster led by UNHCR/MONUC, and the Reintegration and Community Recovery Cluster led by UNHCR/UNDP which focuses on return and reintegration. According to an evaluation undertaken by UNHCR, the introduction of the cluster approach has enabled the humanitarian organisations to better coordinate their interventions benefiting IDP. The report revealed the need, however, to urgently strengthen UNHCR’s capacity in the DRC, so it could take leadership on IDP protection through the mobilisation of adequate resources, and provide additional senior staff dedicated to the protection cluster and to IDP-related activities, particularly in North Kivu. The evaluation also noted difficulties in the coordination between humanitarian organisations and MONUC, the co-chair of the protection cluster (UNHCR, 28 September 2007).

In October 2007, the protection cluster in North Kivu developed a strategy and action plan focusing on IDPs. Meanwhile, the Reintegration and Community Recovery Cluster supported the
drafting of a strategy on national strategy on return, reintegration and community recovery, which had not been implemented as of November 2007.

In order to strengthen the response to the crisis in the DRC, the humanitarian community has requested over $686 million through its 2007 Humanitarian Action Plan for the country. One of the main objectives of the plan is to support the return towards self-sufficiency of IDPs and refugees (OCHA, 30 November 2006). The main funding source for this plan is a multi-donor mechanism called the "Pooled Fund". DRC is also the country receiving the largest amount of money from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), through its grants for under-funded emergencies. Still, as of November 2007, the country plan was only 58 per cent funded.

(November 2007)

RÉSUMÉ DU PROFIL EN FRANÇAIS

République démocratique du Congo: le nombre de retours dépasse le nombre de nouveaux déplacements dans l'Est

Malgré le succès des élections organisées au cours du second semestre 2006 et l’amélioration globale du niveau de stabilité, plus d’un million de personnes demeuraient déplacées dans l’Est de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) en mars 2007. Les opérations menées par les forces armées pour désarmer les milices, ainsi que les violations des droits de l’homme commises tant par ces forces que par les milices, ont continué de provoquer des déplacements fréquents dans les provinces de l’Est. De manière générale, l’ampleur et l’intensité du conflit ont néanmoins considérablement diminué ces dernières années et les personnes qui rentrent chez elles sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que celles qui fuient. A leur retour, les personnes déplacées à l’intérieur de leur propre pays (« personnes déplacées » ou « déplacés ») retrouvent cependant souvent leurs villages totalement détruits et la plupart d’entre elles reçoivent peu ou pas d’assistance pour reconstruire leur vie. Selon le HCR, il existe un besoin urgent de mettre en place une stratégie nationale qui mette en lumière les droits des déplacés et des réfugiés qui rentrent et qui facilite leur réintégration.

Depuis le milieu des années 1990, des millions de Congolais ont fui leurs foyers pour échapper aux combats entre les groupes rebelles et le gouvernement national dans un conflit complexe impliquant également les Etats voisins. On estime à près de quatre millions le nombre de victimes du conflit, lequel a entraîné des violations massives des droits de l’homme, notamment des meurtres de civils, des violences sexuelles répétées à l’encontre des femmes déplacées et autres, le recrutement d’enfants, le pillage et l’incendie des biens des déplacés. Les déplacements ont connu leur point culminant en 2003, environ 3.4 millions de personnes ayant été contraintes de fuir leurs foyers, principalement dans l’Est.

Origines des déplacements et évolutions récentes

En 1996, puis de nouveau entre 1998 et 2003, la RDC a connu deux guerres importantes, entraînant des millions de victimes et des déplacements à grande échelle. Un certain nombre de groupes rebelles, plus ou moins liés à des puissances étrangères telles que l’Ouganda et le Rwanda, ont rivalisé pour contrôler d’importantes zones de l’Est de la RDC. Les civils ont été les
plus grandes victimes de la violence, souvent ciblées pour des motifs ethniques ou politiques. Les déplacements ont connu leur point culminant en 2003, environ 3.4 millions de personnes ayant été contraintes de fuir leurs foyers, la plupart d’entre elles dans l’Est du pays. L’organisation International Rescue Committee estime que 3.9 millions de personnes sont mortes des conséquences de la dernière guerre (IRC, 6 janvier 2006).

Mi-2003, un gouvernement de transition et de partage des pouvoirs a été mis en place suite au retrait des armées étrangères. Composé d’anciennes factions ennemies se disputant souvent ouvertement, le gouvernement national n’a pas été capable de rétablir la sécurité dans l’Est de la RDC, où des milices locales ont continué de provoquer des déplacements massifs. En 2006, des millions d’électeurs ont participé aux premières élections multipartites organisées dans le pays depuis plus de 45 ans, afin de remplacer le gouvernement de transition. La majorité des personnes déplacées n’auraient pas été en mesure de voter en raison de l’insécurité, de la perte de leurs cartes électorales pendant leur fuite ou de leur confiscation par des hommes armés (OCHA, 15 août 2006; NRC, avril 2006).


Une ombre apparaît au tableau dans la mesure où le principal candidat déchu, Jean-Pierre Bemba, s’est éclipsé du pays en avril 2007, après de violents affrontements dans la capitale Kinshasa entre ses militants armés et les forces de sécurité.


Nouveaux mouvements de déplacement et de retour

Déplacements par région: principaux acteurs et modes

Nord Kivu: les combats entre factions armées rivales, les attaques par les rebelles hutus rwandais et les milices Mai Mai, ainsi que les violations commises par les forces armées congolaises à l’encontre de la population, ont continué de provoquer des déplacements. Quelque 100 000 personnes étaient déplacées dans la province avant les élections nationales de 2006. 113 000 autres ont fui leurs foyers fin 2006, suite à des affrontements entre les soldats proches du Général dissident Laurent Nkunda et d’autres soldats dans des zones à proximité de la principale ville de Goma (OCHA, 15 août 2006; MONUC, 8 mars 2007). Au cours des mois suivants, des brigades composées d’anciennes milices tutsi fidèles à Nkunda ont été déployées dans la province plutôt que d’être envoyées dans d’autres régions et intégrées à d’autres soldats (processus de « mixage »), ce qui a conduit à davantage d’insécurité et à des déplacements massifs (AFP, 7 avril 2007). En janvier 2007, des troupes congolaises ainsi que des combattants Mai Mai se sont rendus coupables de pillages et d’autres violations, provoquant des déplacements massifs dans les zones de combats (MONUC, 20 février 2007). En février et mars 2007, des affrontements entre l’armée congolaise et le mouvement rebelle hutu des Forces démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) ont provoqué le déplacement d’au moins 25 000 villageois (DPA, 23 février 2007; IRIN, 14 mars 2007).

Ituri: les civils ont continué de fuir les attaques des milices, ainsi que les opérations de l’armée congolaise et de la MONUC contre ces milices. Quelque 150 000 personnes ont trouvé refuge mi-2006 dans des camps comme celui de Gety et au sein de familles d’accueil, dans un mouvement décrit comme le plus important déplacement dans la région en plus de deux ans (OCHA, 15 août 2006; PAM, 25 juillet 2006). En 2007, des dizaines de milliers de villageois ont fui vers la forêt, après l’incendie de leurs villages par les troupes congolaises, dans le contexte d’opérations armées contre les milices locales (MONUC, 19 mars 2007).


De manière générale, l’ampleur et l’intensité du conflit ont malgré tout considérablement diminué et il y a beaucoup plus de personnes qui rentrent chez elles que de personnes qui fuient leurs foyers (ECHO, 14 février 2007). Presque 500 000 personnes déplacées sont rentrées dans leurs lieux d’origine en 2006 (UNHCR, 13 février 2007). Il semble cependant exister une réelle insuffisance en termes de réponse aux besoins urgents de retour et de réintégration des personnes déplacées en RDC, du fait surtout du manque de financements. La majorité des déplacés qui rentrent ne reçoivent pas d’assistance, en dépit du fait que les combats et les pillages ont conduit à un effondrement total des services, et les déplacés retrouvent souvent les
centres de santé, les écoles et leurs maisons détruits à leur retour. De même, les litiges liés à la terre et aux droits de propriété constituent un obstacle essentiel au retour et une source potentielle de nouveau conflit dans l’Est (UNHCR, 13 février 2007).

Sécurité physique


Les groupes armés commettent de graves violations des droits de l’homme, notamment assassinats, viols, exploitation sexuelle, enlèvements, enrôlements forcés d’enfants, pillages, vols de récoltes, taxations illégales et harcèlement général des civils. L’exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles (or, coltan et diamants) et le trafic de biens et d’armes ne font que renforcer la violence. Début 2007, par exemple, plusieurs milliers de personnes de la province du Kasai Oriental ont fui leurs villages, ravagés par les flammes suite à un conflit lié à une mine de diamants située dans la région (OCHA, 27 février 2007). Dans le territoire de Lubero au Nord Kivu, les milices hutues rwandaises contraindraient régulièrement la population civile à transporter des minéraux exploités pendant une à deux semaines d’affilée, forçant de nombreuses personnes à fuir leurs villages (MONUC, 19 mars 2007).


De nombreux enfants déplacés ont été contraints de rejoindre les rangs des groupes armés, et des milliers d’entre eux sont encore dans des milices. En juin 2006, le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies a informé le Conseil de sécurité que des violations à l’encontre des enfants avaient encore lieu en RDC, pour la plupart en toute impunité, notamment le recrutement et l’emploi.

Situation humanitaire


La grande majorité des déplacés et des rapatriés n’ont pas accès aux infrastructures de base (centres de santé, écoles et routes), à l’eau potable, à la nourriture, à des vêtements et à de la paille pour construire des maisons. Avec l’effondrement des structures de soins de santé en RDC, les personnes déplacées sont particulièrement vulnérables aux maladies infectieuses. 1 250 personnes meurent quotidiennement en RDC, en plus de celles qui mourraient sans les effets liés au conflit. Plus de 70 % de ces décès sont dus à des maladies faciles à prévenir et à soigner (IRC, 6 janvier 2006).

Des épidémies de choléra, de rougeole, de peste bubonique et d’autres maladies se sont déclarées parmi les personnes déplacées en Ituri, Nord et Sud Kivu, Katanga et Maniema en 2006, en raison de leurs conditions de vie précaires et du manque d’accès à une eau potable saine (MONUC, 5 mars 2007; IFRC, 5 septembre 2006). La malaria reste la cause numéro un de mortalité en RDC. Les déplacés sont également exposés au VIH/SIDA, dans la mesure où ils manquent généralement de moyens de protection et ne disposent pas d’information sur la transmission de cette maladie (OMS, 31 mai 2006). Ils sont susceptibles d’être même plus exposés au VIH que le reste de la population en RDC, mais davantage d’informations et de données sont nécessaires avant de pouvoir tirer des conclusions (UNHCR/IDD, janvier 2006).

Accès humanitaire

réponse aux besoins des déplacés et des rapatriés comprennent la simple taille du pays, l’absence de routes et le degré élevé de dispersion géographique des personnes déplacées. Le PAM a dû recourir à des largages de vivres et à des ponts aériens pour atteindre les personnes déplacées dans certaines zones du Katanga, Maniema et Sud Kivu où les transports terrestres et ferroviaires n’existent quasiment pas (IRIN, 6 avril 2006; WFP, 26 septembre 2006).

Réponse nationale et Internationale

Au niveau provincial et national, le gouvernement congolais a jusqu’à présent joué un rôle limité dans la réponse aux besoins des personnes déplacées et de celles qui rentrent (RI, 17 octobre 2006). En principe, le Ministère de la solidarité et des affaires humanitaires a la responsabilité première de la réponse aux besoins des déplacés. Les observateurs locaux affirment cependant que les Ministères de l’intérieur et de la défense sont également impliqués dans la protection des personnes déplacées et de celles qui rentrent, mais leur rôle semble loin d’être clair en pratique. Selon le HCR, il existe un besoin urgent de mettre en place un cadre ou une stratégie nationale de gestion des déplacements qui mette en lumière les droits de déplacés et des réfugiés qui rentrent et qui facilite leur réintégration (UNHCR, 13 février 2007).

Les agences des Nations Unies, les ONG nationales et internationales et le Comité international de la Croix Rouge (CICR) apportent une aide d’urgence aux personnes déplacées ainsi qu’une aide logistique et des colis de retour à celles qui rentrent. En février 2007, le HCR a lancé un appel à hauteur de 15 millions de dollars pour mettre en œuvre des mécanismes de protection et de surveillance dans les zones de déplacement et de retour et instaurer des systèmes d’alerte précoce et des activités de prévention. Lorsque la situation sécuritaire le permettra, le HCR soutiendra également la mise en place de mécanismes de règlement des litiges fonciers et immobiliers, fournira une aide humanitaire aux déplacés qui rentrent et encouragera la coexistence interethnique (UNHCR, 13 février 2007). Dans le même temps, le HCR prévoit d’aider quelque 100 000 réfugiés congolais à rentrer, sur un total de 400 000 (UNHCR, février 2007). Au Nord Kivu, le Conseil norvégien pour les réfugiés réalise un projet innovant liant la reconstruction rapide des infrastructures des villages et la création d’emploi pour les déplacés qui rentrent à des mesures visant à les protéger contre la violence dans une région encore instable (RI, 17 octobre 2006). Les patrouilles de la MONUC dans les régions d’origine des personnes déplacées leur ont donné suffisamment confiance pour quitter leurs camps provisoires et reconstruire leur vie dans leurs villages (OXFAM, 16 février 2007).

Afin de renforcer la réponse à la crise en RDC, la communauté humanitaire a sollicité plus de 686 millions de dollars à travers son Plan d’action humanitaire 2007 pour la RDC. L’un des principaux objectifs de ce plan est de soutenir le retour à l’autosuffisance pour les déplacés et les réfugiés (OCHA, 30 novembre 2006). La principale source de financement de ce plan est un mécanisme appelé le « Fonds commun », un fonds humanitaire rassemblant plusieurs donateurs. La RDC est le pays qui reçoit le plus d’argent – 36.6 millions de dollars sur 85 millions pour le premier semestre 2007 – du Fonds central de réponse d’urgence, au titre de ses subventions pour les urgences dotées de fonds insuffisants (OCHA, 7 février 2007). Selon les observateurs locaux, il est trop tôt pour savoir si l’approche « cluster » et les nouveaux mécanismes de financement ont eu un impact pour les déplacés et les autres personnes vulnérables.
CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Political developments

DRC political developments- Chronology: 1870-2007

MSF, 19 Nov 2002, p.64:
“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.


