



Keeping the Peace in D.R. Congo (DRC)

These notes consider prospects for the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), following elections in July 2007. They argue that the United Nations has no option but to extend the role of MONUC when its current mandate is reviewed in December 2007, as recommended by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.¹ The international community is counting on Security Sector Reform (SSR) to ease its withdrawal from Congo, but the timeframe must take account of the situation on the ground:

- **Demobilization of registered combatants only 65% completed.**
- **Renewed conflict in the East, especially in the Kivus.**
- **Delays in tabling new security legislation in parliament.**
- **Actual numbers of former combatants still unknown.**
- **Reformed police force must regain authority from military.**

Democracy, at last

Elections in July 2007 were the first genuinely democratic contest in four decades, at a cost to international donors of US \$588m.² More than 25 million voters were registered during three years of preparations. Joseph Kabila won the second round of the presidential ballot with 58% of the vote, while elections to the Senate and Parliament were peaceful. A new constitution won 84% approval in a popular referendum in December 2005.

Securing conditions for a free and fair election has been the objective of international peacekeepers since their first deployment in Congo in 1999. Troops deployed by MONUC have increased from 5,537 to 17,030³ at an estimated cost in 2007 of US \$3 million per day.⁴

Under the terms of a 'Global Agreement' brokered by South Africa in 2002, former warring factions in the DRC committed to military integration and demobilisation. However, concerns about factionalism within the army meant the task of securing the electoral process was vested largely in the police. The integration and reform of both military and police must now take priority.

A national army

Only 65% of registered combatants have completed Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) or integration into the new national army. Combatants were required to hand in their weapons and choose between joining an integrated army or demobilisation. Troops who chose demobilisation received a cash payment plus monthly allowances for one year; about half await deployment to non-governmental organisation (NGO) reintegration projects and remain a source of instability.⁵

Within the new Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), seventeen integrated brigades were operational by November 2007. Misappropriation of funds brought the DDR progress to a standstill, while the transitional government delayed an initiative by the EU Security Sector Reform Mission (EUSEC) to separate military command from

the administration of salaries. The World Bank and the DRC government are negotiating a new deal to process the remaining caseload of troops. Troops currently awaiting integration are not regularly paid and pose a potential risk.

- **17 brigades integrated into the new national army.**
- **62,930 troops integrated into the FARDC.**
- **90,496 troops still to be demobilised.**
- **102,750 troops demobilised.**
- **Of those demobilised, 43,000 await NGO reintegration projects.**⁶

The Kivus – still the exception

Instability is compounded by the ongoing presence of rebel groups from the *Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR)* in North and South Kivu. Separately, a fruitless attempt at fast-track integration without involvement of the international community - known as *mixage* - reinforced the position of the dissident General Laurent Nkunda in strategic locations such as Rutshuru and Masisi in North Kivu.

The Nairobi Agreement signed by Rwanda, the DRC and international partners on November 9th 2007 seeks to create a more cooperative stance between the two states. President Kabila has placed a loyal commander in charge of the 8th Military Region in North Kivu and diverted resources to the area. But lack of equipment, logistical support, and problems with command and control have undermined joint MONUC/FARDC operations and could jeopardise the imminent FARDC push.

Frequent skirmishes between rival troops - national armed forces, FDLR and Nkunda's militia - continue to displace tens of thousands of people. MONUC's force of 17,030 troops remains modest relative to the size of territory: a similar number were allocated to the UN mission in Sierra Leone, a country 32 times smaller than DRC.



Politics

Divisions within the integrated FARDC reflect a lack of meaningful consensus and disorganisation among the DRC's institutions. Political momentum has slowed since the general elections. Important draft laws for the security sector have yet to go before parliament, delaying progress.⁷

DDR and integration, initially conceived as a political mechanism to advance the peace process, is largely a separate task from the design of a new army. Military leaders from other factions remain wary of integration, which is seen as handing over their soldiers to the enemy. Troops nominally loyal to the state remain divided and respond in practice to a few well-connected commanders.

