



Armed Conflicts Report

Democratic Republic of Congo [Formerly Zaire] (1990-first combat deaths)

Update: January 2009

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of the Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

Economic Factors

Summary:

2008 The Goma peace accord barely held throughout 2008 and by the end of the year was in tatters. Fighting continued in the war torn province of North Kivu, in Ituri and in the Bas-Congo. However, the largest number of deaths occurred in Eastern DRC on the border with Uganda. LRA fighters from Uganda killed approximately 1,000 civilians and abducted approximately 500 children from September – January 2009. Tensions between Rwanda and the DRC increased as both sides were accused of supporting various rebel factions in the DRC and fighting a proxy war by the UN. The DRC faced a worsening humanitarian crisis by the end of 2008. Sexual violence continued to be on the rise, and the UN reported all sides of the conflict were repeatedly violating human rights, especially the DRC army and police force. A total of approximately 1500 deaths occurred in the DRC over the course of the year, a notable increase from 900 in 2007. An additional 250 000 were displaced, adding to the 850 000 already displaced in previous years.

2007 The Goma peace accord was signed in January 2008 in hopes of finally bringing peace to the war-torn province of North Kivu. The accord is primarily between the government, led by President Joseph Kabila and dissident general Laurent Nkunda of The National Congress for the Defence of the Congolese People (CNDP). However, the agreement did not include Hutu militiamen still active in the area, casting serious doubt as to whether or not it will be successful. Elsewhere violence erupted in the Bas Congo region after government troops employed force to suppress demonstrations in favour of opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba. Renewed hostilities throughout the country are the main factor behind nearly 900 civilian deaths, a notable increase from 500 in 2006.

2006 Despite ongoing hostilities, in August the DRC held its first democratic elections in over forty years. An election observer mission was deployed by the European Union to the capital, Kinshasa. The vote resulted in the election of President Joseph Kabila to office, which renewed tensions between the Eastern and Western provinces. UN military operations oversaw the surrender of many rebel and militia fighters, despite the resolve of many to continue fighting. The government's united armed forces continue to face allegations of human rights abuses and are accused of jeopardizing any chances for peace as instances of rape and summary executions grow. In addition, fighting in the country has been responsible for the deaths of between 200 and 300 rebels, along with about 150 government soldiers and around 500 civilians.

2005 Fighting continued mainly in eastern DRC among rebel groups and between them and UN and government forces after the UN stepped up military operations to launch several large-scale operations against the rebels. The humanitarian situation in the country continued to deteriorate. The International Rescue Committee reported over 1,000 daily excess deaths due to the malnourishment and disease brought on by the

conflict.

2004 Rebel forces made two failed coup attempts in March and June. Although the number of conflict deaths dropped, the east remained volatile, particularly in Bukavu. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs continued with limited success, and many refugees returned from neighbouring countries. The United Nations increased the MONUC force and mandate while the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda established a tripartite commission on peace and security agreements.

2003 Significant gains were made towards ending the conflict when an interim government, including rebel and opposition leaders, was convened until elections are held within a few years. Efforts aimed at demobilising, disarming, and – in the case of non-Congolese combatants – repatriating former combatants continued, conducted primarily by the United Nations' mission to the DRC (MONUC). However, ethnic violence, primarily between Hema and Lendu groups, intensified in the eastern province of Ituri, resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths. A UN-authorized, European Union emergency force, was deployed to provide security to Bunia, the capital of Ituri Province until September, when it was replaced by a strengthened MONUC force.

2002 Fighting remained intense. Thousands of people, both civilians and combatants, were killed throughout the year. Peace agreements were forged with Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, and attempted with rebel groups.

2001 Some progress was made towards peace when the warring sides agreed to pull back their forces from front lines but these developments did not prevent fierce clashes taking place in the north and south of the country. In January, President Laurent Kabila was assassinated and replaced by his son Joseph Kabila who, in spite of early hopes, did not advance peace negotiations.

2000 All sides were accused of violating an April cease-fire, hampering the planned deployment of 5500 UN peacekeeping troops. The Congolese government and its allies launched a new wave of attacks against rebels in early August, pressing on in September and October, and, despite signing the accord, President Kabila refused to authorize UN military observers and troops to monitor the cease-fire. At least 1,200 people died in 2000 in conflict related deaths.

1999 The conflict widened in 1999 to include inter-ethnic clashes and fighting between factions of the main rebel coalition. A mid-year cease-fire proved ineffective. At least 5,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed -- about the same number of deaths as in 1998.

1998 Renewed fighting broke out in August as the Congolese Rally for Democracy (CRD), an insurgent coalition of rebel factions, attempted to overthrow President Laurent Kabila's ruling Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL).

Type of Conflict:

State control/ Failed state

Parties to the Conflict:

1) Government:

Led by President Joseph Kabila, appointed in January 2001 following the assassination of his father, Laurent Kabila, who had deposed Mobutu Sese Seko and seized power after a seven-month war. In 2003, an interim government, headed by Joseph Kabila and including officials from the main rebel groups and the unarmed political opposition, was created in order to govern the country until elections which were held in August 2006. Joseph Kabila was elected in a process that was relatively free from violence.

'While the main belligerent leaders are all in the transitional government, their corruption and mismanagement threaten stability during and after forthcoming elections...' ICG [International Crisis Group] said." [*Reuters*, October 19, 2005]

2) Several armed groups, including:

- Congolese Rally for Democracy - Kisangani / Mouvement de liberation (RCD - K/ML), which split from the main RCD group (see below) and continued supporting Laurent, and subsequently, Joseph Kabila

throughout the conflict.

Versus

Various rebel groups which are found primarily, but not exclusively, in the eastern DRC. Although many of the larger groups, including most RCD factions and the MLC, are involved in the on-going peace process, several of the smaller groups and militias are not. The various rebel groups are:

3) The National Congress for the Defence of the Congolese People (CNDP):

Formed in mid-2006 under the leadership of dissident general Laurent Nkunda, the CNDP is committed to upholding the plight of the region's Tutsi population against Interhamwe Hutu forces that fled into the country following the Rwandan genocide. The group is said to have the support of the Tutsi-dominated government in Rwanda and is one of the most prominent rebel factions in the North Kivu area. The CNDP finally signed a peace agreement in January 2008 after prolonged fighting and numerous ultimatums from the DRC government under President Joseph Kabila.

"Eastern Congo is no stranger to violence, but ironically the latest surge in killing started with a deal designed to bring peace to this corner of the vast country nearly four years after a nationwide accord officially ended a 1998-2003 war. Laurent Nkunda, a dissident Congolese army general, led his two brigades into the bush in 2004, vowing to protect his fellow ethnic Tutsis. He is under an international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes after his men occupied Bukavu, South Kivu. Human rights observers accuse the mixed brigades of killing, raping and forcing civilians from their homes." [*Reuters*, 09 May 2007]

4) Mayi-Mayi militia fighters:

Mayi-Mayi fighters justify their involvement in the conflict by stating they are acting in defence of their communities. Although in the past they often fought in support of the Congolese armed forces, they are not formally allied with any party and have clashed with any forces, Congolese or not, who are active in their communities. Throughout 2006 it became apparent that the Mayi-Mayi were not allied with government forces, as they led numerous attacks on both them and UN peacekeepers. In addition, numerous factions of Mayi-Mayi militia groups became allied under Kyungu Mutanga, who goes by the alias of Gedeon. Following many campaigns led by UN and government forces, Mutanga, along with several Mayi-Mayi warriors were forced to surrender.