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.”

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

MSF, 19 Nov 2002, p.64:
“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.

HRW, 2 June 2005:
“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.”

MSF, 19 Nov 2002, p.64:
“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 Rwandan to withdraw its troops from the DRC and Kinshasa to address Rwanda’s security concerns in the DRC.

HRW, 2 June 2005:
“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.

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

Based on IRIN, 4 January 2005:
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.

Based on Christian Aid, 20 December 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.

2006 President Joseph Kabila was re-elected president in October 2006, after two rounds of elections. Ex-rebel chief Jean-Pierre Bemba came in second.

MONUC, 16 November 2006:
“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.”
**2007**

**CFR, 16 February 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.'”

**HRW, 23 October 2007:**

“The people of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, buffeted by years of war, endured more armed conflict and related violations of international law in 2006 and 2007. [...] Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes in the past 10 months. Abusive forces have not been disarmed, but on the contrary have consolidated their authority.”

**UNSC, 11 July 2007:**

“In the Kivus, however, local armed groups, including the supporters of Nkunda and the Mayi-Mayi, as well as foreign armed groups, such as FDLR, continued to destabilize the region and commit atrocities against local populations.”

**See also:**

The Economist, 6 September 2007, Congo, Will it blow up all over again? A renewal of fighting in eastern Congo could tear the country apart once more [Internet]

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

- Some 17,000 troops currently deployed, about 85 per cent of them in the north-east (2007)
- 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
- Following the elections, MONUC developed a strategy of five lines to protect the civilian population
- MONUC has been facing many challenges after the national elections (2007)
- Reinforcement of MONUC mobile teams in eastern DRC in the second half of 2007

**ICG, 19 October 2005:**

“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.”

**OXFAM, 16 February 2007:**

“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.”

**ICG, 19 October 2005:**

“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."

**AI, 5 July 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."

**See also:**
UNSC, 10 August 2007, Security Council renews arms embargo in DR Congo until 15 Feb 2008, unanimously adopting resolution 1771 (2007) [Internet]

MONUC, 18 July 2007, DR Congo: MONUC - An investigation is underway and any culprits will be immediately punished [Internet]

**Role of MONUC post-elections**
UNSC, 21 September 2006:
"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."

**HRW, 23 October 2007:**
"MONUC had to redefine its role after the election to take account of the newly elected government. This process was particularly complicated in eastern Congo where Nkunda’s troops, officially part of the Congolese army, were engaged in military operations against the army, and where the FDLR was said to be a negative force to be eliminated, yet sometimes benefited from the tacit support of Congolese army soldiers. While trying to negotiate the political complexities of this situation, MONUC was also facing reports of corruption in its own ranks, both in Ituri and in North Kivu, where MONUC soldiers had reportedly traded military information to the FDLR and other armed groups in return for gold."

**MONUC, 6 September 2007:**
"On 28 August [2007], MONUC reinforced its company of blue helmets in Masisi, and an additional Mobile Operating Base (MOB) was installed in Mushake on 29 August. On the whole, six MOBs are currently active in North-Kivu at Kishero, Mirangi, Rwindi, Nyamilima, Nyanzale and Mushake. In addition, MONUC’s brigade intervened three times to encourage a cease fire. MONUC helicopters were used to support the displacement of FARDC soldiers towards Masisi, to evacuate the casualties of Katale, and the staff of non governmental organisations. All MONUC’s military means, including MI-25 combat helicopters, are constantly monitoring the area.

In all of eastern DRC, MONUC has a total of 18 MOBs active in Ituri, Katanga and in North and South Kivu."
UN News, 25 May 2007:
“The northeast has long been the most unstable region in the vast DRC, and about 85 per cent of
the more than 17,000 peacekeepers and military observers in the UN Organization Mission in the
DRC (MONUC) are deployed in that part of the country.”

MONUC, 2 May 2007:
“MONUC Civil Affairs Section has developed a strategy of five lines to protect the civilian
population. It consists of continuing identification missions for the displacement zones and for the
needs of concerned people; mobilizing MONUC military resources to help the humanitarians
organizations have safe access to the concerned persons; jointly planning the deployment of
Mobile Operating Bases (MOB); constantly exchanging information between MONUC and the
humanitarian community; and finally sensitizing the military authorities on international human
rights respect and the distinction between combatants and non combatants.”

To view the UNSC Resolution extending the mandate of MONUC until the end of 2007,
please see:
Congo until 31 December, unanimously adopting resolution 1756 (2007) [Internet]

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)

UNSC, 27 January 2006:
"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; […]”

First democratic national elections after 45 years (2006-2007)

- Relatively peaceful elections in July and October 2006 were followed by violence in North Kivu
- 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

ICG, 31 October 2007:
“The three-year transition period, which began with the signing of the Sun City peace agreement in South Africa in 2003, significantly improved the security situation in most parts of the country, creating conditions for peaceful elections in July and October 2006. However, tensions remained high in the East. While some progress was reported in Ituri district, and relative stability prevailed in South Kivu province, Kabila’s victory was followed in North Kivu by violence on a scale and intensity not seen since the height of the war in 2000.”

Reuters, 20 July 2006:
“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.”

ICG, 2 April 2007:
“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."

See also

International Crisis Group (ICG), 5 July 2007, Congo: Consolidating the Peace [Internet]
International Crisis Group (ICG), 9 Jan 2007, DR Congo: Staying engaged after the elections [Internet]
MONUC, 6 Feb 2007 New DRC government announced [Internet]

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
- Failure of limited integration of fighters called mixage in the Kivus
- Phase III of DDR in Ituri ended in October 2007, with 1,839 demobilised ex-combatants
- 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”
- DRC government presented a new program of security reform in July 2007

AI, 19 January 2007:
“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.

Romkema, June 2007:
“The GoDRC has not been systematically pursuing the repatriation of foreign AGs and has left this issue largely to MONUC since 2002.”

Oxfam, 16 February 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.”

MONUC, 8 March 2007:
“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.”

IRIN, 7 July 2006
"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."

UNSC, 21 September 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."

CFR, 16 February 2007:
"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."

HRW, 23 October 2007:
"Donors recognize that reform of the armed forces is essential to assuring stability in Congo and hence pushed the Congolese government to come up with a program of security sector reform. Presented by the government on July 12, the plan included completion of disarmament and demobilization and formation of an integrated army to serve as a defense force as well as an organized work force for reconstruction; creation of a rapid reaction force of five to six brigades to replace MONUC by 2009; and creation by 2011 of a main defense force to defend the country’s borders. Donors welcomed the government plans but voiced skepticism that the goals could be achieved in the timeframe set out."

In the Kivus:
HRW, 23 October 2007:
“In early 2006 and again in August and November 2006, Nkunda’s troops fought against soldiers of the national army, making plain their continued autonomy and refusal to enter the integrated force under the brassage arrangement. In an effort to avoid further military operations, Congolese army soldiers and Nkunda reached a compromise at the end of December 2006 involving a form of limited integration called mixage. This compromise collapsed by mid-2007, leaving Nkunda in a far stronger position militarily and politically than he had been at the end of 2006. The failure of the attempt at a political solution also undermined the efforts of national authorities to reassert administrative control in the region, and increased ethnic tensions.[…]

In many cases Nkunda’s troops operated, post-mixage, nominally as part of the national army in the same regions where they were previously known as renegade soldiers. And in many of these places, some of the same soldiers who committed serious human rights violations […] were supposed to be providing security to residents.[…]

Reflecting the failure of mixage to bring Nkunda’s forces under control, in August 2007 Lieut. Gen. Kayembe Mbandakulu Tshisuma, now chief of staff of the Congolese army, announced at a press conference that all soldiers must go to brassage.[…]

It is claimed that hundreds of those once under Nkunda’s command left the units to which they had been assigned under mixage and rejoined Nkunda’s forces once fighting resumed between Nkunda and Congolese army troops in August 2007.”

ICG, 31 October 2007:
“The province remained in effect split into two pieces, with Masisi and Rutshuru territories caught in a cold war between dissidents from the former Rwandan-backed rebel group, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), and the national army (FARDC). Little progress was made on disarmament and reintegration of Mayi Mayi militias or repatriation of the Rwandan Hutu (FDLR) rebels.”

Reuters, 27 October 2007:
“The leader of a Congolese pro-government militia surrendered to U.N. peacekeepers on Saturday, following a two-day operation by the army to track him down, U.N. and army officials said.

Congolese soldiers, backed by peacekeepers from the U.N. mission (MONUC), surrounded Kasereka Kabamba and around 50 of his Mai Mai fighters late on Friday in the Rutshuru district of troubled North Kivu province.”

AFP, 7 April 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].”

In Ituri:
OCHA, 22 December 2006:
Plusieurs facteurs semblent bloquer le processus du Désarmement, Déémobilisation 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.”

MONUC, 16 October 2007:
“The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) phase III pilot project which began in Ituri district on 4 August 2007, officially ended on Monday 15 October 2007 in Bunia. […] The social rehabilitation of 1,839 demobilized ex-combatants will now commence, out of a total of 4,665 initially targeted. “It is time to make communities of reception the privileged actors, in order to seal the reconciliation between them and the ex-combatants demobilized by the realization of this work for the common good,” added Minister Bitijula. He went on to say that the government decided to grant 72 hours grace to the armed groups of the FNI, MRC and FRPI to release all the combatants registered on the lists validated by the DDR phase III authorities.

“It goes without saying that after midnight on 18 October 2007, the armed groups which have not surrendered all combatants and arms will be regarded as outside the law,” he underlined. The allusion was made to the FRPI militia of Cobra Matata who surrendered only 886 combatants out of the 2,600 registered, as the FRPI await ranks promised by the government for its officers before any disarmament.”

See also
Amnesty International (AI), 19 Jan 2007
DR Congo: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the reform of the army [Internet]


IRIN, 28 May 2007, DRC: Demobilisation of ex-militias slowly taking root in northeast [Internet]

Armed conflict brings further instability in 2007

- Horrific attacks on civilians increased following political agreements that were supposed to bring these abuses to a halt
- Following fighting in August 2007 between Congolese army troops and renegade soldiers under former general Laurent Nkunda, UN leaders and representatives of the US, UK, France, Belgium, and South Africa committed themselves to finding political solutions to the crisis
- But as parties agreed to seek a special envoy to facilitate discussions between DRC President Kabila and Nkunda, Kabila gave indications that he was bent on further military action against Nkunda

HRW, 23 October 2007:
"The people of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, buffeted by years of war, endured more armed conflict and related violations of international law in 2006 and 2007. Horrific attacks on civilians—including murders, widespread rape, and the forced recruitment and use of child soldiers—increased following political agreements that were supposed to bring these abuses to a halt. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes in the past 10 months. Abusive forces have not been disarmed, but on the contrary have consolidated their authority.

The Congolese government, backed by the international community, tried several short-term solutions to the fighting but failed to deal with the underlying causes of conflict. The inability of the state to protect its citizens from attack, the claims of armed groups to control parts of the territory and exploit its wealth, and the near total impunity for perpetrators of crimes, all remain unsolved.

Following fighting in August 2007 between Congolese army troops and renegade soldiers under former general Laurent Nkunda, United Nations leaders and representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and South Africa acknowledged the risks of wider conflict and committed themselves to finding political solutions to the crisis. But even as parties agreed to seek a special envoy to facilitate discussions between Congolese President Joseph Kabila and Nkunda, Kabila gave indications that he was bent on further military action against Nkunda. A previous round of fighting between Nkunda’s forces and the Congolese army was supposed to have been ended by a Rwandan-facilitated agreement at the beginning of 2007 for integration of their forces, but this collapsed within months. The government policy towards a second armed group, the Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), has also followed a confusing and contradictory course, with the army sometimes supporting, sometimes attacking this group composed largely of Rwandan combatants. The FDLR is supposedly committed to overthrowing the current government of Rwanda, but in recent years its members have attacked Congolese civilians more than they have engaged the Rwandan military."

**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
- In October 2007, the Congolese authorities surrendered and transferred Germain Katanga, alleged commander of the Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri to the ICC

**ICG, 26 August 2004, p.18:**
"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."

**ICC, 16 July 2003:**
"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.

IRIN, 8 October 2004:
"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."

IWPR, 27 July 2006:
“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.[…]

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.”

UNSC, 20 March 2007:
"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." 

ICC, 18 October 2007:
“On 17 October 2007, the Congolese authorities surrendered and transferred Mr Germain Katanga, a Congolese national and alleged commander of the Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri [Patriotic Resistance Force in Ituri] ("FRPI"), to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Mr Katanga, also known as “Simba”, is alleged to have committed six war crimes and three crimes against humanity in the territory of Ituri, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ("the DRC")."

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


- North-Kivu is currently the stage on which national political and military antagonisms are being played out
• In 2006-2007, 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

AI, 28 September 2005:

“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: 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 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.

*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 (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 […]”

ICG, 30 March 2005:
“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.”

Swiss Peace Foundation, 30 June 2006:
“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 Serufuili, 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.”

**IRIN, 15 October 2007:**
“Along with Nkunda’s National Congress for the People’s Defense and the Congolese army, the Hutu Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda and Mayi Mayi militia groups, which are organised along community lines, operate in the region.

Nkunda’s rebellion began in December 2006, causing an estimated 370,000 people to flee their homes amid clashes between dissident and regular troops.”

**IRIN, 8 October 2007:**

“Observers say ethnic tensions in the region have only grown since Nkunda's most recent campaign in August [2007].

