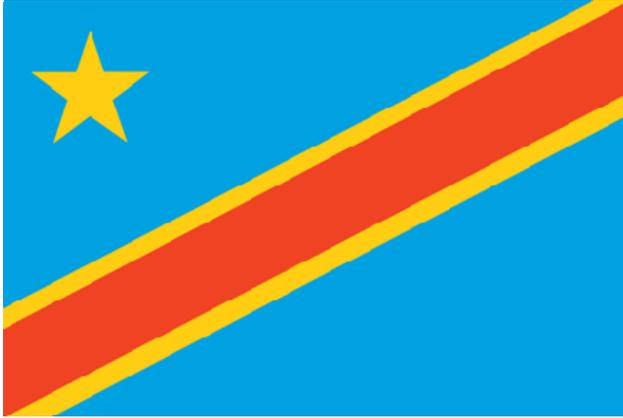


The Democratic Republic of the Congo



Risk Assessment Brief

Based on the CIFP Risk Assessment Methodology

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Background

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a resource rich country that possesses an abundance of minerals, oil, fertile land, and tropical rainforests. A long history of exploitation, repression, conflict and mismanagement has prevented the Congolese people from benefiting from these natural resources.

After gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, Mobutu Sese Seko staged a military coup overthrowing the government in 1965. This authoritarian regime lasted for 32 years until just after over a million Hutu refugees fled from the Rwandan genocide into the DRC. The refugees had a destabilizing effect on the country as their camps were used to stage attacks against Rwandan and Congolese ethnic Tutsis. Under these circumstances, Mobutu was overthrown in 1997 by Laurent Kabila's rebels, backed by the Ugandan and Rwandan governments. Failing to neutralize Hutu militias, Kabila's regional allies turned against his regime supporting a new rebel group, Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), leading to a renewed conflict, dubbed Africa's World War. In response, the Lusaka agreement was signed in 1999, which provided for a ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign troops from the DRC, and the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force (MONUC).

Following the assassination of his father in 2001, Joseph Kabila became the new head of state. For the next five years, despite the signing of two peace agreements in 2002, violence persisted albeit at a lower intensity. General Nkunda rebelled against the Kabila government in 2004 in a purported attempt to protect Tutsis from Hutu forces in eastern Congo. In 2006 the first presidential and parliamentary elections were held. These resulted in a coalition government led by Kabila. In 2008 the Goma Peace Agreement was signed, however sporadic and low intensity conflict continued. In January 2009, Nkunda was arrested by Rwandan government forces.

Conclusions

Despite ongoing violence in the eastern regions of the DRC, the conflict can be cautiously considered stabilizing. The recent joint efforts of the DRC with the Ugandan and Rwandan

governments to target rebel groups and militias have led to the arrests of high-level rebel commanders, and indicate a willingness on the part of the DRC government to cooperate with regional and international forces. The expanded UN mission will also help reduce the intensity of the conflict. In addition, the democratically elected government of 2006 continues to make slow but steady reforms to combat corruption and create an economic climate more conducive to private investment.

Significant challenges remain. The 2006 elections were a positive step for democracy, but the government needs to be more proactive in implementing its 2006 constitution that promises increased civil liberties and human rights for all citizens. The potential for increased ethnic conflict is ever-present in the Kivu region, particularly while the Congolese Tutsis remain threatened by the FDLR and isolated from the political process. Socio-economic factors threaten stability as well. A rising youth bulge, slow economic growth, and poor basic service provision remain unaddressed.

The main conflict resides primarily in the Kivu region. Recent trends suggest that the conflict is slowly stabilizing. However, it is important to note that the current socio-economic conditions throughout the country remain a cause for a concern and represent a potential catalyst for future conflict.