"UN and NGO officials interviewed did not claim to have a complete picture of the conflict in Katanga, but said it appeared that at least a dozen Mayi-Mayi groups had formed an alliance under a leader named Kyungu Mutanga, who goes by the alias Gedeon." [*IRINnews*, January 3, 2006]

"A key turning point was the surrender in May of the most influential warlord, Kyungu Mutanga, better known as Gedeon. Claiming to have communed with the ghost of Laurent Kabila, Gedeon ordered his 150 followers, many of them child soldiers, to hand over their weapons." [*The Guardian Weekly*, July 7-13, 2006]

5) The Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC), led by Thomas Lubanga and based in Bunia:

The UPC is dominated by the Hema ethnic group and has traditionally been supported by the Ugandan authorities. However, it is alleged that Uganda has provided military support to both Hema and Lendu militias and that the UPC has responded by soliciting support from Rwanda – Uganda's regional rival. The UPC leadership declared an end to armed conflict in April 2005 after the arrest of their leaders, Thomas Lubanga and John Tinanzabo, but the militia has yet to fully disarm. In 2007, UPC leader Thomas Lubanga was extradited and summoned before the International Criminal Court where he will stand trial for war crimes, including the conscription of child soldiers, in 2008.

"Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga, accused of using child soldiers in his country's 1998-2003 war, will face trial in March 2008, the first person to be tried by the International Criminal Court. The ICC is also in the early stages of prosecuting Germain Katanga, another Congolese militia leader, who is accused of murder, sexual slavery and using child soldiers." [*Reuters*, 12 November 2007]

Several splinter groups have emerged from the UPC, including:

-UPC-Kisembo, led by Floribert Kisembo Bahemuka who was appointed a general in the national army in 2005 as part of the Pretoria peace accords.

- The Party for the Unity and the Safekeeping of the Integrity of Congo (PUSIC), supported by certain elements of the Ugandan military and based in Bunia; One of its leaders, Kahwa Panga Madro, was arrested in April 2005 and another leader, Ychali Gonza, was made a general in the national army as part of the reconciliation process.

- Armed Forces of the Congolese People (FAPC), supported by certain elements within the Ugandan military and with links to Lendu fighters. The FAPC began disarming in March 2005 as part of the process of joining the national army and was considered fully disarmed as of April 2005.

“The Union des patriots Congolais (UPC), one of the major militia groups in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, announced...an end to its insurrection in the district of Ituri.” “One of the militia groups, the Forces armées du peuple congolais,...sent the remaining 416 of its militiamen to a disarmament site in Mount Awa, northern Ituri on Wednesday. The Congolese government said this was the last of fighters from this movement, effectively ending their war.”
[IRINNews.org April 14, 2005]

6) Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD):

A coalition of rebel groups formerly allied with Laurent Kabila in the struggle to replace Mobutu prior to 1997. The coalition includes the Banyamulenge – the main Kivu-based opposition to Kabila –, figures from the national opposition, and a few former dignitaries of the Mobutu era. Although they initially supported Laurent Kabila in his bid to oust Mobutu, following his rise to power, the RCD accused Kabila of “corruption, nepotism, and failure to bring about democratic reforms, ethnic harmony and regional stability”, and vowed to correct these ills and open the democratization process. The RCD has split into various factions over the course of the conflict:

- The largest faction is the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma (RCD-Goma), which is led by Azarias Ruberwa.

7) The Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI) and allies:

The FNI is a Lendu group created in 2003 and based in Rethy and Kpandroma towns, Ituri Province. Its leader was arrested in March 2005. It is allied with the Forces de resistance patriotiques en Ituri (FRPI), a political party and militia umbrella group of the Ngiti ethnic group.

8) Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC): Another group of Ugandan-backed rebels, led by Jean-Pierre Bemba.

9) Forces populaires pour la democratie au Congo (FPDC): A political party and militia of the Aru and Mahagi ethnic groups based in Northern Ituri, allegedly supported by Uganda.

10) Movement Revolutionnaire du Congo or the Congo Revolutionary Movement, a newly formed militia alliance located in the province of Ituri and composed of remnants of several different militias.

“With support from a Bangladeshi contingent of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, known as MONUC, the Congolese army has been fighting a newly formed militia alliance in Ituri called the Movement Revolutionnaire du Congo, which is made up of remnants of various defunct militias.” [IRINnews, March 30, 2006]

11) Foreign rebels:

The foreign rebels which have been active in the DRC throughout the conflict are: the Burundian Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) and Front Nationales de Liberation (FNL); the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA); the Rwandan ex-Far (ex-Rwandan armed forces) and Interahamwe fighters now called the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR); the West Nile Bank Front; the Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda and the People’s Redemption Army. Of these, the FDLR has

emerged as one of the strongest armed groups with between 12,000 to 15,000 combatants and is said to control much of the South Kivu region. The group has said it will return to Rwanda if granted amnesty for their responsibility in the Rwandan genocide. In 2005, a splinter group of the FDLR emerged, calling themselves the "Rasta" rebel group.

12) The Rasta Movement:

Composed of former Hutu militants who fled to the DRC following the Rwandan genocide, this group of rebel forces is known for their extreme cruelty towards women and children.

"According to victims, one of the newest groups to emerge is called the Rastas, a mysterious gang of dreadlocked fugitives who live deep in the forest, wear shiny tracksuits and Los Angeles Lakers jerseys and are notorious for burning babies, kidnapping women and literally chopping up anybody who gets in their way. UN officials said the so-called Rastas were once part of the Hutu militias who fled Rwanda after committing genocide there in 1994, but now it seems they have split off on their own and specialize in freelance cruelty." [*The New York Times*, 07 October 2007]

13) International forces involved in peace support operations:

The United Nations has had a military presence, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in the DRC since 1999. Since 2005, it has stepped up active military operations against militias in Ituri province and its mandate is currently extended until the end of 2009. The European Union deployed a UN-authorized, French-led intervention force to Ituri, for several months in 2003.

14) A German-led European Union mission with troop strength of 1 500, composed of military units from France, Spain, Poland, Germany and several other countries, was deployed in 2006 to oversee the country's first democratic elections in 40 years. However, the European Union adamantly asserted that the mission would not enter the Eastern provinces of the country, where the heaviest of the fighting was taking place, and the mission concluded at the end of November 2006.

"After weeks of hesitation, Germany's Defense Minister Franz-Josef Jung said his country planned to lead an EU mission of up to 1 500 members, including troops from France, Spain, Poland and several other nations to support UN peacekeepers stabilizing the country." [*The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 20, 2006]

"EU forces will not go to the east of the country where a 17 000-strong UN mission is trying to help the Congolese army control roaming militia groups." [*The Mail and Guardian Online*, July 17, 2006]

Status of Fighting:

2008 Fighting continued in North Kivu throughout the year as the government pledged to forcibly disarm Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) rebels who did not disarm themselves. The government faced increasing difficulty in achieving this goal. It was alleged later on in the year that the government of the DRC was in fact supporting the FDLR and using their forces to combat other militia groups in the country including the Mai Mai's PARECO and the CNDP. Fighting in the Bas-Congo between the army and the Bundu Kia Kongo increased as did the violence in Ituri between the government and rebel groups. The army and MONUC units were deployed to the East in light of the increased LRA attacks there, and civilians periodically attacked UN convoys or compounds throughout the year. Sexual violence was also on the rise, with 2,200 cases of rape reported in North Kivu in June alone. Due to the continuing insecurity, IDP's are being forced to move constantly. All sides of the conflict are increasingly violating human rights, according to the UN. Women are increasingly vulnerable to rape and sexual abuses, and boys and girls are increasingly vulnerable to abduction.

2007 Fighting continued to plague the long-time conflict zones of North and South Kivu, as well as Ituri with government forces clashing repeatedly with rebel factions, the most prominent of which is the National Congress for the Defence of the Congolese People (CNDP) under dissident general Laurent Nkunda. Eight peacekeepers from the UN's MONUC mission were also reported killed in hostilities. Although hopes for the

Goma peace accord signed between the CNDP and the government in January 2008 remain high, there is still uncertainty as to whether or not the accord can facilitate lasting peace as it excludes Rwandan Hutu groups that repeatedly clash with CNDP forces. The recruitment of child soldiers has continued to be a persistent and worsening problem, as many children's organizations in the country reported an increase in the recruitment of child soldiers as well as the recruitment of those who had been formerly demobilized. Fighting also erupted in Bas-Congo, when demonstrators reverted to violence amid claims of fraud in last year's Presidential elections and were met with government troops that employed excessive and indiscriminate force against civilians. The national army still remains an extremely large problem, as it has been cited as the country's worst human rights abuser, especially in terms of its involvement in numerous instances of sexual violence against women.

