



Regional High School Model United Nations XV

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# RHSMUN

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## BACKGROUND GUIDE

Tier | Advanced

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## TOPIC A: THE SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

### INTRODUCTION

Like many post-colonial African states, the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) history of colonization and exploitation has greatly exacerbated ethno-political tensions within the region, setting the stage for a series of conflicts. Since its independence, the DRC has seen several coups and two major wars that involved its neighbors and allies. A closer look at this chapter in the DRC's history uncovers the basis for much of the conflict that exists today.

### HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE

#### The Basis of Colonization

In 1880, King Leopold II of Belgium claimed the Congo as his own personal property, and swiftly began exploiting the natural resources in the area in order to build his own fortune. It became known as the Belgian Congo Free State ("Belgian Congo"). Native Congolese ethnic groups immediately began fighting to protect their rights over lush jungles rich with rubber, as well as other resources ranging from ivory to mineral rich rock. They also fought over the right to access resources in order to gain favors within the Belgian bureaucratic system. Previously separate political entities—native kingdoms, chiefdoms, and tribes—were united by force and repression into the Congo Free State ("Belgian Congo"). Leopold's arbitrary division of the Congo into sixteen administrative regions began a long trend of erratic internal border divisions, serving only to heighten already-present ethnic tensions. The Free State officially became a formal colony of Belgium in 1908, rather than remaining the personal property of the king, but Belgium's agenda in the Congo went no further than a continuation of resource extraction (Dembour 18). The Congolese continued to be excluded from all administrative positions, eventually sparking a movement within a growing European-educated Congolese class for equal political and bureaucratic representation. Following World War II, as pressure from the native Congolese grew, Belgium realized that the drive for independence was a viable political force and began to discuss and encourage the formation of political parties and a national political system. In 1960, the Belgian Congo gained its independence, and the first national elections were held (McCalpin 37).

The newly independent country immediately fell into turmoil. After five chaotic years that saw the assassination of the prime minister, mutinies within the Congolese army, and general instability and violence, army chief Joseph Mobutu led a coup to overthrow president Joseph Kasavubu. Mobutu declared himself president, and during his 32-year rule changed the country's name to Zaire in an attempt to develop a new sense of national unity (McCalpin 37). He also changed his name to Mobutu Sese Seko Nkuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga, which roughly translates to "The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake." He graciously shortened it to Mobutu Sese Seko (Wrong 70).

No amount of name-changing could mask the corruption and economic despair that characterized Mobutu's time as president. Under his perilous leadership, the country lost foreign investments,

defaulted on loans, and subsequently fell into economic and social turmoil. Additionally, nepotism, extortion, bribery, and embezzlement were among a number of additional complaints against Mobutu's administration ("Democratic Republic..."). His most conspicuous failure as a leader was his exploitation of ethnic and economic problems within Zaire for his own personal financial and political gain. Following the Cold War, Seko began receiving USD 73 billion in annual aid for Zairian education budget. Recent investigation has shown that approximately USD eight billion went annually toward the maintenance a bare-bones education system, while the remainder disappeared – likely into the coffers of Mobutu and his cronies. In this manner Mobutu manipulated aid in every branch of his government until he had amassed over USD four billion in personal wealth. During this time Zairian GDP fell by over 65%, forcing most of the population to live by an informal subsistence economy (Gondola 6). For the last two decades of Mobutu's time in power, the state had grown so weak and chaotic that many rebel groups were able to find refuge in, and use as a base for attacks, the eastern provinces of Zaire.

### **First Congo War**

Social, political, and economic turmoil under Mobutu's rule culminated in the First Congo War (1996-1997), a conflict that eventually forced Mobutu out of power. A combination of internal and external tensions had already led to political, economic, and social chaos with Zaire, but it was an outside factor – the 1994 Rwandan genocide – that proved the catalyst for conflict. Over a period of months, ethnic Hutus within Rwanda massacred the Tutsi population, killing hundreds of thousands with the approval of the Hutu-dominated government and forcing even more to flee the country. Following several months of intense violence with Hutu government, the Tutsi rebel army, with Ugandan support, finally ended the genocide ("Genocide in Rwanda"). They established a Tutsi-led government, forcing all Hutu officials involved in the genocide into exile.