‘One situation that we are witnessing over the last month is that we have more and more ethnic-based population movement,’ Lavand’Homme told IRIN. ‘This is worrying because it means that within the community, there is deeper destabilisation of inter-ethnic living and this could become more serious if peace is not restored quickly enough.’”

**HRW, 23 October 2007:**

“Instead of bringing much needed security to the province, the deployment of the mixed brigades led to a further deterioration of the security and human rights situation as they contested control over local populations with the FDLR. As Bravo brigade moved north and east in Rutshuru territory, its forces kidnapped and killed civilians accused of collaborating with the FDLR. The FDLR retaliated against communities that had accepted control of the mixed brigades, even attacking those people with whom they had previously cohabited relatively peacefully.[…]

The newly elected governor of North Kivu, Julien Paluku (from the Nande ethnic group, the largest in the province), made one small step towards resolving the local crisis by setting up a small administrative unit under his own supervision to deal with ethnic tensions. Beyond that, he saw the problem as one that the national government must resolve.”

**Reuters, 10 November 2007:**
“Congolese soldiers traded heavy machine gun and mortar fire with fighters loyal to renegade Tutsi General Laurent Nkunda on Friday in the worst fighting in three weeks in North Kivu province, the United Nations said.

Clashes erupted on Friday morning along the Chandago ridge outside Sake, around 20 km (12 miles) west of the provincial capital Goma, near the Rwandan border.”


South Kivu: spillover from North Kivu (2007)

• Continued displacement due to FDLR militia, but relative improvement of security towards the end of the year (2007)

ICG, 5 July 2007:
“The mismanagement of the process in North Kivu had an immediate ripple effect in South Kivu. The Ubwari peninsula, the Ruzizi plain and the Minembwe Haut Plateau are the most frequent flashpoints. Both ex-Mayi-Mayi and ex-ANC Banyamulenge dissidents are now using the mixage example and the Nkunda threat to renege on commitments to army integration and DDR. In reality, these militias want to preserve their economic and military fiefdoms but poor treatment and ethnic discrimination in the FARDC are also among the reasons for their opposition to integration. Additionally, some commanders give Kinshasa politicians kickbacks in return for protection, undermining the army’s already feeble authority. Although Nkunda claims some of these groups are under his command, the militias are for the most part local phenomena.

The Rasta in particular, a splinter group from the FDLR which absorbed a large section of the former Mudundu 40 Mayi-Mayi group, loot, rape and kidnap civilians for ransom. They carry out systematic reprisals against civilians whenever they are under military pressure from MONUC or the army. Several villages on the southern fringes of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in South Kivu have suffered from these attacks, which have little political significance but remain one of the most dramatic legacies of the war.”

AFP, 3 October 2007:
“The UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) on Wednesday noted a "clear improvement" in security in the eastern Sud-Kivu region, where the army has been fighting Rwandan Hutu rebels for more than 13 years.

MONUC "noted a clear improvement in security conditions on the Kanyola-Budodo-Nyamarege axis," more than 50 kilometres (30 miles) southwest of the provincial capital of Bukavu, military spokesman commander Gabriel de Brosses told a news conference.

He attributed the improvement to operations by the Congolese army against rebel groups made up of local militias and Rwandan Hutu rebels in the Mugaba Forest.

The chiefly Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda are seen as a major source of instability in the region, bordering Uganda and Rwanda.”

IRIN, 3 August 2007:
“OCHA’s Traore said: ‘There was a lot of hope in the [2006] elections but the polls did not address the main political issue in the east, this is the FDLR,’ he said. ‘The government needs to address the FDLR problem because it is the main cause of humanitarian problems in the east.’”

OCHA, 31 July 2007:
“In south Kivu, the situation in the province remains unstable with continued FDLR attacks and the effects of the military operation in north Kivu. Significant population movements as a result of attacks on civilians have been recorded particularly in the territory of Kalehe that borders north Kivu.”

Role of Congolese Tutsi in the Kivus (2007)

- Marginalising of Tutsi community after 2006 elections

HRW, 23 October 2007:
“Congolese who speak Kinyarwanda (Rwandophones) represent less than five percent of the population of Congo and live largely in the two eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. Congolese Tutsi are a small part of the larger group of Rwandophones, numbering several hundred thousand and constituting between one and two percent of the total Congolese population of some 60 million. In South Kivu, Tutsi are known locally as Banyamulenge, but this term does not apply to Tutsi living in North Kivu.

The rapid rise of Tutsi to national political prominence in the 1990s followed by a sharp decline in their power, as well as the anti-Tutsi hostilities accompanying the process, form the essential context of the current political and military crisis in eastern Congo.”

ICG, 31 October 2007:
“In the run-up to national and provincial elections, the situation began to deteriorate. The political balance shifted away from the Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and its Tutsi and Hutu supporters towards the once marginalised Nande, Hunde and Nyanga communities allied to Kabila. The latter groups started jockeying for positions and pushing for redistribution of economic privileges. These developments caused the Tutsi community to fear marginalisation and reprisals for the crimes committed by the RCD army, the Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC), and its allies during the war. While Hutu leaders could rely on a large group in the provincial parliament and a rapprochement with Kabila, Tutsi businessmen and RCD founder-members felt isolated and soon became more interested in Nkunda’s insurgency as a potential source of leverage to defend their economic assets and deter acts of revenge.”

See also:
IRIN, 6 August 2007, RDC: Les Banyamulenges cherchent une solution politique aux tensions
[Internet]

Insecurity caused by continuous attacks by Hema and Lendu militias in Ituri District (1999-2007)

- 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
- 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
- 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
- In 2005, 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
- Military operations lead to the demobilization of 16,000 combatants in Ituri in 2005-2007
- Yet, with returns of thousands of IDPs from North Kivu and refugees from Uganda who want their land back, there is again a high-risk of inter-communal fighting

**Struggle to keep control over rich Ituri region**

HRW, 31 October 2002:
"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, 8 November 2006:
"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)."

PANA, 26 December 2002:
"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.

AFP, 9 June 2002:
"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."

**AI, 19 January 2007:**

"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.”

**2003**

**USAID, 30 November 2003:**

"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."

**2004**

**HRW, 8 November 2006:**

“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.”

**OCHA, 4 May 2005:**

“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.”

**2005**

**IRIN, 23 March 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.

**AFP, 5 August 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.

**2007**

**ICG, 5 July 2007:**
The past two years have seen steady improvement in the security situation. In December 2004, MONUC switched to more robust tactics, enforcing a weapons-free zone, conducting cordon-and-search operations with the army and killing hundreds of militiamen, but also many civilians. These operations led to the demobilisation of 16,000 combatants. At the same time, under international pressure, the government arrested four Ituri warlords in Kinshasa, just months after they had been named to high army posts. One, Thomas Lubanga, was transferred to The Hague to stand trial at the International Criminal Court.

MONUC scaled down operations in Ituri during 2006 due to preparations for elections and because of the army’s poor discipline and human rights abuses during joint operations. Having failed to coerce the combatants into demobilisation, the government resorted to co-opting their leaders. In July it brokered deals with the three main commanders: Mathieu Ngudjolo (MRC), Cobra Matata (FRPI) and Peter Karim (FNI), making them colonels in the army. However, they refused to leave Ituri and prevented most of their troops from going to designated assembly areas since they fear arrest and want to keep a reserve force in case the deals do not work out. Only some 1000 of the estimated 4,000 combatants have arrived at the assembly points, and these with few weapons. The government also did not keep its side of the bargain. A UN official said: “When the combatants come in, there are no provisions for them, no incentive to be demobilised. That, in turn, gives the militia commanders an excuse to stay in the bush”. Yet, with the return to Djugu and Irumu territories from Uganda and North Kivu of hundreds of thousands of Hema refugees and IDPs with their cattle who want their land back, there is again a high-risk of inter-communal fighting. Local peacebuilding and renewed DDR efforts are required.”


- Three conflicts: tensions between southerners and northerners, between outsiders and natives, and between Mai-Mai militias and the national army
- Until early 2006 and the deployment of MONUC, the security and humanitarian situation was precarious for civilians caught between roaming Mayi-Mayi and undisciplined, non-integrated army troops
- The current calm, troubled only by repeated violent protests of disgruntled, demobilised Mayi-Mayi against CONADER or UN agencies, may only be a lull

**ICG, 9 January 2006:**
“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, 5 July 2007:
“Until early 2006 and the deployment of MONUC’s Katanga brigade, the security and humanitarian situation was precarious for civilians caught between roaming Mayi-Mayi and undisciplined, non-integrated army troops. Mayi-Mayi leaders like Tshindja Tshindja and Bakanda Bakoka left the bush with financial incentives and promises of forgiveness. Others such as Makabe kept a low profile and started farming but kept their troops and weapons. In late 2005, FARDC launched an operation aimed at undermining the major Mayi-Mayi group still operational in Central Katanga, under the command of a mystic leader, Gedeon. It broke the group’s communication system but failed to catch Gedeon and caused massive civilian displacements in appalling conditions.

MONUC’s deployment and mediation in Mitwaba in April-May 2006 was instrumental in prompting Gedeon to surrender and most of his followers to demobilise. This signalled other groups scattered around Upemba, Pweto and Dubie that the war was over.[…]

The current calm, troubled only by repeated violent protests of disgruntled, demobilised Mayi-Mayi groups in Kamina and Kalemie against CONADER or UN agencies, may […] only be a lull. With weapons and ammunition still hidden in the bush, political divisions among the Balubakat over spoils and local government, the lack of political will at the national and provincial levels to prosecute key leaders94 and promote dialogue and grass-roots reconciliation, resumed violence in the province cannot be ruled out.”
MONUC, 27 November 2003:

“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 Kasaian-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."

Overview of armed groups

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

OCHA, 17 July 2007:
"The continued presence of some 20 foreign and other residual armed groups constitutes the biggest cause of insecurity and instability, and is a serious impediment to securing state authority across the country and the biggest threat to the Congolese civil population."

ICG, 13 February 2006, p.13:
"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."

UNSC, 22 May 2006:
"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)."

For a comprehensive study on armed groups operating in the DRC, please see:

Congolese Armed Groups:

Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC)
ICG, 21 May 1999, "The Congolese parties to the Conflict":
"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 Zaïroises (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."

Nkunda’s National Congress for the People's Defense (NCPD)
Wikipedia, 2007:
Nkunda is a “[F]ormer General in the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and is the current leader of a rebel faction operating in the province of Nord-Kivu, sympathetic to Congolese Tutsis and the Tutsi-dominated government of neighbouring Rwanda. Nkunda, who commands former troops of the 81st and 83rd DRC Army Brigades, has been indicted for war crimes in September 2005 and is under investigation by the International Criminal Court.

[…] Later in 2004, Nkunda's forces began clashing with the DRC army in Sud-Kivu and by May 2004, occupied Bukavu where he was accused of committing war crimes. Nkunda claimed he was attempting to prevent genocide against Tutsis in the region, a claim rejected by MONUC, and denied the claim that he was following orders from Rwanda. Following UN negotiations which secured the withdrawal of Nkunda's troops from Bukavu back to the Masisi forests, part of his army split, and led by Colonel Jules Mutebusi left for Rwanda. About 150,000 Kinyarwanda-speaking people (Nkunda's own language) were reported to have fled from Sud-Kivu to Nord-Kivu in fear of reprisal attacks by DRC army.[…]

During both the first and second rounds of the contested and violent 2006 general election, Nkunda had said that he will respect the results. On November 25, however, nearly a day before the Supreme Court ruled that Joseph Kabila had won the presidential election's second round,
Nkunda's forces undertook a sizable offensive in Sake against the DRC army 11th Brigade, also clashing with MONUC peacekeepers.

**AI, 10 September 2007:**

"An international warrant for the arrest of Laurent Nkunda was issued nearly two years ago -- if it had been acted on, we might not be seeing the terrible violations we are seeing today," said van der Borght. 'There must now be clear international, DRC and Rwandan government commitment and collaboration to bring him to justice.'"

**ICG, 31 October 2007:**

“The main demands on the CNDP agenda ("cahier des charges") are all linked to the Tutsi community. The movement insists as preconditions for the integration of its troops into the national army both the eradication of the FDLR rebels, whom it accuses of preparing another genocide, and the return and reinstallation on their lands of the 45,000 Congolese Tutsi living in refugee camps in Rwanda. For the Tutsi, the FDLR’s presence is a constant reminder of past violence. Though no serious FDLR attacks on them have been reported in recent years, they do not venture far in rural areas from the protection of Nkunda's troops. For Nkunda, all non-Tutsi are suspected of FDLR associations."

**Rwanda's perception of Nkunda:**

**Reuters, 10 September 2007:**

"[Rwandan President] Kagame made clear he believed Nkunda should be viewed differently to the FDLR, which he called ‘guilty of genocide’. 'This man Nkunda, like him or not, and whatever mistakes you could hold him accountable for, has some political grievances that are legitimate,' he said."

**Mai-Mai militias**

**International Alert & al., 2005, p.20:**

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

One of the cornerstones of the Mai-Mai 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 Mai-Mai 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.”

**AI, 19 January 2007:**

“A few radical Mai-Mai 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.

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]

**Foreign armies and groups**

**Rwandan Army**

*International Alert & al., 2005, p.19:*
“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.”

**Rwandan Hutu militias - Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)**

*Romkema, June 2007:*
“The FDLR was created relatively recently - in 2003 in the Congolese city of Lubumbashi. The FDLR is in essence a continuation of its immediate predecessor, the ALIR (I and II) and, like the ALIR, rooted in the various structures that were created among and by the Rwandan refugees and combatants who fled the country in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. The FDLR leadership is still dominated by leaders of the former Rwandan army, and politicians from the regime that ruled Rwanda before and during the genocide. However, the FDLR has also integrated several individuals, mostly younger men, from the Rwandese refugee community in the DRC, who had no personal implication in the genocide.”