"Following the killing of eight peacekeepers of MONUC on January 23, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1653, condemning the militias and other armed groups that are destabilizing the Great Lakes region by attacks on civilians and UN personnel, and stressing the need for disarmament and demobilization of these groups." [*The SIPRI Yearbook 2007*]

"The security situation in North Kivu remains precarious due to fresh fighting between the newly reintegrated brigades and rebels of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, who have been in the region since the Rwandan genocide in 1994." [*IRIN*, 08 February 2007]

"Armed groups have even forcibly enlisted demobilized former child soldiers," Murhabazi Namegabe, head of a local non-governmental organization, has said. This finding has been confirmed by the United Nations Mission in the Congo (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. Some have made their way into the army's newly integrated brigades, after the integration of two of dissident army General Nkunda's loyalist brigades with three national army brigades since January. MONUC estimates that 4500 to 5000 of Nkunda's troops, according to his figures are due to be combined with a similar number of national army troops." [*IRIN*, 20 February 2007]

"A dissident DRC general called for African mediation to broker a ceasefire in eastern DRC as fighting between his forces and government troops neared the provincial capital. New clashes broke out before dawn around Karuba, a village 30km west of Goma, after President Joseph Kabila's government rejected talk of negotiations. Self-declared General Bwanbale Kakolele, Nkunda's top military commander, said his side was ready for a ceasefire." [*The Mail and Guardian Online*, 07 September 2007]

"The prevalence and intensity of sexual violence against women in eastern Congo are "almost unimaginable," the top UN humanitarian official said Saturday after visiting the country's most fragile region, where militia groups have preyed on the civilian population for years. John Holmes, who coordinates UN emergency relief operations said 4500 cases of sexual violence have been reported in just one eastern province since January, though the actual number is surely much higher. Rape has become "almost a cultural phenomenon," he said." [*The Washington Post Online*, 09 September 2007]

"The transitional government has helped disarm more than 17000 militia members since 2006." [*IRIN*, 22 August 2007]

2006 The provinces of North and South Kivu, Ituri and Katanga all witnessed continued hostilities throughout 2006. The United Nations peacekeeping mission, backed by government forces clashed repeatedly with Mayi-Mayi rebels in central Katanga. Although some Mayi-Mayi have reportedly surrendered and begun to disarm, many remain hidden in the bush. The Ugandan government continues to back rebels in the Ituri region, causing thousands to be displaced. The Congolese Army has also become a negative obstacle to peace, as it remains under-funded and malnourished. Cases of mutiny and attacks on civilians and UN aid stations have been frequent, along with numerous accusations of human rights abuses which involve a sharp increase in the reporting of rape and summary executions. Rebel forces continue to recruit child soldiers, resulting in the highest concentration of children involved in conflict in the world. Also, along with the country's first democratic elections in 40 years came many cases of violence as supporters of Joseph Kabila in the East collided with those of opposition leader, Jean-Pierre Bemba from the West. Continued fighting, floods and lack of

transportation infrastructure have made it impossible for humanitarian aid to reach conflict zones for twelve months in some cases, causing many civilian casualties from hunger and disease.

"The killing continues, unabated and many refugees, long the target of brutal militias, have fled a new threat: the soldiers of a national army supposedly charged with protecting them. One UN official described the army as the "biggest liability the country has". Its soldiers are responsible for scores of rapes each month. Of 182 rapes recorded in the town of Kalonge, 78 were carried out by the army." [*Telegraph Group UK*, April 24, 2006]

"Uganda backs rebels responsible for ravaging the rugged hills and dense rainforest of Congo's Ituri district, according the UN officials and western diplomats. Gunmen, styling themselves the Revolutionary Movement of Congo (known by their French acronym MRC), have forced tens of thousands to flee in the last three months alone." [*Telegraph Group UK*, April 27, 2006]

"The possible consequences of arming Ituri's militias was demonstrated last February when the gunmen killed nine Bangladeshi peacekeeping troops. In return for supplying arms, Uganda plunders the area controlled by its favoured rebels." [*Telegraph Group UK*, April 27, 2006]

"The DRC is thought to have the largest concentration of child soldiers in the world," said Martin Bell, the former BBC war reporter who traveled to eastern Congo as a UNICEF ambassador earlier this year." [*Reuters*, July 24, 2006]

2005 Fighting continued in eastern DRC, in particular in South and North Kivu, Katanga and Ituri. UN and government forces launched a series of major attacks against the FDLR in South and North Kivu provinces in July destroying a FDLR base. The UN also launched a major operation in Ituri against the Mai Mai, Hema and Lendu militias. The latter two groups also fought each other and Mai Mai and RCD-Goma militias clashed in the region. The Uganda-based LRA rebels were forced out of the DRC after briefly crossing into the country to evade Sudanese and Ugandan troops. Fighting also broke out briefly in the capital, Kinshasa, between government troops and former rebels. Tens of thousands of civilians remained displaced both within and beyond the DRC. Disarmament of some militias present in the DRC continued and the FAPC militia was fully disarmed. In Katanga, 4,000 gunmen disarmed in return for bicycles in August 2005. In April 2005, the UPC unilaterally declared an end to fighting following the arrest of its leader.

"Congo's army, backed by U.N. peacekeepers, killed 32 militiamen during a two-day operation to free four local election officials kidnapped in the lawless east, the United Nations said on Wednesday. Two government soldiers died and another four were injured but no peacekeepers were hurt during the Oct 31-Nov 1 operation against Mai Mai gunmen in Congo's North Kivu province." [*Reuters*, November 2, 2005]

"Around 400 LRA rebels accompanied by their families sought refuge in Congo's northeastern province of Orientale in September in the Garamba National Park, after having crossed the Sudanese frontier, fleeing an attack launched by Sudanese and Ugandan security forces. Last week, the Congolese army said that the LRA rebels had returned to Sudan after some 3,000 Congolese troops were deployed to the park." [*IRINNews.org*, October 21, 2005]

"About 80,000 people have been displaced by fighting in the north-east of the Democratic republic of Congo this year, according to UN officials." [Robert Walker, *BBC News*, January 14, 2005]

2004 Fighting occurred primarily in eastern DRC in Katanga and North and South Kivu. Population displacement continued in conflict areas, but a significant number of refugees also returned to their homes from neighbouring countries. Voluntary repatriation of Rwandan Hutu rebels continued with limited success.

"Some 10,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo have begun being voluntarily repatriated from the Central African Republic." [*IRIN*, October 21, 2004]

"United Nations officials estimate at least 20,000 people have fled to North Kivu province from nearby South Kivu. Local authorities put the number at up to 150,000. The civilians were fleeing a recent advance by government troops on dissident soldiers, who broke away from the national army earlier this year." [*BBC*, September 23, 2004]

"UN troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), known as MONUC, fired back on dissident soldiers led by Col Jules Mutebutsi who were fortified inside the South Kivu provincial town of Kamanyola, 40 Km south of Bukavu." [*IRIN*, June 21, 2004]

"Congoese government troops recaptured Bukavu yesterday, a week after the town fell to renegades...that led United Nations peacekeepers to use force to restore order." [*Telegraph*, June 10, 2004]

"MONUC, the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, deployed 3,500 soldiers on Tuesday to the eastern city of Bukavu, South Kivu Province, to help restore calm following an eruption of hostilities." [*IRIN*, March 3, 2004]

2003 Intense fighting in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu and Ituri continued in spite of the completed withdrawal of all foreign government forces from Congoese territory, the work of the United Nations to disarm, demobilize and repatriate both Congoese and foreign ex-combatants, and the creation of a transitional government. Bunia, the capital of Ituri Province, suffered the most devastation as Hema and Lendu militias fought for control of the city following the withdrawal of Ugandan armed forces in May. These clashes, along with several civilian massacres – the most significant occurring in the Ituri town of Drodro, where thousands of civilians were slaughtered – were conducted along ethnic lines and described by some analysts as genocidal.