Because of Mobutu's decades-long alliance with the Rwandan Hutu government, exiled Hutus fled into refugee camps in the eastern provinces of Zaire. From these Hutu refugee camps, the Rwandan Hutu militia, known as Interahamwe, began to orchestrate attacks and organize rebel groups against the new Tutsi government in Rwanda. Recognizing the safe haven Mobutu provided for the Interahamwe, the Tutsi Rwandan government supported an armed uprising in the region with the goal destabilizing and potentially ousting Mobutu. In October 1996, Rwandan troops (the RDP) entered Zaire in support of an internal rebel group, the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL). Led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the AFDL was an armed coalition that had been working for several years in opposition to Mobutu's government. Drawing on the intense dissatisfaction and frustration with Mobutu's corrupt and chaotic administration, the AFDL was able to garner legitimacy among the population of its base, the eastern provinces. With the support of both the RDP and the Banyamulenge, the AFDL began a campaign westward from its base, hoping to reach the capital of Kinshasa and stage a coup (Clark 173). In May 1997 they succeeded: the AFDL marched into Kinshasa, Kabila declared himself president, and Mobutu fled the country. Mobutu died in Morocco in September of that year.

## Second Congo War

Kabila's coup and his assumption of the presidency led many to expect he would usher in a new era of transparent government, democratic reforms, economic prosperity, and ethnic harmony. One of his first moves as president was to rename the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hoping to dissociate his policies as much as possible from Mobutu's. The country, however, remained rife with political, social, and economic problems. Various factions lobbied for power within the new government, a huge external debt hindered many of the economic measures Kabila proposed, and regional instability persisted, particularly in the Kivu and Ituri regions (Dunn 54).

Kabila offered positions within his new government to many Rwandan military and political officials, prompting an outcry from Congolese citizens who viewed Rwanda's influence with intense suspicion. In July 1998, Kabila bowed to this pressure and dismissed many of his Rwandan advisors, finally ordering all Rwandan and Ugandan troops to leave the country two weeks later (Dunn 55). Foreign troops refused to leave, starting what would be called Africa's Great War.

On 2 August 1998 fighting erupted throughout the DRC as new Rwandan and Ugandan troops entered the country. A new coalition of Congolese rebel groups – the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) – formed with support by Kabila's former allies Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda (Reyntjens 246). Primarily composed of Congo's Tutsi population, the RCD accused Kabila of gross mismanagement and corruption. In September Rwandan troops entered the region of Bas-Congo with the intent to march on Kinshasa and replace Kabila with the newly formed RCD, but the attempt was thwarted at the last minute when forces from Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia came to the aid of Kabila's government. Forced to retreat from Kinshasa, the RCD quickly gained control of the resource-rich eastern provinces of the Congo, including the Kivus, and continued to fight the Congolese Army and its foreign backers (Reyntjens 248). In late 1998 Uganda also backed the formation of a rival rebel group, the Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC), which opened a front in the northern provinces and soon established de facto control there.

As Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi actively supported the rebel cause, Kabila enlisted the help of several members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC); though SADC members are technically bound by a mutual defense pact in the case of outside aggression, many states in the organization took a neutral stance with regard to the conflict in the DRC (Vale, Maseko 272). On 19 August 1998, however, after a meeting in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Angola pledged to support and aid Kabila in his offensive against the rebels. Chad, Libya, and Sudan joined Kabila's cause in the next weeks as well. The support of these six countries turned the tide in a conflict that many were sure would end in the capture of Kinshasa by the rebels and Kabila's deposition as president. With the support of these foreign backers, Kabila was able to maintain control over the western part of the country. Kabila also aligned himself with many Hutu militiamen (many of them suspected of having participated in the Rwandan genocide in 1994) in the eastern provinces, since many of the rebel groups were Tutsi-dominated, and with the Mai-Mai, local Congolese warlords opposed to the Tutsis. With the DRC divided between Kabila in the west, the MLC in the north, and the RCD in the east, a multinational war began, and by the end of 1998 violent conflict had erupted in every part of the country (Reyntjens 249).