*UNSC, 11 July 2007:*
“According to President Kabila — and this view was echoed at other levels of the Government — political and diplomatic efforts would be required to address the issue of the approximately 6,000 FDLR elements that remained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many of whom had established close ties with local communities in the area. President Kabila added, however, that a military solution to addressing the issue of the armed groups in the Kivus, including local armed groups, should not be ruled out, as those groups continued to commit human rights violations against local populations, including acts of sexual violence. At the same time, Rwanda should be encouraged to take additional steps to establish conditions conducive to the return of FDLR elements.”
ICG, 5 July 2007:
"The other major armed group in the Kivus, the FDLR, steadily declined during the transition, hurt by desertions and the cutting of its supply line. It has some 6,000 soldiers – half its 2001 strength – around 4,500 of whom are fit to fight. Many have married Congolese and spend some time as farmers and petty traders. The group relies on taxing mines, trade routes and markets for limited revenue, and deserters say morale is low. The FDLR has split into two major groups, one of approximately 1,000 combatants led my Colonel Musare and the main force led by General Mudacumura. While Musare has been linked to the Rally for Unity and Democracy (RUD), a Rwandan opposition party, neither wing has much political or military clout."

HRW, 23 October 2007:
"The FDLR controlled a significant part of the territory of both North and South Kivu as of late 2006, but diminished somewhat in the early months of 2007 as Nkunda expanded his zone of dominance and pushed the FDLR further towards the west. According to one analyst, the FDLR controlled some 20 percent of the Kivus and exercised influence over 30 to 40 percent more. His data generally reflected the situation prior to Nkunda’s expansion in early 2007 and showed also that the FDLR controlled more territory in South Kivu than in North Kivu. While Nkunda controlled the richer and more populated areas of Masisi and Rutshuru, the FDLR has its greatest strength in the less peopled areas of Walikale."

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)
Romkema, June 2007:
"The FNL is the oldest existing rebel movement in Burundi and, indeed, in the Great Lakes Region as a whole. It was created in 1980 by Burundian Hutu exiles in Rwanda and Tanzania, who were inspired by the developments in Rwanda, where the country’s administration and army were entirely controlled by the majority Hutu ethnic group since 1959. The political objectives of the FNL have largely remained the same in the course of its existence: Burundi should be ruled by the majority ethnic group and the rural population should benefit from a large share of the country’s resources. According to the FNL, the vast majority of Burundi’s poor are Hutu and the rural Hutu population is exploited by the wealthier and predominantly urban (Tutsi) population. […] Currenty, the FNL probably has just over 1,000 combatants, and certainly no more than 3,000. Of these, it is estimated that at any given time around 300 are present in the Ruzizi Plains area of the DRC’s South Kivu province."

UNSC, 22 May 2006:
"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."

Ugandan Armed Groups

Lord Resistance Army (LRA)
OCHA, 31 August 2006:
"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."
UNSC, 20 March 2007:
“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.”

ADF/NALU
Romkema, June 2007:
The ADF and NALU are two different but closely aligned Ugandan rebel movements, operating largely from the Grand Nord area of North Kivu province and from the bordering Ituri District, both in the DRC. It is mainly the ADF that continues to launch military operations against the GoU, though it is only capable of sporadic small scale operations on Ugandan territory. The ADF was created in 1996 from the remnants of other rebel groups linked to Islamic extremist groups in Uganda. The NALU was created in the late 1980s and also aims to overthrow the current GoU. The NALU originated from a region where local Bakonjo tribesmen have fought for local autonomy and political influence for decades, and is an amalgam of several older locally rooted rebel groups.

[...]
It is generally believed that the ADF/NALU forces are today no longer militarily significant – they are estimated to number no more than 900 fighters who are not very well trained or equipped, and of whom around 60% are Congolese nationals. These forces are more focused on defending their lucrative business interests in the DRC than on achieving their political objectives in Uganda.”

Main armed groups in Ituri (2007)

AI, 19 January 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.”

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)
- As of the end of 2007, the illegal exploitation of natural resources continued unabated

Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 26 August 2005, p.5:
“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.”

ISN, 27 July 2006:
“The DRC has 10 percent of the world’s 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.”

ICG, 31 October 2007:
“The illegal exploitation of natural resources continued unabated as all communities armed, animated by deep mutual resentments over land security, mass human rights abuses during the war and control of natural resources.”

HRW, 2 June 2005, p.14, p.23:
“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 experts to look into the matter who published four separate reports between April 2001 and October 2003. 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. […]

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.”

AI, 28 April 2003:
“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.”

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

HRW, 2 June 2005, p.120:
“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.”

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]
2007
OCHA, 27 February 2007:
“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.”

MONUC, 19 March 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.”

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]

For allegations of gold trafficking by MONUC troops in 2007, please see:
MONUC, 23 May 2007, DR Congo: United Nations investigates allegations of gold trafficking in Ituri [Internet]

For an account of killings and displacement close to a mine in Katanga, and subsequent impunity of perpetrators, please see:
ASADHO/KATANGA, 17 July 2007, DRC: Kilwa Trial - a Denial of Justice [Internet]

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

DPI, 10 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.”

Displacement in North Kivu, due to army operations against militias, and attacks by renegade troops and militias (2007)

- 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)
• Since fighting erupted between dissident general Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese army in December 2006, about 370,000 people have been displaced from their homes in North Kivu province (October 2007)
• Hundreds of children are reported to have fled to avoid recruitment in October 2007

DPA, 23 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)."

IRIN, 14 March 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, 8 October 2007:
“Since fighting erupted between dissident general Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese army in December 2006, about 370,000 people have been displaced from their homes in North Kivu province, resulting in alarming hikes in malnutrition rates.”
HRW, 23 October 2007:
Throughout 2006 the FDLR looted communities in Katwiguru, Bwisha, Makoka, and surrounding areas of Rutshuru territory, causing residents to flee to the town of Kiwanja. According to the head of a displaced persons’ camp in this town, people had fled out of fear of looting, rape, and other violence. He remarked of the FDLR, ‘They have taken over our villages.’”

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 19 October 2007:
“Ms. Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, voices her grave concern over the escalation of forced child recruitment and sexual violence by Laurent Nkunda's armed forces, the FDLR and allied militias in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

'It is estimated hundreds of children are in the ranks of Nkunda forces and that thousands more are in imminent danger of recruitment. Over the last weeks, a large number of children have fled their villages following attempted recruitments in a number of schools in Masisi’, states Ms. Coomaraswamy.

The Special Representative urges all armed groups to take necessary measures, according to their previous commitments, to ensure that no child is recruited or used and to demobilize all children currently associated with their groups. ‘The forced recruitment and use of children to serve in armed groups and forces as well as sexual violence during wartime are a breach of international law and constitute war crimes’”, she says.”

See also:
OCHA, 30 October 2007, RD Congo : Des milliers de déplacés au quotidien dans la province du Nord-Kivu - Point sur la crise dans le Nord-Kivu [Internet]

IRIN, 9 October 2007, DR Congo: More displaced as insecurity persists in North Kivu [Internet]

Fighting by local militias, and between the army/MONUC and militia all caused major displacement in Ituri District (2007)

- 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)

- In September 2007, Congolese army fought against FNI militia, causing three deaths and the displacement of villagers in the area

MONUC, 19 March 2007:
"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."

OCHA, 16 September 2007:
« UNDSS a rapporté des affrontements entre des miliciens du FNI et les FARDC dans la nuit du jeudi 13 au vendredi 14 septembre [2007] à Libi, aux environs de Fataki (ter. de Djugu). Selon les sources de Mahagi, le vendredi vers 11 heures, il y a eu des échanges de tirs dans les localités de Lalo, Lossa et Libhi. Le nombre de ces miliciens est estimé à environ 14 sous l'autorité d'un commandant d'opération dénommé Hamite. Ces affrontements auraient fait 3 morts de chaque côté. Les populations civiles se sont déplacées dans les localités environnantes telles que Kondoni 1 (vers Fataki) et Kondoni 2 (vers Libhi), Dzate et Yikpa (environ 300 ménages) ainsi que dans les localités de Londoni, Bhali, Sagoville et Dhera-centre (estimation non disponible). »

LRA reportedly caused the displacement of 20,000 people in Ituri (September 2007)

- Close to 20,000 IDPs in Yakuluku, east of Dungu due to LRA attacks

OCHA, 7 September 2007:
« Déplacements de près de 20.000 personnes signalés dans le secteur de Yakuluku, à l'est de Dungu : une source locale à Dungu a informé OCHA/Dungu d'un déplacement de près de 20.000 personnes dans le secteur de Yakuluku, à l'est de Dungu, depuis 2 mois. Selon la même source, ce déplacement serait dû à une attaque des LRA dans certains villages. La communauté humanitaire de Dungu et de la Province Orientale explore les possibilités d'organiser une évaluation de la situation humanitaire dans ce secteur. »

Recent displacement in South Kivu (2006-2007)

- 30,000 IDPs from North Kivu find refuge in South Kivu (September 2007)
- 40,000 IDPs in South Kivu in mid-2007 due to FARDC military operations against the Rastas/FDLR and the violent retaliation currently being carried out by the Rastas/FDLR against the population (July 2007)
- High level of armed groups activities in South Kivu, particularly the Rwandan Hutu militias FDLR and Rastas in 2006 and 2007

OCHA, 17 July 2007:
“The fragile humanitarian situation in South Kivu is primarily linked to FARDC military operations against the Rastas/FDLR and the violent retaliation currently being carried out by the Rastas/FDLR against the population, causing thousands of people to leave their homes. Since the beginning of the year, 39,855 new IDPs have been registered in the province, yet most of them are inaccessible to humanitarian actors."
IRIN, 18 September 2007:
“Thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled to the inaccessible Masisi area, North Kivu Province, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) when fighting broke out are in dire need of aid, humanitarian officials said.[..]

An additional 30,000 are believed to have fled into South Kivu, where the WFP is working through its partners to reach them. However, access to the vast majority of IDPs in the province remains difficult due to insecurity.”

OCHA, 14 September 2007:
« Kalehe: IRC a procédé à l’enregistrement de 3 266 nouveaux ménages (fin août-septembre) déplacés en provenance d’Ufamandu (Masisi) et des acteurs locaux ont enregistré 529 ménages venus récemment de Sake (chiffres à confirmer).

Le CICR a enregistré environ 400 ménages venus récemment du Nord-Kivu à Nyabibwe et 299 dans la presqu’île de Kitembo.»

UN News, 28 May 2007:
“The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) today spoke out against a recent massacre in the country's troubled east, calling on the authorities to find and punish those responsible.

In a news release, MONUC confirmed that on the night of 26 May [2007], a group of 10 to 12 militiamen, purported to be with "FDLR/Rastas," attacked the villages of Nyabuluze and Muhungu in the South Kivu Province, killing 18 civilians, among them women and children, and wounding 27. A dozen and a half people were also abducted in the same incident.

The mission said it “strongly and unequivocally condemns this horrible massacre of innocent civilians,” noting that the victims were all killed or wounded in their sleep by attackers who "chose machetes, bayonets, knives and clubs over firearms to kill silently and avoid detection."

Notes were left on the bodies of their victims, in which the attackers claimed that these atrocities were in reprisals to the operations led against them by the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC), according to MONUC.

As the perpetrators attempted to raid Chihamba, a third village in the same area, a patrol of UN Pakistani peacekeepers opened fire, forcing them to flee into the nearby forests, and "thereby preventing another bloodbath," MONUC said.”

OCHA, 31 August 2006, situation humanitaire:
« Après une période d’acalmie 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, viol, 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). »

IRIN, 13 April 2007:
“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.”

*See also:*
ICRC, 9 November 2007, République démocratique du Congo : au secours des populations fuyant le Nord-Kivu [Internet]

IRIN, 2 July 2007, DRC: Civilians bearing brunt of South Kivu violence [Internet]

IRIN, 31 May 2007, DRC: Weekend attack prompts villagers to flee in northeast [Internet]

OCHA, 29 May 2007, DR Congo: Statement attributable to the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Ross Mountain [Internet]

IRIN, 28 May 2007, DRC: Massacred villagers found dead in their beds [Internet]

IRIN, 24 May 2007, DRC: Thousands more flee ongoing clashes in Kivu [Internet]

**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

**IRIN, 2 February 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.

**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.

**UNICEF, 3 February 2006:**

“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.'

**UNICEF, 24 July 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 poisons tipped 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.”
Little new displacement in Katanga Province (2006-2007)

- As of mid-2007, only 7,050 people remained displaced in 2007 among the new wave of 300,000 IDPs who had been displaced between October 2005 and January 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

OCHA, 31 July 2007:
« Au cours des trois derniers mois, aucun nouveau déplacement n’a été enregistré dans la province du Katanga. Toutefois, les mouvements de retour se sont poursuivis avec plus de 40 000 nouveaux retours entre mars et juin, élevant le nombre total de retours à 451 297 depuis octobre 2006 et laissant 31 348 personnes déplacées à travers la province. »

Contexte
Seules 7050 personnes restent déplacées parmi la vague de 300,000 personnes déplacées suite aux offensives des FARDC contre les Mayi-Mayi entre octobre 2005 et janvier 2006. »

ICG, 9 January 2006, p.2:
"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."

HRW, 21 July 2006, FARDC:
« 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. »

European Commission-ECHO, 14 February 2007:
"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 burned. 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."

OCHA, 30 November 2006:
"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."
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:

UNSC, 15 September 2006:
“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.”

Other causes of displacement

Several hundred thousands of people displaced due to floods in eastern DRC (2007)

- End 2006/early 2007 DRC experienced its worst floods in ten years, which affected approximately 200,000 people and destroyed crops on a massive scale in Equateur, Katanga, and Oriental Provinces

OCHA, 17 July 2007:
“Attention has recently been drawn to protracted acute humanitarian needs in the western provinces, and the needs of victims of natural disasters. Although spared from armed conflict, several evaluation missions have revealed critical rates of malnutrition and extreme vulnerabilities in the Kasai, Oriental, Bandundu and Equateur Provinces. Moreover, towards the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, the DRC experienced its worst floods in ten years, which affected approximately 200,000 people and destroyed crops on a massive scale in Equateur, Katanga, and Oriental Provinces. To some in the humanitarian community, this served as a warning of the potential effects of climate change and the need to increase capacity to respond to victims of natural disasters. As a further indication of the scope of emergency needs, the inter-agency Rapid Response Mechanism1 assisted roughly 488,000 people in the first four months of the year throughout the country with various forms of assistance, and another 500,000 victims of cholera were assisted by water and sanitation activities during the first half of 2007, primarily in the Kivus.”