Although the UN mission and the European Union intervention force helped stabilize Bunia later in the year, they were unable to intervene outside the city, where much of the ethnic violence occurred. In addition to killing civilians, many armed groups employed sexual violence as a means of terrorizing local populations and the government and armed groups continued to recruit children as combatants.

"The DRC is one of the countries with the largest number of child soldiers, Amnesty International said in a report issued in September 2003 ... An official of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimated in September 2003 that there might be up to 15,000 children in the various armed groups in the east of the country. The government has put the figure at about 30,000. Some of the combatants were as young as eight years old. ... Minors continue to serve in rival militias in the area. NGO officials in Bunia said the exact number of children in the UPC and FNI could not be established as verifying information from the militias was difficult." [*IRIN*, December 12, 2003]

"United Nations peacekeepers in the ... (DRC) were involved in several armed confrontations over the weekend with members of a number of militias in the eastern town of Bunia ..." [*UN News Service courtesy of Relief Web*, November 10, 2003]

"The United Nations reported today that 67 Congoese civilians, most of them children, were slain with machetes and rifle fire early Monday in a village in Congo's Ituri province, in one of the largest ethnic massacres in a region that has been plagued by violence for months. The attack was launched by ethnic Lendu militia against the ethnic Hema village of Katchele, U.N. officials said." [*washingtonpost.com*, October 8, 2003]

"The rebel group, Union des patriotes congolais (UPC) took control of Bunia on Monday after six days of fighting between rival ethnic militias, MONUC ... told IRIN. ... The UPC, led by Thomas Lubanga, a Hema, formerly controlled Bunia ... Lubanga's fighters were chased out by Ugandan troops on 6 March. Fighting between rival Hema and Lendu militias intensified after the Ugandans completed their withdrawal from Bunia on 7 May ..." [*IRIN*, May 12, 2003]

2002 Fighting continued despite government efforts to forge peace agreements with rebel factions and with neighbouring countries with troops in the DRC. All parties were guilty of inciting internal violence, and attacking and brutalizing civilians, and the humanitarian situation continued to degrade as a result. Soldiers of the Rwandan-backed Congoese Rally for Democracy (RCD) were responsible for the execution of hundreds of combatants and civilians in retaliation for an attempted mutiny in Kisangani. Heavy fighting between the RCD and the tribal militia "Mai Mai" broke out following Rwanda's withdrawal from Kindu in the east in accordance with a July peace deal.

"Within the larger war in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo) the warring parties carry out another war: that of sexual violence against women and girls. As military activities increase in one area after another, so do rapes and other crimes against women and girls... Brutality against civilians, and specifically sexual violence, is an integral part of the war in eastern Congo. Forces involved in acts of sexual violence against women and girls continue to be rewarded by their leadership and by their powerful patrons for their actions." [*Human Rights Watch*, June 2002]

"The gunfight between Rwandan-backed RCD rebels and Congolese "Mai Mai" warriors broke out shortly after the last Rwandans occupying the town flew home under a peace accord struck by Rwanda and Congo in July. The running battles -- rare in the town center -- underscored fears of heightened turmoil in areas vacated by Rwanda's relatively disciplined troops, who have provided some security in parts of lawless eastern Congo... The Mai Mai, who have long opposed the presence of Rwandan troops and view the rebels as their puppets, responded with rifle fire, but it was not clear who started the fighting." [*Reuters*, September 19, 2002]

2001 Some progress was made towards implementing the Lusaka Peace Accords in April when the warring sides agreed to pull back their forces 15 kilometers from front lines. Further progress was made when Namibia withdrew its combat troops from the DRC. The hope of a peaceful settlement was overshadowed by fierce fighting in the north and east throughout the year, with strategic cities and towns falling and being retaken by opposing factions.

"United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan welcomed the withdrawal of Namibia from Congo's war -- but the pullout left four foreign armies still in Congo and showed how far peace efforts have yet to go. Namibia, a southern African country, had by far the smallest contingent -- an estimated 2,000 troops -- in Congo's war." [*CBC*, August 4, 2001]

"The overall situation in the DRC continues to develop in a largely positive direction. The ceasefire has held and the disengagement of forces and their redeployment to new defensive positions is effectively complete. Some foreign forces have been withdrawn from the territory. At the same time, outbreaks of fighting have continued, if not intensified, in the east of the country." [*United Nations*, October 16, 2001]

2000 All sides (rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda versus Congolese government forces supported by Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola) were accused of violating the Lusaka cease-fire, hampering the planned deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission. Intense fighting took place in Kisangani between Rwandan and Ugandan troops in early June. (Both states entered the Congo in support of the rebels but failed to agree on which of three factions to support.) The Congolese government and its allies launched a new wave of attacks against rebels in early August, pressing on in September and October. Meanwhile, President Kabila's key state allies expressed impatience with his refusal to cooperate with the cease-fire accord.

"...Congo's civil war appears set to begin a bloody new chapter as rebels prepare for another offensive and Congolese President Laurent Kabila's allies enter talks with his enemies. Rebels in northwestern Congo, backed by the Ugandan army, are threatening to take a key government stronghold that would give them a base for striking at the capital, Kinshasa." [*Associated Press*, 3 October 2000]

1999 Fighting continued in 1999, despite a cease-fire signed by the government and the rebels in Lusaka between July and August. There were several clashes between two factions of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) which in August led to a military confrontation between Rwanda and Uganda in Kisangani. Many civilians died during the year as a result of ethnic fighting fuelled by the conflict. By the year-end the government lost more than half of the country to rebel groups.

"Cease-fire agreement negotiated in Lusaka in July was violated by all parties especially in the north and east, but fighting was generally less intense than during the first half of the year.... By year's end, the Government had lost control of more than half the country's territory to armed antigovernment organizations, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC)

From August 14 to 16, disputes among antigovernment forces led to fighting in Kisangani between Rwandan and Ugandan troops. During the clashes, rebels, Rwandans, and Ugandans reportedly killed approximately 50 civilians. It was reported that Rwandan and RCD-Goma rebels also attempted to kill archbishop Monsengwo of Kisangani, who fled his home dressed as a servant." [1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 25, 2000]

1998 Fighting was intense from the beginning of a rebel attack in August. Over the New Year holiday, 500 people were massacred in raids carried out by soldiers aligned with the rebels. In November, a limited number of Sudanese rebels joined with Uganda in defence of the rebels, raising the total number of outside states involved in the war to six.

Number of Deaths:

Total: An estimated 350,000 people have been killed as a direct consequence of violence. In total, an estimated 5.4 million people have died as a result of the conflict, the vast majority from malnutrition and disease. The International Rescue Committee in conjunction with Australia's Burnet Institute released a study in January 2008 showing over 45,000 non-combat deaths per month. The conflict has internally displaced an additional 3.4 million people.

"War, disease and malnutrition are killing 45,000 people every month in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a conflict-driven humanitarian crisis that has claimed 5.4 million victims." [Reuters, 22 January 2008]

"War-ravaged Congo is suffering the world's deadliest humanitarian crisis, with 38,000 people dying each month mostly from easily treatable diseases, a study published Friday in Britain's leading medical journal said. Nearly four million people died between 1998 and 2004 alone — the indirect result of years of ruinous fighting that has brought on a stunning collapse of public health services, the study in the Lancet concluded. The majority of deaths were due to disease rather than violence, but war has cut off or reduced access to health services for millions in the impoverished country the size of Europe." [Todd Pitman, *The Associated Press*, January 9, 2006]

"Over 1,000 Congolese civilians a day are dying, nearly all from disease and malnutrition, due to a festering conflict that has killed 3.8 million people, an aid agency [the International Rescue Committee] said on Thursday." [David Lewis, *Reuters*, December 9, 2004]

"... 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." [*Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey*, International Rescue Committee, conducted April – July 2004.]

"The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has one of the highest rates in the world of internally displaced people, with 3.4 million having fled their homes during nearly five years of war, a top UN official has said." [*Agence France Presse*, November 13, 2003]

2008 Estimates put the death toll of DRC civilians at 1,500 killed along with 300 or so government and rebel troop members. 1,033 of those killed were killed by the LRA from September – December and again in the Christmas massacres that occurred from Dec 24, 2008 to January 11, 2009. The number of deaths does not include the vast number of sexual crimes carried out against women or guerrilla warfare casualties that go uncounted by either rebel groups or the government. 2 aid workers were also killed in the DRC this year.