Stakeholder Analysis

Name	Description
Internal	
Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)	Hutu militias complicit in the Rwandan genocide. They seek to overthrow of Rwandan Tutsi government and continue to carry out Hutu grievances against Tutsis in Rwanda and the DRC.
Democratic Republic of Congo Central Government and the National Armed Forces (FARDC)	The current government seeks to stabilize the ongoing conflict, gain greater control over its sovereign territory, and provide greater protection for its civilians. However, the FARDC has been accused of being complicit in various human rights abuses.
Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC)	Major opposition party in the DRC government. Formerly a rebel group which demobilized after the 2002 peace agreements. The MLC then entered the political process with Jean Pierre Bemba at its head.
National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP)	Rebel government set up by Laurent Nkunda in the eastern Kivu region. The CNDP has attempted to obtain greater military and political control of the east. The group claims to protect ethnic Tutsis from the FDLR.
External	
United Nation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC)	UN peacekeeping mission established to monitor the Lusaka Peace Agreement. After this and successive agreements failed, MONUC seeks to establish and enforce a stable peace agreement.
Rwandan Central Government	The Tutsi led government of Rwanda is primarily interested in demobilizing and disarming the FDLR in order to put an end to attacks against Rwandan territory and ethnic Tutsis.

Key Indicators

History of Armed Conflict
<u>Stabilizing Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall intensity of conflict has been decreasing over the past five years. • Status of the conflict dropped from war throughout 2003-05 to intermediate armed conflict in 2006. • Relatively low levels of violence occurred following parliamentary elections in 2006. • Presence of one of the largest UN Missions (MONUC) in the world. • Decrease in internally displaced persons by 50% between 2004-2007, from 2.3 million to 1.2 million. <u>Destabilizing Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of fragile peace agreements and conflict relapse. • Large flow of refugees into and out of the country, representing a total of 107 300 people in 2007. • Congolese refugee numbers increasing in recent years from 35 400 in 2004 to 53 000 2007. • Source and destination country for human trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation. • One of the highest rates of child soldiers worldwide.
Governance and Political Instability
<u>Stabilizing Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2006 Constitution guarantees freedom of press, rights for women, and provision for other human rights. • Decentralization process ongoing including provision for provincial autonomy and establishment of 15 new provinces by 2009, including elections. <u>Destabilizing Factors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High defence and security spending disrupted funds for social sectors and hampered public finance management. • Government legitimacy undermined by corruption. • Lack of capacity to provide basic services and control vast parts of the country, including conflict zones.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judiciary underpaid, inefficient, plagued with corruption, subject to government interference. • Civil service weak and hindered by corruption and lack of resources. • Ongoing widespread human rights abuses committed by rebel and government forces targeted at journalists and political dissenters.
<p>Militarization</p> <p><u>Stabilizing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of MONUC troops increased from 16 661 to 19 850 in November 2008. • Government troops have increased from 64 800 in 2005 to 100,000 in 2007. <p><u>Destabilizing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal rebels integrated into army however many still loyal to their former commanders. • DRC troops are underpaid and poorly trained, resulting in low morale and discipline. • Military expenditure decreased from \$152m in 2005 to \$135m in 2007 (constant 2005 US \$) but has remained around 2.1-2.5% of GDP for the last few years.
<p>Population Heterogeneity</p> <p><u>Stabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kabila working with UN to help achieve Lusaka Peace Accords which make provisions for minorities. <p><u>Destabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern violence motivated by history of ethnic grievances and systematic violence. • Ethnic groups including the Tutsis, Hutus, and Nande Mai Mai have been vying for power in eastern region. • Ethnic militias have refused integration into the FARDC.
<p>Demographic Stress</p> <p><u>Stabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low population density. <p><u>Destabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47.1% of population between ages of 0-14 creating youth bulge. • Relatively high population growth rate of 3.3% as of 2007 exacerbates youth bulge.
<p>Economic Performance</p> <p><u>Stabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow increases in GDP Per Capita (PPP, Current International \$) from \$250 in 2005 to \$290 in 2007 with an estimation of \$300 for 2008. • Rich in natural resources including diamonds, gold and copper. • Real GDP growth expected to rise between 8-12% (2008). • Government reforms to increase private investment are ongoing, albeit progress is slow. • Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers for 2006-2008 included commitment to economic growth and improved living conditions. <p><u>Destabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation (Consumer Prices, annual %) increased between 2006-2007, with estimates between 16.7 and 23.86 % for 2008 owing to increases in food and oil prices. • Exchange rate stabilized against US dollar in Feb 2008, but in comparison to previous years has deteriorated overall. • Conflict and mismanagement has meant unstable economic growth and poor infrastructure development while widespread poverty and inequality persist. • Competition for rich resources in the Kivu region makes it prone to conflict. • Large production of cannabis for domestic consumption as well as a tool of war with respect to controlling child soldiers.
<p>Human Development</p> <p><u>Stabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with bilateral donor governments to implement <i>Cinq Chantiers de la République</i> which focuses on provision of education, health, infrastructure, energy and employment. <p><u>Destabilizing Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half of the population is without access to sanitation and improved water sources. • Low life expectancy of 46 as of 2006. • Percent of population aged 15-49 with HIV/AIDS estimated at 1.2-1.5 in 2008.