IRIN, 25 January 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. [...]
Many 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.

Fire causes internal displacement (2006)

IRIN, 26 September 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.

**See also:**

DanChurchAid (DCA), 15 Oct 2006
DRC: Assistance given to 1,500 homeless families [Internet]
Global Figures

Close to 1.4 million IDPs in September 2007

- In early 2007, there were over a million IDPs in eastern DRC, over half of them in North Kivu. The number of IDPs continued to grow the following months.
- According to OCHA, 143,000 people were displaced between mid September and mid October 2007, and the number of displaced keeps rising due to insecurity in the province.

According to an unpublished report by OCHA, there were 1,390,343 IDPs in DRC as of September 2007. OCHA estimates that at least 529,000 people have been displaced in 2007.

**MONUC, 19 October 2007:**
“According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 143,000 people have been displaced between mid September and mid October 2007, and the number of displaced keeps rising due to insecurity in the province.

The displaced are concentrated west of Goma in five sites, in eight sites in Rutshuru territory and certain others in Masisi territory.”
Total estimate of IDPs drop to 1.1 million in November, compared to 1.48 million in August (end 2006)

OCHA, 31 August 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, 30 November 2006, pp.10-11:**
"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."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>IDP population as of October 2006*</th>
<th>IDP return in 2006*</th>
<th>Expected IDP return in 2007*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kivu</td>
<td>540,841</td>
<td>490,000</td>
<td>950,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province Orientale (mainly Ituri)</td>
<td>210,434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kivu</td>
<td>222,075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanga</td>
<td>101,947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,075,297</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

OCHA, October 2005:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces/ Districts</th>
<th>IDPs 12 mois</th>
<th>Retournés 12 mois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ituri</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>213,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientale</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nord Kivu</td>
<td>502,500</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sud Kivu</td>
<td>351,500</td>
<td>456,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maniema</td>
<td>7,600</td>
<td>252,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanganyika</td>
<td>48,500</td>
<td>369,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanga</td>
<td>263,900</td>
<td>77,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kasais</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equateur</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinshasa</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,664,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,680,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 million IDPs as of end 2004

OCHA, 31 August 2004:

Table of IDPs and Returnees in DRC As of August 2004*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Displaced</th>
<th>Returns</th>
<th>Date of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katanga</td>
<td>365,000</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province Orientale</td>
<td>455,000</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maniema</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Kivu</td>
<td>785,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Kivu</td>
<td>254,000</td>
<td>275,000</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equateur</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinshasa</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 2003 for the IDPs and June 2004 for the expellees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandundu</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bas Congo
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

**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

**OCHA, 18 November 2003, p.18:**

![Internal Displacement DRC 2000 - 2003](chart)

**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.”

**Major increase mainly due to the crisis in Ituri:**

UNSC, 16 July 2004, para.40:

“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.”

**End 2002**

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

**End 2000-2001**

**OCHA, 30 September 2001:**

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

**UN, 7 June 2001:**

According to the United Nations, “The vast majority of the 2 million people displaced by war are children and women.”

**OCHA, 31 December 2000, p.6:**

*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.*

**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

**OCHA, 17 April 2000:**

*Increase of the number of IDPs 1998-2000*

End 1999

**UNSC, 17 January 2000, para. 24:**

"[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.."

**OCHA, 15 November 1999:**
UN, December 1998, p.14:
"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."

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

USCR, 1999, p.59:
"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."

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

USCR 1998, pp. 60-61:
"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."

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

USCR 1997, p.107:
"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."

Disaggregated figures

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

MSF, 28 March 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 then a year, approximately 92,000 persons have been displaced.”

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

IRIN, 4 May 2006:

“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.”
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)
- 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

<table>
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<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Nov 03</th>
<th>Aug 04</th>
<th>July 06</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equateur</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>455,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>197,135</td>
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<td>95,000 (includes +/- 40,000 expellees from Angola)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>45,000 (includes +/- 3,000 expellees from Angola)</td>
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<td>TOTAL IDPs</td>
<td>3.4 million</td>
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(based on numbers provided by UN OCHA, 18 Nov 03, p19; UN OCHA 31 August 2004; OCHA July 2006)

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<td>Eastern Kasai &amp; Western Kasai</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

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

MONUC, 15 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 it's 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."

Double simultaneous movements of displacement and return complicate humanitarian assistance (2006-2007)

IRIN, 13 June 2007:
"Intermittent clashes and frequent attacks on civilians by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have created a state of permanent displacement in the volatile central African country, an official of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said.

‘There are a million internally displaced persons [IDPs], but each time there is a successful return of IDPs, there are new displacements because of conflicts elsewhere,' said Judy Cheng-Hopkins, UNHCR's assistant high commissioner for operations.

‘For us, the great challenge is to provide protection and assistance to the IDPS, especially protection against physical and sexual violence, protection of children, civil protection,' Cheng-Hopkins told IRIN in an interview in Kinshasa on Tuesday.

She noted that the problem of displacement in the DRC was unique because of the large number of people who had fled their homes and the difficult logistics of delivering aid to them.

"Here, the people are always on the move, living with other families in the communities of reception or they are completely dispersed, so much so that it is a great challenge finding the displaced for identification and for the provision of assistance," she said."

OCHA, 30 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. »

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

RI, 8 March 2006:
“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.”

MSF, January 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 Dílenge-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 Kampango. 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.”

Night commuters/Pendulum displacement in the Kivus (2007)

- Villagers in North Kivu are forced to sleep in the jungle for fear of being attacked in their homes at night (October 2007)
- In South Kivu, IDPs who fled the violence return home to tend their farm in order to survive

Reuters, 12 October 2007:

In North Kivu: “Forced to sleep in the jungle for fear of being attacked in their homes at night, the residents of this east Congo village are crying out for peace.

Government soldiers forced fighters loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda out of Karuba and two nearby villages this week but only pushed them back to Mushake, 15 km (9 miles) away, meaning the front line is still dangerously close.

"We've been sleeping in the bush at night for a month now. We return to the village by day to see the situation. We've nothing to eat, no clothes," said Karuba resident Jerome Lali. The village of shacks nestles in the hills of North Kivu, a thickly-forested province on Democratic Republic of Congo's border with Uganda and Rwanda, long a crucible of violence."

IRIN, 1 August 2007:

In South Kivu: “Janet Furaha fled the violence in her home area of Kaniola in the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) South Kivu province in May to live with relatives in Walungu, but she has often returned to tend her farm.

'I have not been there in the past few weeks because attackers have intensified their activities, but if I hear the situation is calmer, I will go and see if I can get any food,' she said.

Furaha is one of the thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern Congo, who spend nights in areas they consider safer, such as settlements close to UN peacekeepers, but return to their home farms during the day.

Because of their constant movement, humanitarian workers have difficulties determining the exact number of IDPs and how to effectively deliver aid to them.”
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

RI, 12 August 2003:

“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. […]

[...] In 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, 20 August 2004:

“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.”

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

RI, 17 October 2006, p.6:
“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.”

UN, July 1999, p.8:
"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, November 2000, p.18:
"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."

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

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

OCHA, 31 December 2000:
"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.'"

UN, November 2000, p.15:
"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.”

HRW, 21 July 2006, Mai Mai:
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 » »

MONUC, 27 December 2006:
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.”
PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

Urgent protection concerns for IDPs and other civilians (2006-2007)

- MONUC reported that in July 2007, Congolese soldiers had been responsible for numerous cases of arbitrary executions and other HR violations
- In June 2007, an IDP camp close to Goma was allegedly looted by Congolese soldiers after the distribution of humanitarian assistance
- According to UNHCR, IDPs in North Kivu have been victims of grave human rights violations by all the factions engaged in fighting and by other civilians (May 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)

2007

MONUC, 8 March 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, 20 February 2007:
"FARDC, FDLR, and Mayi-Mayi were responsible for increased insecurity and many human rights violations/abuses in North and South Kivu."

MONUC, 17 September 2007:
[In July 2007] "FARDC soldiers were responsible for numerous cases of arbitrary executions and other human rights violations, in particular, the rights to physical integrity, liberty and security of persons […]
On 27 June 2007, the Katwiguru IDP camp, in the territory of Rutshuru, Goma, was allegedly looted by armed men in FARDC uniform. That was the third consecutive attack against the Katwiguru IDP camp after the distribution of food and non-food items by humanitarian agencies."

IRIN, 8 May 2007:
"Fighting between forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo government and Rwandan rebels has displaced tens of thousands of villagers in the eastern DRC's North Kivu province since February, who were now being victimised by the military and other civilians, humanitarian sources said.

"The security situation is harsh for these displaced people as they are victims of grave human rights violations and are directly targeted in the fighting," said Jens Hesemann, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, on Monday.
North Kivu has been the scene of most of the fighting between DRC's Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the rebel Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, known by its French acronym, FDLR, which comprises the remnants of the former Rwandan army and ethnic Hutu militias blamed for the 1994 genocide.

"Displaced people are being subjected to looting every day by all the factions engaged in fighting - the Congolese army and the Rwandan rebels - and are victims of atrocities, including killings, robbery and other kinds of mistreatment by other civilians," said Hesemann, citing reports from a UNHCR monitoring team, which has collected testimonies from the displaced.

War-related abuses worsened in the first week of May when FARDC launched a major offensive against the FDLR, during which more than 40 rebels were killed.

"Civilians are complaining about the killing of their relatives by soldiers who accuse them, often without evidence, of being rebel accomplices," said Hesemann."

See also:
MONUC, 9 November 2007, DR Congo: Monthly Human Rights Assessment - Sep 2007
[Internet]

AFP, 9 October 2007, DRCongo rebel leader accuses army of razing houses [Internet]

2006
OCHA, 21 July 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.”

In Ituri: MONUC, 30 November 2006:
“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.”

Also in Ituri:
HRW, 16 October 2006:
“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.”

ICG, 9 January 2006, p.14:
“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.”

MONUC, 9 October 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 Eringenti. He was accused of taking photographs of a military camp and interviewing spouses of military personnel. ”

Reuters, 8 February 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.

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, Maï Maï Analyse Légale [Internet]

Reuters Foundation, 21 Jun 2006, UN probes report of force’s role in Congo massacre [Internet]


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

IRIN, 7 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."
Ituri: increased harassment of IDPs in Gety camps, rape in neighbouring Aveba (August 2006)

OCHA, 31 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.”

MONUC, 15 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.”

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

ICG, 20 July 2006:
“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. 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."

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

MSF, January 2006:

"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.

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

**IRIN, 19 May 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."

**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

**UN News Service, 31 July 2003:**

“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 Drodro 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.”

**MONUC, 14 April 2004:**

"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."

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

**MONUC, 19 March 2007:**

"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."

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

- During 2006, the UN investigated 176 cases of sexual abuses allegedly committed by MONUC personnel
- 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

UNSC, 20 March 2007:
“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, 22 March 2005, para.64-65, 85:
“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, 28 December 2005, para.62-65:
“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.”

OMCT, 15 August 2006:
"[…] 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."

*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]

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

OCHA, 26 November 2001, p.34:
"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."

HRW, June 2002, p.23:
"Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war by most of the forces involved in this conflict.."

According to Amnesty International, IRIN-CEA, 27 June 2001:
"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."

AI, 27 November 2003:
"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."

AFP, 13 November 2003:
"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."

UN News Service, 4 November 2003:
"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."

HRW, 7 March 2005:
"[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.

AI, 26 October 2004, p.1:
“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.”

International Alert & Al., 2005, p.46:
“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.”

UNSC, 16 October 2001:
“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.”

Oxfam, May 2004:
“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 they 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.”

UNSC, 28 November 2005:
“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.”

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
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)

In 2007, the special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on Violence against Women, said an estimated 4,500 cases of rape had been reported in the eastern province of South Kivu in the first six months of 2007 alone

Special rapporteur said that sexual violence in the DRC amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity (October 2007)

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)

According to UNICEF, 18,000 cases of rape were reported in eastern DRC in 2006 (Oct 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

According to UNFPA, over 2,000 cases of rape occurred in North Kivu between January and September 2007

In Oriental Province, many children have been raped, often by members of the security force

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

DPI, 16 March 2007:
"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."

ActionAid, 17 November 2006:
"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."
MONUC, 8 March 2007:
“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.”

IRIN, 10 February 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, 2 August 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.”

OCHA, 31 March 2007:
“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 luck 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.”

IRIN, 14 September 2007:

“In July [2007], Yakin Erturk, special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on Violence against Women, said an estimated 4,500 cases of rape had been reported in the eastern province of South Kivu in the first six months of 2007 alone, with many more going unreported. She noted that sexual violence was perceived as “normal” by local communities.”

UN News, 26 October 2007:

“The scale and brutality of the sexual violence currently faced by women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity, an independent United Nations human rights expert has told the General Assembly.

Yakin Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, told the Assembly’s Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (Third) Committee yesterday that the international community needs to intervene urgently to stem the widespread sexual violence.”

See also:

UN Human Rights Council, 30 July 2007, UN expert on violence against women expresses serious concerns following visit to Democratic Republic of Congo [Internet]

IRIN, 16 October 2007:

“The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) told IRIN that 18,000 cases of rape were reported in 2006 in three Congolese provinces, including North Kivu. But the real numbers are likely to be much higher.[…]"
When fighting between dissident general Laurent Nkunda and the DRC army resumed this month in North Kivu province, women in the region again fled the threat of rape by armed groups. 'When you have an increase of insecurity, an increase of displacement, women are put at risk and more vulnerable to sexual harassment,' Patrick Lavand'Homme, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in North Kivu told IRIN. 'The mix of the military being close to IDPs [internally displaced persons] means the little rule of law that exists completely disappears.'