2007 Demonstrations in the Bas-Congo killed 134, intense fighting between the government and rebel groups reportedly killed 600 in March along with hundreds more who perished as either a direct result of the fighting or due to the conditions imposed by displacement. Estimates put the death toll for DRC civilians at nearly 900 killed along with 400 rebels and 100 government troops. These numbers do not include the vast number of sexual crimes carried out against women that are continuously on the rise. Eight UN peacekeepers with the MONUC mission were also killed in early January.

"Following the killing of eight peacekeepers of MONUC on January 23, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1653, condemning the militias and other armed groups that are

destabilizing the Great Lakes region by attacks on civilians and UN personnel, and stressing the need for disarmament and demobilization of these groups." [*The SIPRI Yearbook 2007*]

At least 38 Rwandan militiamen and five Congolese soldiers have been killed in clashes this week as Congo's government strives to impose its authority on the country's war-torn east, a UN official said. Major Ajay Dalal, spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission in North Kivu province said the fighting erupted after DRC's army deployed a battalion last week made up of reintegrated combatants from a 1998-2003 war." [*Reuters*, 21 February 2007]

2006 Due to the fact that humanitarian organizations are not permitted near conflict zones and many instances of fighting continue to go unreported, exact numbers of casualties remain unclear. It can be estimated through various sources that between 200 and 300 rebels have been killed along with about 150 government soldiers and 500 civilians; however it is thought that these numbers should likely be much higher as hunger and malnutrition continue to ravage the country. These figures also do not include the thousands of women who have fallen victim to an exponential increase in sexual violence.

"Guatemala said it would not withdraw Special Forces troops serving in [Democratic Republic of the] Congo as UN peacekeepers, after eight of its soldiers stationed there were killed in a battle with Ugandan rebels." [*The Washington Post Online*, January 23, 2006]

"Although there are no comprehensive statistics, in one province alone, South Kivu, about 42 000 women were treated in health clinics for serious sexual assaults last year, according to statistics collected by the human rights group, Global Rights." [*The Guardian*, November 14, 2006]

2005 At least 300 people were reported killed by fighting although the actual figure is undoubtedly far higher, likely in the thousands. Most of the casualties that occur during fighting in the DRC's remote regions go unreported.

"And yet the policy of laissez-faire suddenly ended last week when Pakistani UN troops were ordered to dismantle a militia camp in Ituri...and to use force in the attempt. The militia...hit back...but instead of retreating...the Pakistanis counter attacked, killing up to 60 militiamen in a four-hour battle...There has been criticism too from some human rights activists who say that more than 120 people, mostly civilians, were killed in last week's Pakistani-led attack." [*Adrian Blomfield, The Telegraph*, March 7, 2005]

"Unidentified attackers ambushed UN peacekeepers on patrol in northeaster Congo on Friday, leaving several of the soldiers dead [10 Bangladeshi peacekeepers], a UN spokesman said." [*Associated Press*, February 25, 2005]

2004 At least 330 people were reported killed in 2004, but as in earlier years many other deaths in remote fighting may have gone unreported.

"...two UN peacekeepers were shot dead in an ambush near Goma, north of Bukavu. The United Nations Mission to Congo (Monuc) has about 1,000 troops in Bukavu. It has said it lacks the mandate to stop the fighting, but has begun to dispatch night patrols to check the looting." [*Telegraph*, June 7, 2004]

"The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUC, is to send a team to investigate a reported massacre in Ituri District, eastern DRC...According to local authorities, armed men said to belong to a militia group called the Front des nationalistes integristes (FNL) killed at least 100 people in Gobu, a lakeside village some 60 km north of the town of Bunia." [*IRIN*, January 23, 2004]

2003 A US State Department report suggests that over 8,000 civilians died as a direct result of the conflict in 2003. However, due to the remoteness of some of the fighting the real figure may be significantly higher. Additionally, several thousand people died as a result of conflict-related malnutrition and disease.

"Based on investigations conducted in 2003 by MONUC and other human rights organizations in

Ituri, during 2002 and 2003, it was estimated that all armed groups based in Ituri and several non-Ituri-based groups, including the MLC, RCD, RCD-ML, and RCD-N, killed at least 8,000 civilians, sometimes deliberately and sometimes through the indiscriminate use of excessive force." [US State Department, *Human Rights Report 2003*, February 28, 2004]

"Twenty-two civilians were hacked to death in ethnic clashes in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo this week, the Ugandan military has said. Fourteen people from the Hema tribe were killed with machetes Tuesday morning in Kokolombi, near Bunia ... Major David Muhoozi told reporters late Wednesday, a day after rival ethnic groups signed a truce aimed at ending a long-running feud." [Agence France Presse, March 20, 2003]

2002 Independent media reports suggested that over 1,000 people died as a direct result of the conflict with a US State Department report citing over 4,000. Thousands more died as a result of conflict-induced famine and disease. Rwandan troops and the Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of civilians and combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

2001 An estimate of conflict deaths for 2001 was made difficult by the remoteness of the conflict and the limited media coverage. However, reports suggest that thousands could have lost their lives.

"Even as a cease-fire has held on the front lines, massacres have continued behind rebel lines where militias and rebel armies terrorize some of Congo's more densely populated districts, attacking villages on the suspicion inhabitants are helping the other side. Congo's vast jungles are now populated by untold thousands who no longer feel safe in their homes but are ill equipped for living in the bush. 'People hide in the forest,' said Claude Jibidar, head of the World Food Program office in Bukavu, capital of South Kivu province, where 380,000 people have been driven from their homes, many into the forest. 'You don't really see them. You don't see the bodies.'" [The Washington Post, April 30, 2001]

2000 At least 1,200 people were killed in 2000. The International Rescue Committee estimated that overall 2,600 people died every day, mostly due to the lack of health and nutritional services.

"On average, some 2600 people are dying every day in this war and our research found that the first months of the year 2000 were even worse than 1999,' said the study's author, epidemiologist Les Robert." [BBC News, 9 June 2000]

1999 At least 5,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed during 1999.

"Thousands of people have been killed and more than 150,000 have fled from ethnic fighting in northeastern Congo, an aid agency said on Thursday. Medecins Sans Frontieres said it was 'deeply concerned about the rapidly worsening humanitarian situation' around the town of Bunia, where the effects of the country's civil war have been exacerbated by fighting between Hema and Lendu ethnic groups. 'We estimate that a few thousand people have been killed,' MSF country manager Jannes van der Wijk told Reuters by satellite phone from the Congolese town of Goma." [Mail and Guardian, January 21, 2000]

1998 After the August uprising an estimated 5,000 people died, many of them civilians.

Political Developments:

2008 The Goma Peace Accord only contributed to a reduction in fighting, there were hundreds of violations of the accord by the end of April, 2008. Many armed groups withdrew from and reentered the peace accord throughout the year, developing their own ceasefire agreements with governments individually. This particularly applies to the CNDP, whose ceasefire remained steady from Oct 2008 to the end of the year. The FDLR refused to disarm, and tensions between Rwanda and the DRC governments grew towards the end of the year. Rwanda has been accused of supplying aid and child soldiers to the Tutsi rebels of the CNDP, and has previously denied these accusations. The Congolese army is accused of working with the FDLR. President Kinshasha refuses to further negotiate with CNDP leader Nkunda, and Nkunda has threatened war. At the end of 2008, the UNSC approved the deployment of 3,100 more troops to the DRC in efforts to stem violence. Already the UN's largest mission at approximately 18 000 troops, the UN is stretched thin across

the country as violence continues to erupt on all sides. The International Criminal Court continued with Thomas Lubanga's trial but a dispute over evidence has led to the stay of the trial and perhaps his release. Two other former DRC leaders were arrested by the ICC this year, and another warrant was released for a third's arrest.