While the war itself was technically between the Kabila government and the Congolese rebels attempting to depose him, the states volunteered troops for respective factions in the conflict for various reasons. The Tutsi-led government of Rwanda wanted to stop Hutu attacks from across the DRC-Rwanda border and support the Banyamulenge. Angola wanted to stop the activities of its domestic rebel group União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), which used the DRC as a base for its attacks. Namibia wanted to support Angola at least partially because it believed that UNITA had supported recent Namibian insurgencies. Uganda was concerned with economic and trade ties between Central and East Africa through eastern Congo, and Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe had both economic interests in the DRC and a political agenda to become a ranking regional leader (Reyntjens 249).

### Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement

In July 1999 representatives from Kabila's government, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda, several rebel groups, and the mediator state Zambia met in Lusaka, Zambia for peace talks. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed on 10 July (Koko 33). It provided for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign troops, a collective effort to disarm militias in the Congo, the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and several "Inter-Congolese Dialogues" meant to prepare the country for a transitional government and new elections. In August 1999 the UN deployed about 90 personnel to observe the implementation of the agreement, but throughout the following months all sides accused the others of violating the agreement, and monitors began to fear that even the smallest of incidents could trigger renewed conflict. Fighting broke out between Ugandan and Rwandan forces in late 1999, and Rwandan forces attempted to reach Kinshasa that year before being repelled. On 24 February 2000, the UN authorized a peacekeeping mission of 5,537 troops to address the escalating violence, but conflict continued throughout the year (Koko 35).

### 2001– 2009

On 16 January 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated. The Congolese parliament voted unanimously to install his son, Joseph Kabila, as president. In October of that year, the first Inter-Congolese Dialogue was held in Ethiopia but ended inconclusively (Dummett). The dialogue was resumed in February 2002 in South Africa and ended with a partial agreement which was never implemented, leading to resumed negotiations that October. The Pretoria Accord, a powersharing agreement between the political parties and groups in the DRC, was ratified by all parties involved on 2 April 2003 in Sun City, South Africa, and by May 2003 all Angolan, Zimbabwean, Namibian, Rwandan, and Ugandan troops had been withdrawn from the DRC (Tull 14).

In June 2003, Joseph Kabila officially announced his transitional government, and new vice-presidents and officials were sworn into office. Despite a supposed cessation of hostilities, intense violence continued throughout 2003-2004 in the eastern provinces, as tensions between Hutu and Tutsi factions rose and Rwandan incursions into the Congo to stop Hutu militiamen created even more instability (Tull 15). The rest of the country, however, remained relatively stable. In 2005 the northeastern province of Ituri experienced an intense surge of violence as rival militias backed by

Uganda and Rwanda fought over gold mines and trade, and Rwandan militias continued to operate in the eastern provinces, maintaining the very real possibility of renewed conflict.

Elections were held in July 2006 and resulted in four days of low-grade violence when presidential runner-up Jean Pierre Bemba refused to cede victory to the incumbent Kabila, despite the fact that the international community acknowledged Kabila as the clear winner. In early December, on the verge of a major crisis, Bemba and Kabila reached an agreement. Kabila was inaugurated after the country's first free and fair elections in four decades ("Elections in..."). Despite this democratic success, fighting continued in the eastern provinces, and in 2007 violence erupted again between troops loyal to Kabila and militias and troops loyal to Bemba. The conflict that ensued continued to kill thousands, again primarily in the east, and displace thousands more, and by November even General Babacar Gaye, head of the UN peacekeeping mission, acknowledged that force was the only remaining option for disarming the most violent of the militias ("Congo Civil War"). In January 2008 the UN sponsored a peace conference between various rebel factions and the government, leading to an unstable ceasefire between several major rebel groups and the Kabila's government. The talks broke down until December of that year, and once resumed were hindered by accusations that the rebels had been purposefully delaying the implementation of the peace agreement ("Congo Civil War").

The DRC and Rwanda formed a coalition in 2008 for the purpose of combating the Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), a Congo-based group attempting to destabilize the political situation in Rwanda which had committed atrocities against civilians in the eastern regions. The Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the military of the DRC, also committed a number of humanitarian crimes in its pursuit of rebel groups in eastern Congo, according to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon ("Congo Civil War").