What is troubling in eastern Congo is the brutality that often accompanies rape. Women are routinely raped by more than one man, violated in front of their families or tortured after the rape."

IRIN, 15 October 2007:
« Il y a eu plus de 2 000 cas de viols dans le Nord-Kivu entre les mois de janvier et de septembre 2007, selon le Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population (UNFPA), qui a relevé que des viols et autres exactions étaient commis dans certaines régions du Nord-Kivu où avaient eu lieu des combats entre l'armée congolaise et les troupes fidèles au général dissident Laurent Nkunda. »

For more information
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 17 Oct 2007, Over 27,000 sexual assaults in DRC in 2006: violence against women and girls continues to rise [Internet]

OCHA, 11 October 2007, Congo's rape war - Savage sexual violence is sweeping the troubled nation, demanding a global response [Internet]

MSF, October 2007, Ituri: Les civils restent les premières victimes [Internet]

Hell on Earth - Systematic Rape in Eastern Congo, Journal of Humanitarian Assistance (JHA), 6 August 2007 [Internet]

IMC, 2007, Healing the wounds of war in DRC, By Margaret Aguirre [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, RDC : 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

In North Kivu, protection workers say children are no longer being recruited by the Congolese army but by any one of three main militia groups operating in the region (October 2007)

Legal aspects:

JRS, 13 February 2007:

*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

[...]
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.”

In practice
AI, 19 June 2001:
"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."

International Alert & AI, 2005, p.46:
“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."

UNICEF, 24 July 2006:
“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.”

Save the Children Alliance, 27 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.”

AI, 11 October 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.”

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the DRC:
UNSC, 28 June 2007:
“The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), covers the major developments related to the situation of children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the previous report on the subject (S/2006/389) and provides information on compliance with and progress made in ending the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations against children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report notes that, although significant progress has been made through the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and civil society partners to improve the situation of children affected by armed conflict, major gaps exist, most especially in the Ituri district and North and South Kivu provinces. […]

“Since January 2007, a surge in the recruitment and use of Congolese and Rwandan children by commanders loyal to Laurent Nkunda has been observed in North Kivu.”

See also:
United Nations Security Council, 26 October 2006, Children and armed conflict - Report of the Secretary-General [Internet]

In 2007, recruitment reportedly continued:
IRIN, 17 February 2007:
“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.

MONUC, 14 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.”

According to the UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict: DPI, 16 March 2007:
“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.”

IRIN, 8 October 2007, “recruitment”:
“The forced recruitment of children has struck fear into the hearts of many of the displaced who say they will not leave the camps and return home until their security can be assured.

'I have heard of a lot of children being recruited, even the little girls,' said Ame Muhima, the president of a grouping of 4,000 displaced families waiting to be integrated into formal camps for the displaced outside of Goma.

'There were 17 children who have escaped and come back to us here,' Muhima said.

Protection workers say children are no longer being recruited by the Congolese army but by any one of three main militia groups operating in the region; and they face the risk of recruitment in more ways than one.
Mayi-Mayi militia groups tell children it is their responsibility to fight to protect their villages from other armed groups. Spurred by a sense of duty, children often volunteer themselves for service. Those who resist are ‘volunteered’ by their parents.

The Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), an ethnic Hutu militia group with links to the perpetrators of Rwanda’s 1994 genocide, employ a different tactic.

‘The FDLR are known to sweep into a village and literally scoop up all of the children of a certain age and march them off into the bush,’ Ironside told IRIN.

If caught, children captured during the recent eruptions in violence are held in squalid prisoner-of-war (PoW) camps by the various armed groups. Forces loyal to Nkunda are widely reported to be holding underage PoWs.

“Unlike boys, girls always remain behind the scenes in rebel camps, making it more difficult for protection workers to gain access to them.

‘It's always been a grave issue,’ Ironside told IRIN. ‘The difficulty is that girls who are kidnapped by armed groups … in some cases develop a tacit acceptance of their situation. They know that were they to go back to their home community they would be stigmatised as a result of the fact that they have been raped and borne children by an opposing group.’”

HRW, 23 October 2007:

“In a report to the UN Security Council in June 2007 the secretary-general stated that the use of children as soldiers continued to be a problem in Congo, and he noted with concern increased recruitment of children in Congo and in Rwanda for service with Nkunda’s units in early 2007.”

Reported demobilization of 10,000 children since 2004 in Ituri:

MONUC, 15 May 2007:

“As far as the issue of children in the armed forces is concerned, 1,571 have been disarmed and demobilized in the ranks of the FNI since July 2006. Similarly, 482 children have been disarmed and demobilized in the ranks of FRPI and 154 in the ranks of MRC since January 2007. In total, more than 10,000 child soldiers have demobilized in Ituri since September 2004.”

See also:

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


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

Save the Children Alliance, 2 February 2007, Child soldiers being actively recruited as frontline fodder in at least 13 countries [Internet]

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC), 31 July 2007, DR Congo: Priorities for children associated with armed forces and groups [Internet]
Displaced children at risk in North Kivu (September 2007)

- Attempts to establish child-friendly spaces in the IDP camps

IRIN, 19 September 2007:

“According to Pernille Ironside, a protection officer for UNICEF in Goma, thousands of children were among civilians displaced by fighting in the past few months in North Kivu Province.

‘These children are at direct risk of all sorts of violence, but particularly sexual violence, exploitation, abuse, certainly re-recruitment and new recruitment, and other threats to their physical safety,’ she said. UNICEF, she added, was trying to establish child-friendly spaces in the IDP camps in the province to provide a protective environment for the children to minimise the risks against them.

‘Children are used in a multitude of different roles by armed groups,’ Ironside said. ‘More often, they tend to be behind the scenes in more support roles as porters, spies, guards, and cooks; and certainly girls are taken to be the forced wives or sex slaves of many of the officers in these groups.’

She said there were alarming reports of hundreds of children still being recruited by armed groups in North Kivu.

‘It is extremely alarming and essentially means we are on the brink of potentially taking a major step backwards in all of the advances made in the child DDR [Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration] programme in the province,’ she added.

There were also reports of children being captured during the fighting. ‘We hope these children will be released immediately into our custody for protection. It demonstrates the existence of the children in the various groups and we know they are being held in extremely desperate conditions, and possibly subjected to various forms of abuse during their custody.’

The latest fighting was now threatening UNICEF’s past success in reuniting children with their parents.”

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

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 26 April 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.”

Freedom of Movement

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

ICVA, 18 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.”
SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Alarming hikes in malnutrition rates and epidemics among IDPs in North Kivu (October-November 2007)

- 19 percent global malnutrition in parts of North Kivu
- Aid workers fear measles and cholera epidemics may break out among displaced people who cannot be reached by humanitarian agencies due to fighting
- Cholera outbreak in IDP camps around Goma

OCHA, 2 November 2007:
“Regarding the outbreak of cholera in the IDPS sites around Goma, WHO underlined the strengthened efforts of water and sanitation actors in the area (water tanks have been added by Oxfam-GB; Solidarités and Mercy Corps will build 20 latrines). However, water flow is still slow, as water pipe of ASAF has been destroyed. WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR and International Medical Corps will extend their hygiene sensitization program by notably providing soaps throughout November [2007].”

IRIN, 8 October 2007:
“Chronic violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has cut 150,000 vulnerable people off from humanitarian aid, deepening an already severe crisis, according to the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

Since fighting erupted between dissident general Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese army in December 2006, about 370,000 people have been displaced from their homes in North Kivu province, resulting in alarming hikes in malnutrition rates.

Humanitarian workers also warn of the risk of malaria, cholera and measles epidemics in rural areas that have been cut off from the delivery of medications.

"It's a bit of an anarchy situation out here," Aya Shneerson, the head of WFP in North and South Kivu provinces, told IRIN. "In some parts, we have tens of thousands of people who have fled conflict, who are living in deplorable conditions, who really need our help, and we just can't get there."

Fighting in the region has abated since clashes in September between Nkunda's National Congress for the People's Defense (NCPD) and the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the national army; but sporadic eruptions of violence have kept most humanitarian workers confined to Goma, capital of North Kivu.

Further complicating the already thorny situation, observers say, are Mayi-Mayi and Hutu militia groups, which have been recruited to help bolster Congo's weak, demoralised national army to put down Nkunda’s rebellion.[…]

Humanitarian workers caution that if violence continues, civilians will bear the brunt of the fighting.
'In some areas in North Kivu, in some parts of Rutshuru, we have 19 percent global malnutrition,' Shneerson said. 'That's huge. That's something that you saw in Niger.'

Most of the recent displaced are impoverished farmers, already eking out a tenuous existence.

'They really are 100 percent dependent on what they grow, and if they are forced out of their homes, they don't have anything to eat,' Shneerson said.

Humanitarian workers also warn that if the displaced are not able to return for the upcoming planting seasons, fields in the region will lie barren and a severe food crisis could result:

IRIN, 18 October 2007:

"Aid workers in the strife-torn east of the Democratic Republic of Congo fear measles and cholera epidemics may break out among displaced people who cannot be reached by humanitarian agencies because of fighting between government forces and dissident soldiers in North Kivu province."

See also:
IRIN, 12 July 2007, DRC: Alarming malnutrition rates in North Kivu [Internet]

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator tells IDPs that it is neither normal nor acceptable that they have to live this way (September 2007)

OCHA, 7 September 2007:

"The ERC [UN Emergency Relief Coordinator] then travelled to the area around the town of Mugunga, 10 kilometres west of Goma and 15 kilometres east of Sake, where three sites are sheltering displaced persons. The town of Sake has virtually emptied of its approximately 26,000 inhabitants, and the environs of the town have also been virtually emptied of their estimated 4,000 inhabitants. While the three sites had pre-existing displaced persons, many thousands more have arrived over the past two weeks, including those who have fled fighting and those who have fled pre-emptively. In some cases, families are now moving to locations according to their ethnicities. While families are still being registered and needs assessed, preliminary indications are that needs will include food, shelter, and water and sanitation.

"It is neither normal nor acceptable that you have to live this way," Mr. Holmes said in his address to the displaced. He told them that the United Nations and its partners would try to get more resources and would carry on assisting them as much as possible. He also said that he would, upon his return to New York, address the United Nations Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, he noted the need for a political solution to the situation."

IDP recounts ordeal and hunger in South Kivu (July 2007)

IRIN, 31 July 2007:

"Claudine Ngomora, 25, fled her home after an attack by people she says are known as the Rasta in February 2007. She has survived on the goodwill of friends and relatives in Walungu Territory in the province of South Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Claudine recounted her story at a school in the Cagala area of Walungu, where NGO, Malteser International, was distributing food to 3,000 internally displaced persons:
I have five children, the eldest of whom is eight years old. I live with all the children, together with my husband, with a family that has been kind enough to host us here in Walungu. I left my home in Kaniola five months ago and I cannot say I have had a full stomach since.

I am always hungry. There is not enough food for me and my children. Hunger and disease are the biggest problems we currently face. I left my banana trees and my cassava crop was just getting ready. I know it was looted by the attackers.

Nowadays, I find that life has become pointless. I feel so helpless. I wake up in the morning, sweep the house and do general household chores. I wash the children's clothes with or without soap, and then I take the hoe to till the land my husband has leased on a short-term basis.

We haven't harvested anything yet from this small piece of land. That is why we are always hungry. After coming back from the farm, I help the host family with whatever needs to be done; cooking, cleaning, clearing the compound of weeds etc, but I ask myself: For how long will this go on?"

**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

 IRIN, 4 January 2007:

"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.

IDPs' needs in Katanga (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

WHO, 31 May 2006:
« 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%).”

MSF, 28 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.”

See also:

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

MSF, January 2006, Running for their lives- repeated civilian displacement in Central Katanga, DRC [Internet]
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

WHO, January 2007:
"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. »

UNHCR, 13 February 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;"

OCHA, 31 December 2005:
"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 August 2006, “crisis watch”:
“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, 14 August 2006:**
"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, 31 August 2006, « situation humanitaire »:**
"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."

**MONUC, 17 January 2006:**
"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)."

**OCHA 2 January 2004, p.4:**
"Dans les 18 zones de santé du Maniema, environ 80% des structures sont à réhabiliter, environ 90% ont besoin de médicaments essentiel et déquipement."

**IFRC, 5 September 2006:**
"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."

**See also:**
MSF, 22 Jun 2006. No end in sight as pneumonic plague outbreak increases in Ituri, DRC [Internet]
MSF, October 2005, Access to healthcare, mortality and violence in the DRC [Internet]

**Vaccination campaign targets displaced children and pregnant women in North Kivu (September 2007)**

**IRIN, 12 September 2007:**
"A vaccination campaign targeting thousands of displaced children and pregnant women is to commence next week in a camp in North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), health officials said.

'In seven days, at least 22,000 children between the ages of six months and 15 years will be vaccinated against measles,' Stéphane Bateyi, the coordinator of the vaccination programme in Goma, the main town in the province, said.

At least 6,400 children aged between one and five years will also be given deworming medicine, Bateyi said on 11 September [2007].

In addition, 2,000 pregnant women are expected to be vaccinated against maternal and neo-natal tetanus during the seven-day exercise beginning 17 September under the government's extended vaccination programme (Programme élargi de vaccination) in partnership with the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)."
The vaccinations will be carried out in Mugunga village, 15km from Goma. The village is housing thousands of internally displaced persons who fled the fighting in Sake between the army and militias loyal to dissident general Laurent Nkunda.”