2007 Renewed violence throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including clashes in the capital, Kinshasa, have created doubts regarding President Joseph Kabila's ability to achieve sustainable peace in the country. Despite the 2006 elections being declared largely free and fair by international observers, supporters for opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba continue to complain of fraud and corruption. The national army and police forces remain political liabilities as international observers claim them to be the perpetrators of the DRC's worst human rights violations. Furthermore two political leaders were murdered in 2007. In July, Floribert Bwana Chui Bin Kositi, provincial secretary of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) was found murdered in Goma, preceded by the death of the head of the state intelligence department who was killed in May. A long-awaited peace agreement was signed in January 2008 between dissident general Laurent Nkunda and government forces. The agreement is being hailed as the instrument that will finally bring peace to the North Kivu region, yet it does not include the signatures of Hutu militiamen still active in the region. Former Union des Patriotes du Congo leader Thomas Lubanga's trial is set to begin in 2008, he will be the first person tried by the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. DRC militia chief Germain Katanga has also been arrested by the court, and faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in village and hospital massacres in the Ituri region.

"Diplomats and analysts see the accord thrashed out at a two-week conference in Goma under intense pressure from Kabila's Western allies as the best chance in years of pacifying Democratic Republic of the Congo's war-torn east. The Goma deal establishes a ceasefire and offers an amnesty for the rebels and militias, including Tutsi guerrillas loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda who have battled government troops in recent months in North Kivu province. Excluded from the deal are Nkunda's sworn enemies, Rwandan Hutu rebels of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) who also operate in the region. Failure to eliminate the FDLR rebels will keep alive the justification for Nkunda maintaining his own armed rebellion." [*Reuters*, 24 January 2008]

"Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga, accused of using child soldiers in his country's 1998-2003 war, will face trial in March 2008, the first person to be tried by the International Criminal Court. The ICC is also in the early stages of prosecuting Germain Katanga, another Congolese militia leader, who is accused of murder, sexual slavery and using child soldiers." [*Reuters*, 12 November 2007]

"DRC militia chief Germain Katanga was transferred Thursday to the International Criminal Court in the Hague to face multiple charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Katanga's name will be forever associated with the name of Bogoro: an ordinary village, which he ordered fighters under his command to 'wipe out'. In a statement issued in January 2005, Human Rights Watch accused Katanga of having helped lead one of the worst Ituri massacres at Nyakunde Hospital in September 2002. Witnesses had told how over a 10-day period his fighters, together with another militia group, the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation Movement (RCD-ML) "systematically slaughtered at least 1200 Hema and other civilians selected on the basis of their ethnicity." [*Agence France Presse*, 18 October 2007]

2006 The Democratic Republic of Congo held their first democratic elections in 40 years in August. Despite numerous tensions and predictions otherwise, the polls were relatively peaceful. Because a 50% majority is required to claim victory, a runoff ballot was held between President Joseph Kabila and rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba. The polls divided the country with the East supporting Kabila and the West, Bemba. Some instances of violence occurred as Kabila and Bemba supporters clashed. The outcome of the election became clear in December, with Joseph Kabila being sworn in on December 6th, 2006 as the country's first democratically elected President in over forty years. Bemba urged his supporters to accept the outcome as legitimate, and reportedly has plans to run for a seat in the Senate. Kabila will now be charged with the enormous task of re-integrating thousands of ex-combatants as well as child soldiers into a unified national army as well as back into society. A German-led European Union election monitoring mission with troop strength of 1500 was also deployed to the capital region of Kinshasa. The international community spent a reported US \$480 million to oversee the polls. In addition, Congolese rebel leader Thomas Lubanga was

arrested and brought to the International Criminal Court (ICC), where he awaits trial on war crimes committed while leading the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), allegations he reportedly denies.

"Congolese rebel leader Thomas Lubanga was brought before the Hague's International Criminal Court, the first suspect to stand trial since the permanent war crimes tribunal was created nearly four years ago. His arrest warrant covered crimes committed after 2002, when the court came into existence and Congo's civil war officially ended. Since then, 8,000 people have been killed and 600,000 displaced in Congo's eastern Ituri provinces." [*The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 20, 2006]

"The Democratic Republic of Congo lived up to its name on Sunday when voters turned out in the millions to take part in the vast, war-torn central African country's first multiparty vote in more than 45 years." [*The Christian Science Monitor*, August 02, 2006]

"Voting was largely peaceful, despite analysts' predictions that it would not be, as the largest UN peacekeeping force in the world patrolled dirt roads and swarms of international and local observers looked on." [*The Washington Post Online*, October 29, 2006]

2005 The UN Security Council extended MONUC's mandate to September 2006 and granted the UN peacekeeping force an additional 300 troops. The Security Council also extended an arms embargo on the DRC until July 2006. Voters approved a new constitution in a December referendum opening the way for 2006 elections.

"...Congolese voted last Sunday in a referendum on a new constitution. Official results announced on Saturday, with counting completed from nearly three quarters of polling stations, showed voters had overwhelmingly approved the new postwar constitution, which paves the way for national elections next year. The Independent Electoral Commission said the 'Yes' vote had so far won 83 percent, while the 'No' had nearly 17 percent." [*Reuters*, December 24, 2005]

"The UN-backed programme for Ituri was due to have disarmed 15,000 fighters from various ethnic-based militias. Last week, nearly 4,000 fighters disarmed, more than doubling the number of disarmed in the region since September." [David Lewis, *Reuters*, March 14, 2005]

2004 The period of transitional government was marred by two coup attempts and the withdrawal of a former rebel group, the Congolese Rally for Democracy, from the government. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs continued with limited success. The United Nations increased the MONUC force to 15,000, extended its mandate by a further six months and set up a committee to monitor an arms embargo. Meanwhile the International Criminal Court began investigations into war crimes. Attempts were made to improve the relationship between DRC, Uganda and Rwanda through a tripartite commission to ensure the implementation of peace and security agreements in the region.

"Some 5,000 extra troops have started to arrive in the Democratic Republic of Congo to reinforce a severely stretched United Nations peacekeeping force... Once all of the new troops, from India and Pakistan, are in place there will be some 15,000 blue helmets in DR Congo - the most ambitious and expensive peacekeeping operation in the world." [*BBC*, November 22, 2004]

"In the largest such joint action to date the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) will support military operations by the national Congolese army to protect the Walungu area in the eastern part of the country from rebel attacks. A combined operational centre will be set up in Walungu, 80 kilometres southwest of Bukavu in South Kivu province." [*UN News Service*, November 8, 2004]

"Concerned over continued insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN Security Council set up a committee on Friday to monitor the implementation of an eight-month-old arms embargo in the region." [*IRIN*, March 15, 2004]

2003 The Congolese peace process, initiated by the 1999 Lusaka Accord, continued to make gains in 2003. These included the creation of a two-year transitional government, led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents drawn from the political opposition and the main rebel groups, and the creation

of a unified army comprising rebel, militia and government fighters. President Kabila also granted amnesty to those fighters who had sought to overthrow the Congolese government during the war.

In the eastern provinces, warring rebel groups and local militias agreed to a variety of ceasefires throughout the year, none of which succeeded in ending the violence. Even so, relations between the DRC and its neighbouring countries improved as Uganda withdrew its troops from Bunia in April, removing the last of the foreign armies in Congolese territory. The United Nations mission to the DRC (MONUC) undertook the demobilization and repatriation of Congolese-based foreign combatants and its mandate was strengthened and extended in 2003 as it shifted its focus, along with most of its personnel, to the conflict-ridden east. Following the UN Security Council authorization of Operation Artemis, a European Union interim emergency force led by France, in September a contingent of 3400 MONUC troops, authorized to use force to protect civilians, was deployed in Bunia.