- Low levels of primary school and secondary school enrollment, 61 and 22% respectively.
- HDI ranking of 0.361 in 2006, ranked 177 out of 179.
- Fighting in North Kivu has caused families to flee, increasing risk of sexual violence, interruption of school, and recruitment of children into armed forces.
- Rape of women and children of all ages reported in Kanyabayonga, Kayna, and Kirumba. Rape becoming a prevalent weapon of war.
- 200 children abducted in Dungu district since September by Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Environmental Stress

Destabilizing Factors

- Despite possessing vast mineral deposits, the mining industry collapsed in early 2000s. Restructuring and deregulation began in 2004 however the industry has been plagued by widespread corruption and fraud.
- Forestry poorly managed and protected by government. Conflict has degraded forest, leading to a loss of biodiversity. Poaching and smuggling continue to be a problem.
- 6% of the population has access to electricity (urban 30%, rural 1% as of 2006)

International Linkages

Stabilizing Factors

- Membership in various international and regional organizations, including the World Trade Organization, African Development Bank, G-77, United Nations (including UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, UNESCO), African Union, among others.
- Despite past tensions with Rwanda, the two governments recently established a UN supported joint military operation to target, demobilize, and repatriate Hutu Militias.
- Working with Uganda to demobilize LRA.

Destabilizing Factors

- LRA and FDLR have been using the DRC as a staging ground to launch attacks against their respective home countries.
- Low participation in international security alliances.

Scenarios

Best Case

Continued reduction in conflict allows more funds to be diverted from defense spending towards providing basic services. Joint efforts by FARDC and the Rwandan government significantly reduce the operational capacity of FDLR. Demobilization and disarmament of CNDP leads to successful integration of rebel soldiers into FARDC and an increased involvement of the Tutsi minorities in the political process. Less press censorship and expanded political participation of opposition parties. Decrease in rate of human rights abuses including sexual violence and use of child soldiers as conflict lessens.

Most Likely

Provision of basic services continues to be largely provided by international organizations while defense spending remains a priority for government. Low-intensity conflict persists as rebel groups refuse to recognize authority of the central government. The FDLR continues to operate despite joint efforts of Rwanda and DRC. Attempts to integrate former rebel soldiers into FARDC have further destabilizing effects on unity of government armed forces. Status quo with respect to civil and political liberties remains unchanged. No mitigation of sexual violence and abuse against unarmed civilians as little is done to alleviate the problem.

Worst Case

Tensions between Bemba and Kabila supporters become violent due to political repression of opposition groups. Ethnic tensions in eastern provinces continue to rise with unsuccessful repatriation of Hutu militias and refugees back into Rwanda. This also contributes to a breakdown in DRC-Rwanda government relations. Renewal of conflict leads to a sharp increase in sexual violence, and the evacuation of international organizations providing basic services, placing further strain on government spending priorities. Finally, poor socio-economic conditions coupled with the youth bulge leads to more militant recruiting, thus increasing the odds of violent future conflict.

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