**Ituri: cholera, bubonic plague, meningitis, etc in 2006 (March 2007)**

- In Ituri, WHO found that in 2006 epidemics broke out due to precarious hygiene conditions, displacement of populations and endemic disease like plague and cholera

**MONUC, 5 March 2007:**

« [S]elon les statistiques officielles fournis par le Bureau régional de l'OMS, l'Ituri a été frappé [en 2006] par:
- 21 épidémies de cholera qui ont frappé les Territoires de Djugu et d'Aru, notamment les localités de Bunia, Gety, Tchomia et Drodro et d'Aru et Ariwara respectivement. Ces épidémies de cholera auraient fait au total 117 victimes.
- Une épidémie de peste bubonique qui aurait touché les Districts de Djugu (Rethy, Linga et Fataki) et le District d'Aru et provoqué 48 décès.
- Une épidémie de peste pulmonaire, qui propagée à partir de l'épidémie de peste buboniques aurait touché un territoire plus vaste comprenant d'autre centres importants comme Kwandroma, et qui aurait causé 29 décès.
- Une épidémie de coqueluche, qui en touchant le District de Djugu, aurait provoqué 168 décès. Ce chiffre est par ailleurs mis en doute par les responsables de l'OMS eux-mêmes car le taux de léthalité (qui est le résultat entre le nombre de décès et le nombre des cas) ne serait pas compatible dans ce cas avec ce chiffre surtout si l'on considère que l'épidémie aurait duré après la campagne de vaccination menée par UNICEF.
Ainsi, on a un total de 362 décès dus aux épidémies en Ituri pour l'année 2006. Par ailleurs, ce chiffre ne tient compte que des cas enregistrés dans les structures de santé.

En dehors de ce bilan annuel, il faut aussi enregistrer une épidémie de méningite qui, toujours active dans le Territoire d'Aru, aurait affecté 470 personnes jusqu'aujourd'hui et provoqué le décès de 55. Pour faire face à cette dernière épidémie, le 15 février plus de 111.000 doses des vaccins commandés en Suisse par le bureau de l'OMS sont arrivées dans la zone de santé d'Adi, localité située à environ 90 kms de la ville d'Aru. Ainsi, la vaccination a été réalisée entre le 23 février et le 2 mars 2007.

Les principales raisons liées à ces explosions épidémiques sont au nombre de trois: 1) Conditions d'hygiènes précaires; 2) déplacement de population, et surpopulation; 3) l'existence des foyers endémiques pour certaines maladies comme la peste et le cholera. »

**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

**IRC, 6 January 2006:**
"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, 8 December 2004:
"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.”

IDPs in Bukavu cannot leave hospital due to lack of funds (June 2006)

OCHA, 16 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. »

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

Spiegel, 2004:
“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 percent), 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.”

UNHCR/Internal Displacement Division, DATE, pp26-27:
“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 Neisui), 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.

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)

WHO, January 2007:
« 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. »

HRW, June 2002, p.69:
"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. 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.”

UNICEF, 7 May 2004:
“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.”

Save the Children Alliance, 27 April 2005:
“[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.”

MSF, October 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.”

For more information, see the study:

Nutrition and food

Food security remains issue, particularly among returning IDPs, 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)

OCHA, 30 November 2006:
"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 Kasaï 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 Kasaï 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 Kasaï regions and Katanga)."

WFP, 31 October 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."

For information on the 45,000 displaced in Gety, Ituri, who faced severe shortages of food in 2006, please see:
RI, 25 August 2006, DRC: Update on the Gety food crisis in Ituri

For information on heightened malnutrition due to multiple displacement Katanga, please see: OCHA 15 August 2006, Situation humanitaire en RDC juillet 2006

Shelter

Camps set up in North Kivu during intense conflict (2007)

- More than 20 makeshift camps have emerged in North Kivu since December 2006
- Camps include congested makeshift settlements with very difficult living conditions and camps set up by UNHCR which has the essential basic facilities
UN News Service, 31 August 2007:
"More than 20 makeshift camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) have emerged in North Kivu since last December [2006] as the capacity of local host families to absorb the new arrivals has been overwhelmed."

DPA, 8 October 2007:
"Bosco Machumpenze is under a great deal of pressure these days.

As head of Mugunga Two, a squalid camp for displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo's conflict-stricken North Kivu province, Machumpenze is responsible for 20,000 people - and they're beginning to get restless.

"Four people have died so far from hunger," Machumpenze told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.
"We've got a lot of problems but no assistance."

Misery is evident everywhere in Mugunga, a collection of three camps, now home to 80,000 internally displaced people.

Residents live in a field of rubble, packed into hastily constructed straw huts that leak during the afternoon downpours. They have little drinking water and subsist primarily on boiled cassava leaves.
And while residents say they haven't received food aid in weeks, aid groups insist they are the lucky ones due to their close proximity to North Kivu's capital city Goma.

Sporadic eruptions of violence between forces loyal to dissident general Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese Army have caused a looming humanitarian crisis in a region which only four years ago emerged from a devastating war."

UNHCR, 19 October 2007:
"In the North Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday, Thursday, we started the process of transferring people who have been internally displaced by violent clashes in the region from congested makeshift settlements with very difficult living conditions to a new camp set up by UNHCR which has the essential basic facilities.

A first group of 500 people moved from Ndosho – a makeshift settlement of some 1,000 people with no drinking water or basic sanitation – to the new camp at Buhimba six kilometres west of Goma, the main town in the area. The 28-hectare site is expected to decongest several makeshift sites including Ndosho and Lac Vert in the Mugunga area and ensure basic facilities. We expect to complete the transfers from Ndosho, where many people had been living for a month, to Buhimba by today (Friday) and then start transferring more than 7,000 IDPs from Lac Vert to the new camp.

Buhimba is the second camp developed by UNHCR for IDPs in the Mugunga area and it can accommodate more than 10,000 people. Bulengo, the first camp, reached its capacity of 10,000 IDPs at the end of September.

Displaced people are continuing to arrive at sites around Goma. In the last 10 days more than 500 families have reportedly arrived in the Mugunga area."

MSF reported 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.

**MSF. August 2005, pp.13-14:**

“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.”
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
- Education put on hold in North Kivu due to conflict (September 2007)

OCHA, 17 July 2007:
"Net primary school enrolment for children between 6 and 11 years of age is of 51%; First grade enrolment rate is estimated at 17%." 

UNHCR, 13 February 2007:
“[…] the current net enrolment rate in the first grade of primary schools in the DRC is only 17 per cent.”

OCHA, 26 November 2001, pp.47-48:
“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.

OCHA, 31 August 2006:
“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.”

OMCT, 15 August 2006:
“Effectively, primary education which must be free, according to international texts, continues to cost money.”

UN, 16 January 2003, p.44:
“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."

**Save the Children Alliance, 14 September 2006:**
"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."

**Oxfam, 6 August 2001, pp.29-30:**
"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."

**UNICEF, 11 April 2005 :**
"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/Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction of the DR Congo, July 2002, pp.75-79:**
« 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 Kasaï 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."

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 handycraft either
- Main source of revenue are as daily workers and small trading

WFP, 31 October 2006:
« 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).

Comparerés 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. »

**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

**WFP, 31 October 2006:**

« 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 hôtés 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 entreprenants et prospères des populations hôtés 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.”
Agencies conduct household economy studies, livelihood analysis in eastern and northeastern DRC (2003-2007)

- 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.
- Catholic Relief Services analysed the usefulness of non-food items distribution in Maniema Province.

JHA, 31 May 2007:
“CRS Congo, in partnership with local partner Caritas Kindu, implemented a post-emergency livelihood project in Maniema Province, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, from January 2004 until April 2006. The project addressed seed, infrastructure, and non-food item needs through Seed Voucher & Fairs, cash for work to support road rehabilitation, and non-food item (NFI) distributions of pre-packaged UNICEF household kits.[…]

In order evaluate the appropriateness of its NFI activities and illuminate the advantages and potential pitfalls of using cash and voucher interventions to meet the non-food needs of Congolese households recovering from the effects of war and displacement, CRS Congo used private funds to carry out a pilot ‘cash for household non-food needs’ program in Maniema Province, DRC in April 2006. […]

[All forty participants stated that they overwhelmingly preferred method of receiving cash and making purchases in the Kindu market rather than receiving the NFI kit, because it allowed them the flexibility to respond to their priorities, though this finding is unsurprising as the participants themselves opted to receive cash instead of the kit.”

HPG, July 2004, pp.24-25:
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 charcoal making, 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.

See also:

FAO, 31 August 2003, Information sur la sécurité alimentaire en RDC [Link below]

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)

UN, 19 November 2002, p.56:
"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."

Oxfam, August 2001, pp.9, 24:
“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

WHO, 29 June 2001:
"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.”

ISS, 31 December 2005, p.18:
“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.”

The World Bank Group, 8 March 2007:
“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.

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)

International Alert & Al., 2005, pp.25-26:
“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 Congolais (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.”

OCHA, 6 March 2001:
"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."

WHO, 29 June 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."

HRW, June 2002, p.21:
"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."

WFP, 31 October 2006:
« 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 masculin […]. En plus, les pourvoyeurs des ménages menés par des femmes n’ont généralement qu’une faible éducation ce qui les rend encore plus vulnérables […]. »

Public Participation

IDP committee in Ituri appeals for UN protection (June 2006)

OCHA, 16 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 Lese 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."
DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

Most IDPs were not able to vote on July 30 (2006)

OCHA, 23 June 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. »

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

NRC, April 2006 :

« 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 DPs 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 presenter 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 venu 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 avaient octroyé des jetons qui servaient de pièce d’identité. […]

D’un autre abord, la plus grande menace à l’égard des déplacés est provenu de l’interprétation que certaines personnes (des agents de la CEI, des autorités locales et mêmes 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 enregistrés 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.


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. »

See also: Mission Electorale de l’UE en RDC 21 December 2005
62% of women in DRC marry under customary law and cannot get inheritance priority (Oct 2001)

"IRIN, 1 October 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."
PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Land and property disputes identified as major obstacle to return (2007)

UNHCR, 13 February 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.”

See also the brochure published by local NGO Aide et Action pour la Paix to help IDPs know their property rights: see link below

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

Al, 28 September 2005:
"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.

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.”
Lack of access to land is seen as a structural cause of the conflict in eastern DRC (2005-2007)

- 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

ODI, 1 March 2005:

“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.”

See also:
AFP, 23 September 2007, 20 dead in DR Congo land conflict [Internet]

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

ACTS, August 2002, pp.170-171:
“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, though 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.”
PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

More people returning than newly displaced (2006-2007)

- According to OCHA, over a million IDPs returned home in eastern DRC between March and June 2007
- Nearly half a million IDPs went back to their places of origin in 2006
- Situation in return areas is usually worse than the national average (February 07)
- Over 10,000 families recently returned home in Mitwaba territory, Katanga (March 07)
- In North Kivu, villagers returned as dissident general Laurent Nkunda’s fighters were 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 2007

OCHA, 31 July 2007:
“Au total 1’157’238 retours ont été enregistrés à travers les provinces orientales de la RDC [between March and June 2007], une augmentation considérable depuis mars 2007, rendant la tendance générale au retour légèrement supérieure à la tendance générale aux nouveaux déplacements.”

ECHO, 14 February 2007:
“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.”

OCHA, 31 August 2006:
“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.

UNHCR, 13 February 2007:
“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.”

IRIN, 7 February 2007:
“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.”
OCHA, 9 January 2007 :
“Selon les informations recueillies par la mission d'évaluation du cluster Sécurité Alimentaire ce jour auprès du secrétaire 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 pillées, à l'exception de la plantation de café près de Sake. À 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'agriculture a contribué à la baisse de la production agricole. Besoins ressentis : houes, semences et vivres.”

See also:

Refugees International (RI), 28 Dec 2006, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Front-line communities need help recovering from years of war [Internet]

Thousands of displaced in North Kivu stayed in camps out of fear that fighting could resume (September 2007)

- Thousands of people who had been recently displaced returned home in August 2007, but many were displaced again by renewed clashes

IRIN, 19 September 2007:
“Thousands of Congolese civilians who were displaced in August [2007] by fighting in Sake town, North Kivu Province, are still living in camps out of fear that fighting could resume, a UN official said.

"Sake is almost a ghost town; some of the displaced come to the town during the day but return to IDP [internally displaced persons] camps around Goma [the provincial capital]; they are still afraid," Eusebe Hounsokou, the representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), said on 19 September [2007].”

IRIN, 31 August 2007:
“Thousands of villagers who had fled the first clashes between the army (FARDC) and militias close to renegade general Laurent Nkunda in the Masisi hills, North Kivu province, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are starting to return home, according to UN sources. We have heard that the displaced are starting to return to their homes,’ said Christophe Illemassene of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

It is estimated that about a third of the population has been displaced. Since Masisi has about 26,000 people, that would mean about 8,500 displaced people returning home. According to Illemassene, however, it is impossible to estimate accurately the numbers involved because the area remains inaccessible.

However, as the first clashes stopped, new conflicts flared up on 30 August [2007], causing many new displacements.”
OCHA, 31 July 2007 :
« Retours: En raison de l’instabilité et de l’insécurité générale régnant dans la province, il n’y a guère eu de retours vers la province, et seule une vague d’environ 6000 personnes retournant à Kanyabayonga (territoire de Lubero) a été enregistrée au cours des trois derniers mois. La situation sécuritaire dans la province n’incite pas à des retours plus nombreux. »

Over 100,000 IDPs return home in South Kivu between end 2006 and mid-2007 (2007)

OCHA, 14 September 2007 :

OCHA, 31 July 2007 :
“Retours: Le taux de retours a aussi considérablement augmenté dans la province. Entre la fin de 2006 et jusqu’en juin 2007, 109,085 retours ont été enregistrés au total. Parmi ces retours, 48,095 ont eu lieu entre février et juin 2007 dans le territoire de Walungu. Ce retour est accompagné d’assistance de la part de différents acteurs. »

Over 460,000 IDPs returned home in Ituri in 2007 (July 2007)

OCHA, 31 July 2007 :
« Retours: Depuis novembre 2005, 466,706 retours avaient été enregistrés jusqu’en juin 2007, dont 146,695 entre mars et juin. La plupart de ces retours ont eu lieu à Irumu entre janvier et juin 2007, et beaucoup d’autres personnes sont rentrées dans leurs villages d’origine à Djugu entre mars et mai 2007. Occupant auparavant la deuxième place pour ce qui est du nombre de déplacés dans les provinces de l’Est de la RDC, l’Ituri est devenue la troisième région au plus grand nombre. Elle enregistre aussi actuellement le plus grand nombre de retours, devant le Katanga, avec 42% de tous les retours en RDC orientale. »

Over 450,000 IDPs returned home in Katanga between October 2006 and mid-2007 (July 2007)

OCHA, 31 July 2007 :
« Retours: L’enregistrement de personnes déplacées au retour se poursuit à travers la province. Entre avril, mai et juin 2007, 59,434 retours ont été enregistrés par la CMP, augmentant à 451,297 le total de déplacés rentrés depuis octobre 2006, ce qui représente le deuxième plus large mouvement de retours, après l’Ituri. »
Call to resettle thousands of people displaced by LRA in Orientale Province (May 2007)

IRIN, 22 May 2007:
“Thousands of civilians who were forced to flee their homes several years ago after incursions into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by armed groups from southern Sudan, should be resettled, the administrator of Dungu territory in northeastern DRC has said.