International guidelines enable demobilisation but restrict investment in the military. The World Bank and donors jointly contributed \$200m under a Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), vastly greater funding than the \$18m allocated for integration into the new army from the Congolese budget and bilateral donors.⁸

International Effort

The UN Security Council faces pressure to reduce MONUC numbers to accommodate other missions, notably in Darfur.⁹ Any reduction in MONUC's strength risks creating a security vacuum, with stability under threat both from external elements and from within the national security forces.

The proliferation and splintering of armed groups after the war has made it difficult to establish which leaders represent which factions. The *Front pour la Réconciliation Populaire* (FRP) which took part in integration, for example, may no longer be the same FRP which signed the peace agreement. The UN and World Bank have at times disagreed on which elements to include, prompting the UN to source alternative funding for certain marginalised groups.

Belgium, South Africa and Angola kick-started the integration of troops; each trained a brigade, under bilateral agreements with the transitional government. Subsequent initiatives managed by the Congolese have brought the number of integrated brigades to seventeen. The DRC government, aided by bilateral partners such as Belgium, US and China, will train six new rapid reaction forces in anticipation of MONUC's withdrawal.¹⁰

Police

International support for SSR generally has targeted the army. However, the 2007 elections shifted priorities. The police were considered more reliable than the faction-riven FARDC in securing the elections.

The police were weakened and marginalized during the war. Routine duties such as arrest of criminal suspects have been assumed by armed groups, including the Presidential Guard.

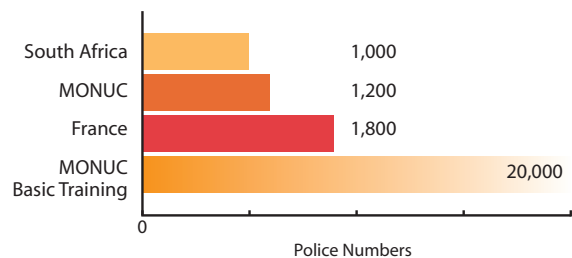
In January 2005 a new force, *Unité de Police intégrée* (UPI), was

established by EUPOL to provide security for VIPs and transitional institutions. Several rapid response units - *Police d'Intervention Rapide* (PIR) - were trained by France and Angola. Provincial intervention units were trained initially by South Africa, then by a group tasked with election security.

Recommendations from the *Groupe Mixte de Réflexion pour la Reorganisation et la Reconstruction de la Police* (GMRRR) are contained in draft legislation for a new policing system. Submitted to parliament in July 2007, to date this has not been tabled for debate.

Police Training by Agency

Total Police: 74,000 (estimated); officially 114,000



The Future

The UN Security Council must not be distracted by other crises before its work in the DRC is done.

The international community must avoid a piecemeal approach which has allowed competing personal, national and institutional agendas to create crippling delays. It must also restart and complete DDR.

Police reforms, while successful in preparing for elections, are at an early stage. The police will need to resume functions usurped by the military, in the context of an often chaotic and corrupt justice system.

A withdrawal of international forces is contingent on more determined implementation of reforms to the Congolese security sector.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Africa Research Institute

on 020 7222 4006 or info@africaresearchinstitute.org

1 UN Press Release, 21st November 2007

2 Filip Reyntjens, *African Affairs*, April 2007, p315

3 Resolution 1445, Resolution 1493, Resolution 1565

4 UN News Service. Based on US \$1.3 billion a year.

5 MONUC, Interview with Sarita Bingeman, September 2007

6 MONUC, Interview with Sarita Bingeman, November 2007

7 EUPOL, Interview with Sarita Bingeman, September 2007

8 EUSEC, Interview with Sarita Bingeman, September 2007

9 Amnesty International, *DRC: DDR and the Reform of the Army*, January 2007, p12

10 MONUC, Interview with Sarita Bingeman, November 2007.