"The United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo says it will move most of its troops to the east, where fighting is continuing. The peacekeepers will be transferred from parts of DR Congo where security has improved, said William Swing, the top UN official in the country. This means that by mid-December more than 80% of the 10,000-strong force will be stationed in the east." [*BBC News*, November 14, 2003]

"Last week, President Kabila signed an amnesty law pardoning some acts of war committed since the start of the conflict more than four years ago. The amnesty pardons the rebels for attempting to topple the Kinshasa government, but does not cover any war crimes committed during this period." [*BBC News*, April 22, 2003]

2002 A number of tentative steps toward peace were taken in 2002. The "Inter-Congolese dialogue" held in Sun City, South Africa, brought together representatives of government, rebel factions, tribal militia, opposition parties and civil society to discuss the creation of an interim government and the restoration of peace. However, the parties could not come to a consensus over the composition of a transitional government and the talks ended with only partial agreement in April.

In January, the Burundian Foreign Minister claimed Burundian troops would soon be withdrawn from the DRC. In August, DRC President Kabila and Rwandan President Kigame signed a peace agreement in South Africa for Rwanda to withdraw from the DRC once former Interhamwe militia and former Rwandan Armed Forces were disarmed and repatriated. Some analysts questioned the efficacy of the agreement, suggesting Rwanda was more interested in the economic benefits of remaining involved in the DRC than in security issues. Presidents Kabila and Museveni of Uganda signed an accord in early September in Angola for the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from eastern DRC and a normalisation of relations between the two countries. Scepticism also remained over Uganda's commitment to the accord.

"The Ugandan-backed rebel Congolese Liberation Movement reached a peace deal with Kabila in April. But Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy, which controls a huge territory in eastern Congo, has rejected it, as have some Congolese opposition leaders." [*Washington Post*, July 22, 2002]

"The presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, Joseph Kabila and Paul Kagame, signed a peace agreement in Pretoria, South Africa, on 30 July. It is hoped that the agreement, largely brokered by South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma, will finally bring peace to an area that has been the scene of rebellion and fighting since 1996." [*Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 7, 2002].

"Many accuse Rwandan soldiers of collaborating with the Hutu militiamen to maintain their excuse for occupying Congo and plundering a mineral-rich expanse 27 times the size of Rwanda ... 'The interhamwe is now a very convenient excuse for Rwanda to loot Congo. Maybe it's 20% threat, 80% for show'." [*Guardian Weekly*, August 8-14, 2002]

"Congo bade farewell Wednesday to its military allies in a devastating four-year war ... A closed celebration ... marked the end of the military involvement of Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia." [*Associated Press*, October 2, 2002]

"Congo's government, rebels and opposition parties signed a peace accord Tuesday to end four years of civil war and set up a transitional government to lead Africa's third-largest nation to its first democratic elections since independence in 1960. Under the accord, ... Congo President Joseph Kabila will remain the interim head of state until the elections can be held in about 30 months. ... Under the deal, the interim government will also include four vice presidents named from the government, the two rebel groups and the political opposition. ... The talks were a continuation of earlier negotiations held at the South African resort of Sun City ..." [*Associated Press*, December 17, 2003]

2001 In January, President Laurent Kabila was assassinated and his son, Joseph Kabila, became the new President. There were hopes the new President would push peace initiatives forward but, in October, representatives of the DRC government walked out of peace talks in Ethiopia. In January 2002, an Oxfam report suggested the lack of progress in the peace talks could directly be related to exploitation of the vast natural resources of the country.

"If the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is to have any chance of success, it must confront the issue of natural resource extraction in a serious and explicit manner, says the international aid charity, Oxfam. In the document, 'Poverty in the midst of wealth,' Oxfam said that the Lusaka peace accord, signed in 1999 but not yet fully implemented had not incorporated the natural resource issue. Since the signing, resource exploitation has assumed greater importance than ever, the agency said. 'There is a triangular link between the extraction of natural resources, human suffering and the peace process, which must be recognized.' Oxfam said." [*IRIN*, January 23, 2002]

2000 In February the UN Security Council voted unanimously to authorize a peacekeeping force of up to 5,537 people to monitor the cease-fire in the Democratic Republic of Congo and supervise the withdrawal of foreign troops and disarmament of the Rwandan Hutu militia. Although he agreed to the cease-fire in April, President Kabila refused to cooperate in its implementation and, due to continuous cease-fire violations and increased fighting, the United Nations delayed the deployment of military observers. In September, President Kabila called for a revision of the cease-fire agreement, creating new complications. [Sources: *CNN*, 24 February 2000; *Associated Press*, 8 August 2000; *Associated Press*, 9 August 2000]

1999 The DRC rebel group broke into two factions in May, with the breakaway group establishing its headquarters in Kisangani with Ugandan backing. Between July and August, the government, the rebels, and the states with forces in the DRC (except Burundi) signed a peace agreement in Zambia. Known as the Lusaka Accord, it covers a broad range of areas, including the termination of fighting, the establishment of a joint military commission, and the organization of Congolese elections in July 2000. In the same period, the United Nations promised to assist in Accord implementation by establishing a two-phased peacekeeping force, the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC).

1998 Despite South African efforts to broker a peace settlement, in October 1998 outside states turned the conflict into a de facto regional war when the Presidents of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia, vowing not to "allow Kabila to be defeated," agreed to take the war into the rebels eastern stronghold. (The governments of Chad and Sudan had earlier intervened on behalf of Kabila.) A month later a limited number of Sudanese rebels joined Uganda and Rwanda in their support for anti-Kabila groups.

Background:

Until 1995, fighting over land and economic and political power in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) was mostly between the resident Hutu ethnic group and local Nyanga, Nande and Hunde groups in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. In 1993 some 7,000 people were reportedly killed in extreme fighting, followed by several hundred more deaths in 1994 and 1995. The ethnic mix of the region changed in 1994 when, after the victory of the Tutsi-led Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) over the Rwandese army, more than a million Hutu refugees fled neighbouring Rwanda for eastern DR Congo out of fear of retribution for the genocide that had taken place earlier in the year.

In September 1996, the deputy governor of South Kivu province issued an ultimatum to the Banyamulenge -- a Tutsi ethnic group opposed to then President Mobutu Sese Seko -- to leave the region. In response, the

Banyamulenge began an active rebellion against the Hutu militias and Zairian forces in the Kivu area, which grew into a larger insurrection as several rebel groups joined to overthrow the Mobutu regime. The resulting coalition group, the ADFL, took as its leader a former Zairian rebel commander, Laurent Kabila, who, after the fall of the Mobutu regime to the rebels in May 1997, became president of the (newly named) Democratic Republic of Congo. Accusing Kabila of "corruption, nepotism, and failure to bring about democratic reforms, ethnic harmony and regional stability," the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), a coalition of rebel groups, was formed in 1998 to depose Kabila. The RCD, which included the Banyamulenge, members of the national opposition, and a few former government leaders, was rooted in unresolved tensions and ethnic differences among anti-Mobutu groups which surfaced after Mobutu was gone. The conflict took on a regional dimension when neighbouring states intervened in the conflict. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia all deployed troops to the DRC in support of Laurent and later Joseph Kabila, while Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi deployed troops against the Kinshasa government. Following the assassination of Kabila in January 2001, his son Joseph Kabila became President. Although faltering for years, a 1999 peace agreement, the Lusaka Accord, led by 2003 to the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and a transition government and unified army drawn from the Kabila government and opposition groups.

In August, 2006, the Democratic Republic of the Congo held its first democratic elections in 40 years. The European Union deployed an election observer mission of 1500 troops to the capital of Kinshasa and the vote was deemed to have been relatively peaceful. The results were tabulated in December 2006, after a runoff election between President Joseph Kabila and rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba, and Kabila declared the winner. Despite initial violence, Bemba advised his supporters that the vote was legitimate and Kabila was sworn into office on December 6, 2006. In January 2008, the Goma peace agreement was signed between government forces and dissident general Laurent Nkunda, who represents the Tutsi CNDP. Hopes remain high for sustainable peace in the North Kivu region, but the exclusion of Hutu militia groups active in the area from the accord may serve to detract from its legitimacy.