"These people have not been able to return to their villages since 1999," Leandres Bwiulu said. "The worst is that a whole ethnic group among the Baka, whose villages were located in the region, are disappearing since the whole population has been roaming for years."

According to Bwiulu, about 5,800 families were displaced by the incursions, initially by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) and later by the Ugandan Lords Resistance Army (LRA). The Baka ethnic community, he added, constituted 11 percent of the 252,000 people who live in the territory.

The SPLA incursions, which occurred before the groups signed a peace agreement with the Sudanese government in 2005, were intended to forcibly repatriate Sudanese rebels and refugees.

The LRA fled into DRC, where the groups leader Joseph Kony had set up a base in Garamba National Park, after suffering heavy casualties from the Ugandan army."

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

Reuters, 30 August 2006:
“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."

UNHCR, 5 October 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 Hounskou, 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."

See also: 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

**IRIN, 31 July 2006:**
"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."

**MONUC, 27 July 2006, p.10:**
« 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."
the Rwanda-backed RCD (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie) 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.”
IDPs return due to improvement of security in Maniema and Equateur (2006)

**USAID, 16 May 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.”

**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

**OCHA, 8 June 2005:**
“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.”
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Humanitarian workers at risk in the DRC (2006-2007)

- Attacks in Ituri cause the suspension of humanitarian activities in September 2007

**OCHA, 16 September 2007:**
“Deux agents de l'ONGI Première Urgence ont connu une embuscade, le samedi 8 septembre à 6 km de Gety (55 km au sud de Bunia), alors qu'ils se rendaient en moto à Aveba (79 km au sud de Bunia) pour payer les ouvriers dans le cadre du programme 'cash for work'. Quatre hommes non identifiés ont fait des tirs de sommation avant d'emporter tout l'argent des salaires et autres matériels. Il n'y a pas eu de pertes en vie humaine, mais un des agents a été effleuré par une balle au niveau de la jambe. Suite à cela, PU a suspendu ses activités de réhabilitation de la route à Gety et s'en est retiré également. Solidarités et Oxfam/GB se sont aussi retirés temporairement de la zone le même jour. Toutefois, Solidarités a repris ses activités le mercredi 12 septembre tandis Oxfam/GB entend retourner à Gety le lundi 17 septembre prochain.”

**UN News Service, 5 January 2006:**
“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).”

**NRC, 26 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.”

Restricted humanitarian access in eastern DRC (2006-2007)

- Humanitarian operations in the east are significantly restricted by the fragile security situation
- Access certain areas of South Kivu remained limited in mid-2007
- Administration requires NGOs in South Kivu to pay taxes, which they refuse to do (2006)
- 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)
- Due to insecurity only 30 percent of Ituri were accessible to humanitarian assistance (August 2007)
- Difficult to access 150,000 people in North Kivu due to insecurity (October 2007)
- In North Kivu, 500 IDPs chanted anti-UN slogans and threw stones at a MONUC patrol, demanding that MONUC take direct military action against Nkunda (October 2007)
UNHCR, 28 September 2007:
“Humanitarian operations in the east are significantly restricted by the fragile security situation. The majority of the eastern zone is in Security Phase 4, and travel to the field by UN staff (including to IDP settlements) requires substantial advance planning to obtain security clearance and arrange MONUC military escorts. This results in significantly reduced levels of accountability as UN agencies are unable effectively to monitor projects being implemented on their behalf, and inhibits the understanding by staff of the environment in which they are operating.”

For a detailed account of humanitarian access in eastern DRC (in French), documented by photos, please see:
OCHA, 31 August 2007, RD Congo : Focus Humanitaire Août/Aug 2007 [Internet]

North Kivu

MONUC, 10 October 2007:
"WFP is extremely worried about fate of approximately 150,000 displaced people in Masisi, Rutshuru and Kalehe. The majority has been displaced for more than six months, and have not received food aid since August [2007]."

IRIN, 8 October 2007:
"The movement of armed groups operating along the roads to reach vulnerable populations has prevented UN agencies and many international non-governmental organisations from delivering food aid and non-food items.

‘They won’t let our trucks pass by,’ [Aya] Shneerson [the head of the Kivus] said. ‘At this point, the UN agencies are dependent on armed guards.’

The UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), with 17,000 peacekeepers, has been facilitating transport for humanitarian convoys.

While looting of food aid and medical supplies has not become a serious problem, aid groups say recent developments are cause for concern.

‘Today what we have started to see is that some groups are reluctant to see humanitarian assistance being provided to the other side, to their enemies,’ said Patrick Lavand’Homme, who heads the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Goma.

‘We do a lot of advocacy with the different armed groups to let them understand that the aim of humanitarian assistance is to assist vulnerable people and not to assist any military group,’ Lavand’Homme said.”

UN News, 22 October 2007:
“For the second time in a week United Nations personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have become the target of angry civilians caught up in the continuing military standoff between government and rebel forces.

On Saturday, a UN patrol was obstructed by some 500 internally displaced persons (IDPs) near a cantonment site for recently disarmed fighters near the town of Rumangabo in North Kivu province, UN spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters in New York.

The protesters chanted anti-UN slogans and threw stones at the patrol. They also demanded that the peacekeepers take direct military action against dissident general Laurent Nkunda."
See also:
IRIN, 19 October 2007, DRC: The long road to delivering food aid [Internet]

MSF, 28 September 2007, Violence in North Kivu, DRC: Assistance severely hampered [Internet]

IRIN, 28 June 2007, DRC: NGO suspends operations amid increased displacement in the east [Internet]

South Kivu

IRIN, 25 July 2007:
“Continued insecurity and poor roads have been restricting humanitarian access to thousands of internally displaced people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), an official of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

‘Getting to areas where the latest displacement of the population has occurred is hampered by activities of armed groups and the fact that roads in these areas are very poor,’ Claude Mululu, liaison officer in OCHA’s Bukavu office, told IRIN.

He said the most recent areas to be affected were around the town of Minembwe, about 150km south of Bukavu, the provincial capital, following reports of fighting between the Congolese army, FARDC, and militia soldiers.”

OCHA, 30 November 2005:
“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, 31 August 2006, crisis watch:
“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.”

See also:
IRIN, 22 Jun 2007, DRC: Violence hampering aid efforts in the east [Internet]

Katanga

IRIN, 3 January 2006:
“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.”

WFP, 26 September 2006:
« 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."

IRIN, 6 April 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 malitiamen in Katanga, the southeastern 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 Kasongeji, 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.""

UNSC, 13 June 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."

Ituri

OCHA, 31 August 2007:
"En Ituri, depuis la "guerre de libération" menée par l'Alliance de Libération du Congo (AFDL) en 1996, le district a plongé dans un cycle de violence presque sans fin. L'insécurité est telle que seuls 30 % du territoire sont actuellement accessibles par les humanitaires. Les escortes militaires de la MONUC sont parfois nécessaires pour convoyer de l'assistance."

IRIN, 1 September 2006:
"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 Médicines 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."
Killing of peacekeepers by militias in 2005-2006

IRIN, 23 January 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."

See also:
United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), 8 Jul 2006 Captured UN peacekeepers released in DRC [Internet]

Improved access to IDPs and returnees in Katanga thank to railroads (October 2006)

WFP, 13 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."

**UN Joint Logistics Centre supports logistics capabilities of humanitarian agencies in the DRC (2005-2006)**

**UNJLC, 8 October 2005:**

“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.”

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). Nominaly, 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).

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)

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 curtailling 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). The DRC Parliament adopted the Great Lakes Pact on security, stability and economic development on October 2, 2007.

In September 2007, President Joseph Kabila travelled to North Kivu nd discussed with aid agencies how to improve access for humanitarian workers and protect civilians from armed groups, as well as the needs of those affected by the crisis (IRIN, 25 September 2007).

See also:
IRIN, 31 July 2007, DRC: Government seeks help for 75,000 IDPs [Internet]

International Response

UN Coordination
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). He is located within the integrated office of MONUC, and is supported by the OCHA office. In 2006, the Humanitarian Coordinator also manages 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). At Kinshasa level, overall humanitarian coordination takes place through the Humanitarian Advocacy Group (HAG) which meets weekly, and an inter-cluster coordination group recently established to facilitate coordination between clusters at the working level (UNHCR, 28 September 2007).

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 an evaluation undertaken by UNHCR, the introduction of the cluster approach has enabled the humanitarian organisations to better coordinate their interventions benefiting IDP and other affected civilian populations (UNHCR, 28 September 2007). 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). Authorities have been involved in the Reintegration and Community Recovery Cluster, but not in the protection cluster due to the sensitivity of certain topics discussed (UNHCR, 28 September 2007).

In October 2007, the protection cluster in North Kivu developed a strategy and action plan focusing on IDPs. In September 2007, a “Real Time Evaluation in the DRC” revealed the need to urgently strengthen UNHCR’s capacity in the DRC, in order to take leadership on IDP protection (UNHCR, 28 September 2007). According to local observers, UNHCR should mobilise adequate resources, and put in place additional senior staff dedicated to the protection cluster and to IDP-related activities, particularly in North Kivu. As for the co-chair of the protection cluster, MONUC, its association with the Congolese army, bears much of the responsibility for abuses against civilians, brings with it certain problems.

For more information on the clusters in the DRC see:
UNHCR, 28 September 2007, Real time evaluation of UNHCR’s IDP operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo [Internet]

OCHA/ICVA Mission to the DRC to Support Implementation the Cluster Approach (6-18 March 2006), Internal Displacement Division (IDD), 18 March 2006

The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance (JHA), 5 October 2007, Responsibility to protect: A policy recommendation based on the protection Cluster’s implementation in South Kivu, DRC [Internet]
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).

In September 2006 and again in September 2007, The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator went to eastern DRC to draw attention to the plight of IDPs, and to advocate for the respect of humanitarian space to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance. (MONUC, 6 September 2006; OCHA, 13 September 2007).

See also: OCHA, 11 September 2007, Briefing to the Security Council by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on mission to DR Congo, 03 - 08 Sept 2007 [Internet]

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, went to the DRC in May 2007. During her visit in the East, she called upon provincial government authorities to commit themselves to preventing and combating impunity and sexual violence (MONUC, 19 June 2007). In June 2007, High Commissioner for Operations Judy Cheng-Hopkins on Wednesday became the most senior UNHCR official to visit IDPs in North Kivu. The goal of her visit was to review support operations for the displaced and to examine the feasibility of refugee returns (UNHCR, 13 June 2007).

UN and NGO activities

UN agencies, national and international NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are providing emergency assistance to people recently displaced in eastern DRC, as well as transport assistance and return packages to returning IDPs.

The humanitarian community in eastern DRC struggled to respond the needs of hundreds of thousands newly displaced in North and South Kivu, following clashes between Congolese troops and followers of dissident general Nkunda. UN, NGOs and ICRC provided food and non-food items, seeds and tools, health care, and emergency education. UNICEF has been providing emergency assistance to IDPs in North Kivu, and it had airlifted protein biscuits and emergency shelter supplies for approximately 100,000 people in September 2007 (UNICEF, 26 September 2007). It 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 it continued to organise awareness-raising sessions on the basic principles of IHL for all parties, including armed non-state actors. (ICRC, 23 February 2007).

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 Tankaïika 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). In 2006, UNHCR started to provide 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). More generally, with the activation of the cluster approach in 2006, UNHCR took on enhanced responsibilities for protection and early recovery, with a particular focus on the humanitarian response in the east of the country (UNHCR, 28 September 2007).

For more information on UNHCR’s assistance to IDPs in the DRC, please see:
UNHCR, 31 May 2007, UNHCR’s Contribution to the Inter-agency Response to IDP Needs: Summary of Activities under the Supplementary Appeal, May 2007 [Internet]

The Programme of Expanded Assistance to Returns (PEAR) project launched by UNICEF has been instrumental in assessing and responding to the needs of returning IDPs (OCHA, 17 July 2007). 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 placed 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).

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 Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Agencies helped some 488,000 IDPs between January and April 2007 through the RRF (OCHA, 17 July 2007).

Since 2004, a joint initiative to address sexual violence has brought together UN agencies, ministries, and NGOs under the leadership of UNFPA. This initiative promotes a holistic response to sexual violence, which includes prevention, capacity-building of partners, medical and
psychosocial care, livelihood support, legal assistance for victims and the strengthening of the legal framework and its application (UNSC, 28 June 2007).

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).

To see the latest report on the DRC:
UNSC, 28 Jun 2007, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2007/391) [Internet]

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, Cooperatione 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 group 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 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 objective 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
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 November 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. The DRC Parliament adopted the Great Lakes Pact on security, stability and economic development on October 2, 2007. For more information, see the following documents (links below):


- 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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| OCHA IDP Unit undertook mission in December 2002 to assess training needs on the Guiding Principles |
| 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

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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

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.

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.

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.

Date: 24-26 August 2005


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.

Date: 2003-Present

Documents: Zeender, G., NRC, Advocating for IDP Protection in the Democratic Republic of Congo, April-September 2003, [Link below]

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