## **MONUSCO**

The United Nations Organization Mission in the Congo (MONUC) was renamed the UN Organization and Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) on 1 July 2010 to reflect the changing nature of the peacekeeping mission in the DRC. Formed by SC resolution 1279 on 30 November 1999, the original purpose of the MONUC was to monitor the ceasefire implemented by the Lusaka Agreement and act as a liaison between the parties of the agreement. SC resolution 1291, however, passed 24 February 2000, expanded MONUC's mandate in recognition of the persisting conflict in the DRC. A total of 5,537 personnel and 500 observers were authorized to not only monitor the ceasefire and act as liaisons, but to facilitate the release of prisoners of war, assist in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, and help humanitarian assistance ("MONUC Mandate"). Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter MONUC was authorized to take any necessary action and use force to protect UN facilities, personnel, and Congolese civilians under imminent threat of physical harm.

In 2002, MONUC monitored the withdrawal of several thousand foreign troops, but a rise in conflict in the Ituri region over the next year led to the redeployment of peacekeepers in the eastern provinces. Observer teams monitored the gross human rights abuses that occurred while UN forces attempted to protect camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and civilians ("MONUC Mandate"). In 2004 rebel general Laurent Nkunda began a series of offensives in the

eastern regions, but UN forces were only strong enough to protect their own installations. With resolution 1565 (2004) the SC authorized MONUC to take any and all necessary action to protect civilians and humanitarian aid, focusing on the situation in the eastern provinces, and to support the Kabila government in establishing effective security forces and protocols (S/RES/1565). By 2008, MONUC had been authorized to help organize, prepare, and conduct elections in the DRC and was requested to make the situation in the Kivus its top priority. With the adoption of resolution 1856 that year, MONUC's mandate, in order of priority, was to ensure the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel; help with the disarmament and demobilization of foreign and Congolese armed groups; train members of the Congolese military; and ensure the territorial security of the DRC. A total of 22,016 uniformed personnel were deployed to the DRC, at that time the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world. By 2009, the mission had cost an estimated USD 8.72 billion ("MONUC Facts and Figures").

## Natural Resources

The DRC's wealth of natural resources, including diamonds, gold, timber, cobalt, and coltan, has long been the main component of its gross domestic product (GDP) as well as a prime source of exploitation since Belgian colonization. The exploitation of the Congo's mineral wealth, and its connection to the financing of militant groups in the area, have long been subjects of intense debate. When Rwandan and Ugandan troops entered the DRC to support the RCD in its takeover of the eastern portion of the country, for instance, they were not without economic incentives (in addition to the obvious political motives. Both Rwandan and Ugandan authorities deny production of diamonds within their respective countries, but during their occupation of the DRC, Rwandan and Ugandan diamonds exports increased exponentially, while Congolese diamond exports fell by almost half (Samset 471). Rwanda also benefited from exploitation of Congolese coltan, a mineral used in the manufacture of electronics; a UN panel convened on the use and exploitation of the DRC's mineral wealth in sustaining conflict estimates Rwandan earned USD 250 million from the sale of DRC coltan over a period of eighteen months in 1999 and 2000 (Samset 472). These countries have also been able to reap profits from finishing and export taxes on exploited mineral products.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe also had a vested interest in the DRC economy during the war. When Laurent Kabila was courting foreign backers to help in his defensive against the RCD and MLC, he used the renegotiation of mining concessions and contracts as a form of "payment" for those who pledged to support him. In late 1998 a Zimbabwean diamond company entered into a contract with a Congolese mine; the partner company that emerged became a huge part of the Congolese diamond industry, allowing Zimbabwe to profit enormously from its position as a dominant alliance partner in the Congolese diamond sector (Samset 475).

Resource exploitation has been both a motivation for foreign involvement in the DRC conflict and an actual perpetuator of the war as well. Not only have natural resources been re-exported by intervening countries, allowing them to gain profits from both taxes and export sales, but diamonds especially have often been used as a form of payment for military supplies, food, or medicine for rebel troops. When Kabila attempted to print more Congolese francs to finance the war, the currency saw severe inflation, which greatly devalued the currency and made it more difficult for troops to buy supplies with cash. This made the guaranteed physical worth of diamonds and gold even more attractive, leading to greater exploitation of mines and corruption of trading company

partners. Militias almost certainly used money-laundering schemes to conceal their financial dealings, a practice for which diamonds are extremely well suited (Samset 471).

### **Localized Conflicts: Ituri and the Kivus**

While the whole of the DRC has been affected by the conflict, there are two regions – the Kivus and Ituri – which have been particularly devastated by the war, given their already-present ethnic conflicts.