Arms Sources:

The DRC government drew on equipment supplied to the Mobutu regime by China, France, North Korea, and the US, among others. More recently, the government received weapons from Poland, while the rebels were supplied by Rwanda and Uganda. States involved in the conflict also brought in weapons from former Soviet bloc countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. In 2003, the UN Security Council imposed a 1 year arms embargo, which was extended in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 for all armed groups and militias operating within the eastern DRC; however, this embargo has been difficult to enforce due to the lack of monitors on the ground, the porous nature of the DRC's borders, and the proliferation of arms within the area. Known violators of the embargo include firms in the UK, eastern Europe and neighbouring African countries such as Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. Total military spending by the DRC government reached US \$163 million in 2007, a \$17-million dollar increase since 2006. Further, massive demobilization of numerous rebel factions has resulted in large caches of weapons that are scheduled to be destroyed by the unified national army.

[Sources: See *The Military Balance*, 1999/2000 to 2007; *SIPRI Yearbook 2005 to 2007*; *InterPress Service*, January 26, 2000]

"According to the Commission Nationale de Desarmement, more than 22000 adults from all armed groups in Ituri have participated in the disarmament process. At least 100 000 arms, including Kalashnikov guns, have been recovered since the programme started. Also recovered were 1500 bombs, 1000 mines, 4300 magazines, 715000 munitions and a large quantity of various military materials, including more than 600 radios." [IRIN, 25 May 2007]

"The UN documented two shipments of arms from Uganda to Ituri's militias in 2004. These embargo-breaching consignments included 150 cases of 7.62mm ammunition along with Kalashnikov assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, heavy-caliber rifles and mortars." [Telegraph Group UK, April 27, 2006]

"The flow of weapons from Uganda breaches a UN arms embargo imposed on eastern Congo in 2003 and expanded to cover the entire country last year. At the same time British aid to Uganda totals 70 million pounds this year of which 30 million goes directly to the coffers of President Yoweri Museveni's government." [Telegraph Group UK, April 27, 2006]

"The UN Security Council unanimously extended an embargo on weapons for another year, until July 2007, destined to local and foreign militias active in the eastern DRC." [BBC News, August 01, 2006]

"The UN Security Council has extended a two-year-old arms embargo on DR Congo and threatened to crack down on those who violate the sanctions." [BBC News, August 8, 2005]

"Tanzanian exports of light weapons to Congo and Burundi are continuing unabated, according to a new report issued by GRIP [Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security]." [BBC News, May 6, 2005]

"Firms based in Britain and across eastern Europe are flying weapons into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in a deadly trade that threatens to derail a fragile peace process, a report by Amnesty International said Tuesday." [Agence France Presse, July 5, 2005]

"The UN report said Uganda was still shipping AK-47s, rocket launchers, mortars and land-mines across its rugged, mountainous border to an Ituri militia group known for pillaging, torturing and killing residents." [Frank Nyakairu and Agencies, *The Monitor*, February 1, 2005]

"The report by an independent panel of experts, prepared for a U.N. Security Council committee... says Uganda and Rwanda are among those violating the embargo." [Reuters, January 25, 2005]

" 'A Kalashnikov [semi-automatic rifle] is still easily obtained for a mere fifty dollars in Ituri,' Usman Dabo, chief administrator of MONUC's Ituri operation, told IRIN. He said that cutting supplies to the armed groups was proving to be difficult for a number of reasons. 'There are a lot of airfields, so it's hard to monitor all the planes coming in and what they are carrying,' he said. 'But part of the problem is the huge supplies of arms that have been shipped into Ituri in the past years during the war. Even if we effectively monitor arms going into Ituri, it is difficult to cut the supplies to the armed groups because a lot of arms are buried around the place'." [IRIN, November 2003]

"The Security Council, ... decides that all states, including the [DRC], shall, for an initial period of 12 months from the adoption of this resolution, take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer, from their territories or by their nationals ... of arms and any related material, and the provision of any assistance, advice or training related to military activities, to all foreign and Congolese armed groups and militias operating in the territory of North and South Kivu and of Ituri ..." [UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1493 (2003), July 28, 2003]

"The on-going civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which US Secretary of State Madeline Albright described as 'Africa's first world war,' is being fueled mostly by weapons from Soviet bloc countries and military training from the United States. ... Under the current US International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme, the US provided about 7.9 million dollars in outright grants to sub-Saharan Africa in 1998, increasing it to 8.1 million in 1999 and 8.5 million in 2000 ... according to a report in the London-based military magazine Jane's Defence Weekly last November, the DRC has finalized an arms deal with Georgia for the purchase of 10 sophisticated Russian-made Sukhoi Su-25 fighter planes at a cost of about five million dollars." [InterPress Service, 26 January 2000]

Economic Factors:

Competition for minerals is regarded as one of the factors contributing to the conflict in the DR Congo. The country is rich in diamonds, gold, cobalt, coltan and other rare minerals such as niobium and tantalum. The illegal exploitation of resources in the DRC serves as both a cause of conflict, as well as a means of financing its continuation. A special report prepared for the United Nations Security Council released in May 2002 tentatively drew a link between resource extraction and persistent conflict, suggesting that profits generated through the exploitation of resources were used to fund both government and rebel troops. Other sources claim that foreign troops deployed in the DRC are heavily engaged in illegal resource extraction. The final

report of the UN 'Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the DRC', presented to the Security Council in 2003, accused many high-ranking officials from states involved in the conflict of exploiting Congolese resources over the course of the war. The 2008 Goma peace agreement does not include any stipulations regarding resource extraction, which is a primary reason behind international as well as rebel involvement in the region. Competition for resources continued to fuel the violence in 2008, as FDLR rebels control large portions of resources in S. Kivu.

[Sources: United Nations Security Council, *Interim Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the DRC*. May 22, 2002.; *Hard Currency: Criminalized Diamond Economy of the Democratic Republic of Congo and its Neighbours*. The Diamonds and Human Security Project, *Occasional Paper #4*, 2002]

"At the heart of the problem facing eastern DR Congo is an issue that was not addressed by the Goma agreement – the immense wealth of the region. Gold, diamonds, coltan and timber are among the resources that have, time and again, drawn the combatants back to fight to control the area." [BBC News, 24 January 2008]

"Foreign firms are looking to strike gold in Congo's lawless northeast while militia fighters massacre, torture and rape local people, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report on Wednesday. The report said the world's number two gold miner, AngloGold Ashanti, had given financial and logistical support to the Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI), a militia suspected of gunning down nine U.N. peacekeepers in February." (Eric Onstad, *Reuters*, June 1, 2005)

"A United Nations committee investigating the plunder of gems and minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) published its final report today, listing the names of companies that did - and did not - cooperate with their work. In a report to the Security Council made public today, the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the DRC says, 'illegal exploitation remains one of the main sources of funding for groups involved in perpetuating conflict.'" [UN News Service courtesy of Relief Web, October 28, 2003]

"The UN-appointed team of experts accused 54 people – including more than 20 senior military and political officials in Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe and the DRC itself – of leading 'elite networks' that exploited the DRC's minerals, timber and wildlife during the war in DRC, which broke out in 1998." [Agence France Presse, June 6, 2003]

"According to the UN report [one of a series of reports on illegal resources exploitation], the 'effective collapse' of state institutions in the DRC 'offers significant financial opportunities and rewards to unscrupulous elements operating under the garb of various governments, businesses, mafias, individuals, etc.' It added: 'the initial motivation of foreign armies to intervene in the [DRC] was primarily political and security-related in nature; over a period, and owing to the evolving nature of the conflict, it has become the primary motive of extracting the maximum commercial and material benefits. This holds true for both government allies and rebel supporters.'" [IRIN, January 29, 2002]

"It is also becoming clear that Rwanda will not be content with getting its hands on easily accessible and marketable commodities, such as gold and diamonds. Kivu has deposits of precious minerals used in leading-edge industries (electronics, aeronautics, nuclear medicine). These include niobium (15% of the world's reserves are to be found in Africa, 80% of these in the Congo) and tantalum, associated with columbium and known locally as 'coltan' (Africa has 80% of the world reserves, of which 80% in the Congo). These rare minerals are exceptionally resistant to heat and cold, and can be used in highly ductile and resistant alloys." [Le Monde Diplomatique, October 1999]