#### **Ituri**

Ethnic tensions have existed between the two major ethnic groups in Ituri, the Lendu and the Hema, for centuries. Historically, the groups have lived in close proximity relatively peacefully, with conflict flaring up only recently. They have fought over land and grazing rights for centuries, but violent conflict emerged after the Belgian administrative system favored the Hema, which created significant educational and wealth discrepancies between the two groups. As the Hema elite grew more powerful, they had access to the region's wealth of natural resources, including gold, diamonds, coffee, timber, and coltan. With the Second Congo War, the tensions between the two groups erupted into violent conflict, as the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) occupied the northern part of the DRC as a supporter of the MLC ("DRC: IRIN Focus..."). The fighting on the front lines in the Congo war was accompanied by fighting between the Hema and the Lendu, which was exacerbated by the influx of arms into the region through Uganda. In 1999 the regional leader of the UPDF declared Ituri its own province – it had previously been part of the province of eastern Orientale – and named a Hema governor, which ignited further ethnic violence. Fighting slowed in late 1999, but began again in 2001, and conflict in the region has continued since ("DRC: IRIN Focus...").

#### **Kivus**

In 2004, former RCD general Laurent Nkunda used his new position in the Kabila Congolese military as a platform from which to stage a mutiny, eventually retreating to Nord Kivu with other former RCD troops. Later that year, his forces began to fight with FARDC, and Nkunda's forces occupied Bukavu in Sud Kivu. Through 2006 the FARDC and MONUC fought the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), Nkunda's forces, throughout the Kivus, and within a year Nkunda had been accused of several war crimes ("General Laurent..."). In 2007, the government attempted to integrate Nkunda's troops into the FARDC, but the attempt backfired and Nkunda gained control of more troops. That year, FARDC and MONUC leaders acknowledged that the CNDP would have to be stopped by force and began a fresh campaign against Nkunda ("Year in Review 2007" 13). A peace deal signed in January 2008 failed almost immediately, and fighting resumed in the region. In October Nkunda captured a national park in a major military victory, and MONUC forces launched an offensive to protect the strategically important city of Goma. Thousands of people fled the area, an indication of the terrible humanitarian crisis in the Kivus.

(“Thousands Flee...”). Nkunda was finally captured in January 2009, and the CNDP signed a treaty with the Kabila government agreeing to become a political party in exchange for the release of its members (Dagne 7).

## Sexual Violence

The DRC has been recognized as the “rape capital of the world.” While it is impossible to collect accurate figures on the prevalence of sexual assault, estimates put the number of assaults anywhere between forty per day and over 1000 per day: a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* published in May 2011 reported that 400,000 women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 had been raped during a 12-month period in 2006 and 2007. Even this number is almost certainly an understatement, given the fact that the age range is not all-inclusive, and victims of any age are often reluctant to come forward. Members of all the various armed groups in the DRC commit sexual violence as a standard practice, keeping women and girls as “wives” for soldiers in camps or simply raping them on the street and leaving them there (Amnesty 13).

There are several explanations for the severe scale of sexual violence in the Congo, which range from personal to tactics of war. Many soldiers superstitiously believe that having sexual relations with a pre-pubescent girl or a post-menopausal woman can cure them of disease, prevent disease (particularly HIV/AIDS), or protect them from harm in battle. The almost complete immunity of rapists from legal or even social repercussions contributes to the high level of sexual assault as well, and many soldiers regard rape as a “spoil” of war (Amnesty 14). Specific to the DRC, however, is the fact that rape is often used as a weapon of war: armed groups attempt to destabilize their opposing forces or the region which they have taken over by systematically raping women and girls (and in some cases, boys and men as well). They attempt to destroy the social fabric of the community, purposefully “maximizing the humiliation and debasement of the victims and witnesses” (Amnesty 14). Rape is also seen as a method of retaliation against an individual or his or her family.

Mass and gang rape is extremely common, and it is committed against women and girls regardless of whether they are healthy, pregnant, mentally or physically disabled, old, or young; girls as young as five have been assaulted (Amnesty 20). Many are enslaved in militia camps, kidnapped from their homes and raped daily, often by multiple men. In Congolese society, a woman who has been raped is often perceived as impure or worthless and is generally scorned by her community. Many husbands and family members leave women who have been raped, which removes any means of economic support. Often left with the children from their marriages or pregnant from rape, these women and their children are often destitute. Their severe psychological trauma and the often-terrible physical pain they suffer prevents them from working, since many come from farming communities and had done physically demanding work (Amnesty 23). The extreme levels of sexual violence have also contributed to the DRC’s growing problem with HIV/AIDS and STIs (Amnesty 25).

## CURRENT STATUS

Though the war officially ended in 2003 and relatively free and fair elections were held the next year, armed conflict has persisted in the DRC, particularly in the eastern provinces. The humanitarian situation has disintegrated, becoming one of the worst in the world, and MONUSCO has only partially been able to address these recurring issues.

### Sexual Violence

A report released in the *American Journal of Public Health* in May 2011 estimated the number of rapes in the DRC as over 1000 per day, a number that many believe is still lower than the actual rate. Levels of sexual assault have not decreased since the end of the war; the presence of militant groups in the eastern regions of the country means that it is unlikely that the numbers will decrease in the near future. Less than two percent of rape cases are brought to court, generally because victims have no faith in the justice system and fear further repercussions from their attackers (Background). Many women do not know their legal rights, and few have access to even the most basic medical care. The DRC has always had a severely under-developed health care infrastructure, and because of the war several regions have no health care system whatsoever. Psychological and psychiatric care is virtually nonexistent. Even if medical care were accessible, many victims are terrified to leave their villages or seek help from professionals because they do not trust security forces. In October 2010, a series of rapes occurred in the towns of Fizi and Luvungi, towns in which MONUC and FARDC forces were stationed ("Mass Rapes"). The inability of these troops to prevent the attacks is only the latest example of MONUC's apparent failure to adequately deal with sexual violence.

### Humanitarian Crises

Extreme levels of sexual violence are not the only humanitarian problems faced by civilians in the DRC. The DRC is infamous for the high number of child soldiers used by militant groups, both during the war and now. UN estimates place the DRC as the fourth-largest internal displacement region in the world, with at least 1.8 million IDPs, 1.4 million of whom are in North and South Kivu (DR Congo). Displaced by armed groups, civilians are forced to flee their homes, taking almost no possessions, and often find their homes burned down or completely looted when and if they return. Economic hardship, hunger, and disease affect most IDPs, only some of who are lucky enough to find refuge with a 'host' family (the members of which are often struggling to make ends meet themselves). Access to health care and education is rare. Sometimes, IDPs make the difficult decision to return to their homes in places of intense conflict because that is the only way they can have access to food. While Congolese officials say that the situation in the eastern provinces has improved and that they want to see many IDPs return home, there are several serious obstacles: the general lack of security in villages away from main roads; abuses and threats by combatants on all sides of the conflict; accusations of collaborating with enemy groups; looting of harvests; extortion by ill-disciplined combatants; and disputes over land title, land occupation, and property destruction (DR Congo).

Access to medical care is also a major concern. The spread of diseases such as measles, malaria, and tuberculosis, in any developed country practically nonexistent, has reached pandemic levels, as has the spread of HIV/AIDS (WHO). Operating hospitals often have low budgets, understaffed, with improper medical equipment and poor hygiene. In some areas food and blankets must be supplied by the patients or their families, clean water is nearly impossible to obtain, and access to electricity is shaky. There are too few doctors and trained medical personnel to deal with the influx of IDPs and sexual assault survivors. Health services provided by NGOs are generally the only resource for civilians (Amnesty 27). Despite the fact that the war ended seven years ago, the death rate is the same now as it was during the last year of the war, with around 45,000 people dying each month, mainly from disease and hunger.

## MONUSCO

Under resolution 1925 (2010), the SC extended MONUSCO's mandate until 30 June 2011. As of April 2011 there were 19,995 uniformed personnel, 2,781 local civilian staff, and 616 UN volunteers. MONUSCO has been advised to focus on the conflicts in the Kivus and providing security for civilians from roaming militant groups, but the operation has come under fire recently for its poor handling of several security situations (S/RES/1925). MONUSCO forces' inability to protect against or respond to several recent series of rapes has shown the mission's difficulty with policing and protecting a country so large and politically decentralized. Despite having a budget of over USD one billion for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, and having spent USD 8.4 billion already, MONUSCO has been unable to effectively calm violence in the Kivus, and Ituri, leading some to question its management structure and the effectiveness of its military strategy. With regard to sexual violence, MONUSCO has almost no structured policy in place for dealing with victims or those displaced.

## BLOC POSITIONS

### European Union

The EU is currently involved in the security sector reform (SSR) measures created by the DRC government; the Union is leading two advisory and assistance missions within the African country. The first of these, the “EUSEC DR Congo” mission, is aimed at Army reform, while the “EUPOL RD Congo” mission is dedicated to restructuring the DRC’s police force. The EUSEC DR Congo mission began with Council Joint Action 2005/355/CFSP on 2 May 2005 and is specifically focused on cultivating good government practices and integrating the Congolese Army. The EUPOL RD Congo mission was passed on 12 June 2007 and has several goals, including the improvement of communication between the Congolese police and criminal justice system, the professionalization and integration of a multiethnic police force, and the protection of the basic human rights of women and children (“EU Missions...”). The EU has maintained an active presence in the DR Congo and is fully supportive of reform efforts in conjunction with the Congolese government.

### African Union (AU)

Like the EU, the AU has taken an active stance in reforming the post-conflict government of the DRC. In 2010, the AU sent a mission into the DRC to ascertain exactly what the Union could do to help the country recover within the context of the AU Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (“African Union Sends...”). The AU has a unique perspective on the situation in the DRC because of its regional presence and experience with similar cases.

More recently, on 17 March 2011, the AU signed a Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Program (CAADP) with the DRC. The CAADP is a measure focused on improving the agricultural practices of the DRC in order to alleviate poverty in the country (AU Press Release No 021/2011). This agreement further illustrates the commitment of the AU to improving the lives of the Congolese population. The measures of the AU in the post-conflict DRC balance the needs of the country with the needs of the region as a whole.

### Asia and the Pacific

China has taken on a particularly interesting, mainly economically motivated role in the DRC in the recent past. The DRC has extremely rich reserves of minerals, and China has actively funded the development of infrastructure for mining in the African country. In 2008, the China cut deals with the DRC for several projects, including one where the Chinese ExIm Bank would give the country USD 8.5 billion to improve mining infrastructure. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned the international community of the dangers China’s loans to the DRC present; however, the DRC has chosen the money over any potential developmental roadblocks it could cause (“China in the DRC”). China imports mainly cobalt, wood, and copper from the DRC, validating its economic interests in the country.

Japan provided about USD 7.57 million in aid to the DRC in order to help facilitate the country’s 2010 elections. Before that, however, there was little history of aid between Japan and the DRC (“Japan-the Democratic...”). This is the trend with a majority of the other nations within the region. China, however, represents an interesting voice in the global community concerning the DRC.

### US and North America

During 2010, the US Department of State assisted in a stabilization initiative spearheaded by Congolese President Joseph Kabil and US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Five trained teams were deployed to examine five sectors: gender-based violence; security sector reform; food security; corruption; and minerals management (2010 Year in Review). It is hoped that the results of this large



## COMMITTEE MISSION

As the primary decision-making body of the UN, the Security Council should take its role in the situation in the DRC very seriously. There is much to be dealt with, including the egregious need for humanitarian aid, the stabilization of the government, and the protection of IDPs. These issues are just the tip of the iceberg for the DRC, which is greatly in need of international aid. Delegates should also consider how to maintain law and order in the DRC, especially in relation to gender violence and conflict within refugee camps.

The UNSC must, however, respect the national sovereignty of the DRC when handling crises and drafting resolutions. It is of the utmost importance to keep in mind what is feasible in the current situation and what is not. Delegates will debate about what has worked in the past to stabilize the DRC government and end violence, and they should focus on how these measures can be improved for the future.

## TOPIC A RESEARCH AND PREPARATION QUESTIONS

1. Has your country played any role in past conflict in the DRC or any of its neighboring countries?
2. Has your country ever provided aid for the population or government of the DRC? Is your country currently involved in MONUSCO? If not, what are your country's reasons for remaining uninvolved?
3. Does your country currently have any economic interests in the resources of the DRC? Has it acted upon these interests?
4. What measures does your country think should be taken to stabilize the government and provide humanitarian aid to the Congolese people? Does your country believe there is a feasible solution to the conflict in the African state?

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