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Contemporary
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Development
Trends in the
Great Lakes Region

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Contemporary Security and Development Trends in the Great Lakes Region

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
BINUB	*Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi*
CAR	Central African Republic
CEPGL	*Communauté économique des Pays des Grands Lacs*
CNDD-FDD	*Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie - Forces pour la défense et la démocratie* (Burundi)
CNDP	Conseil National pour la Défense du Peuple
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East Africa Cooperation
FARDC	*Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FNL	*Forces nationales de libération* (Burundi)
GLR	Great Lakes Region (in Sub Saharan Africa)
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
IDP	Internally Displaced People
JVMM	Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDRP	Multi-Donor Demobilization and Reintegration Program

MONUC	*Mission des Nations Unies en RDC* (UN Mission in DRC)
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ONUB	United Nations Operations in Burundi
PRA	People's Redemption Army
RoC	Republic of Congo
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RPR	*Rassemblement populaire rwandais*
RUD	*Ralliement pour l'Unité et la démocratie*
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNPBC	United Nations Peace Building Commission
UPDF	Uganda Peoples Defense Forces
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front

Introduction

Since its inception in 2002, the Multi-Donor Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) was tasked with contributing to the stabilization and recovery of the Great Lakes region (GLR) through: a) the establishment of a comprehensive regional framework for country-level disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts; b) the implementation of national DDR programs that would contribute to regional stabilization; and c) regional activities supported through MDRP to facilitate DDR and confidence-building in the region.

The MDRP focused on the following countries: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo (RoC), Rwanda, and Uganda. In addition to national programs, the MDRP also designed and implemented special projects targeting specific needs and groups in participating countries. Overall, the MDRP supports the demobilization and reintegration of some 400,000 irregular and regular forces that posed the greatest risk to future cycles of conflict in the GLR.

The MDRP Secretariat commissioned this study to provide a synoptic assessment of the contemporary security dynamics in the region. Since the MDRP was conceived in a regional security environment characterized by intense intrastate and interstate wars, it is important to understand how the prevailing security context may affect ongoing and future DDR programs.

Specifically, the study seeks answers to these questions: What is the current regional security and political situation in the GLR? How is this situation different from or similar to the security context that animated the MDRP? Answers to these questions are important to highlight and telescope some of the regional challenges and their potential impact on future DDR programs. The bulk of the analysis is on security and development trends in core GLR countries — Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda. This is followed by a brief sketch of the regional security environment and concluding remarks on the impact of this environment on future DDR programs.

DDR Programs in Regional Security Perspective

The MDRP's initiatives were conceived and crafted in the circumstances of profound regional insecurity, at the moment when civil conflicts and militarized trans-border wars that scarred the GLR throughout the 1990s were still raging. Although ceasefires and peace agreements had begun to gain prominence as avenues out of violent confrontations, armed groups remained a large part of the regional landscape, causing mayhem across communities and states. In this fragile environment, DDR activities sought to contribute to broader international and regional efforts to lay the foundations for enduring peace and security.

More critical, most of these programs served as preconditions for political reconstruction by demilitarizing society, allowing fledgling and legitimate authorities to reclaim the monopoly on the means of violence, and fostering confidence among formerly warring groups and states in the region. Equally vital, during this preliminary stabilization phase, the MDRP focused on building national capacity for DDR by lending expertise and comparative experiences to states that barely had the resources and institutions to manage such enormous programs.

Over the last seven years, the MDRP has laid the basis for stabilization by substantially reducing the number of armed groups, building functional programs with a modicum of national ownership, and tentatively setting the stage for national and regional recovery. Throughout these engagements, the MDRP has collated valuable lessons and experiences that are important in informing ongoing and future programs.

In contrast to the pattern of regional insecurity in the early 2000s, the current environment is characterized by remarkable strides in the reconstruction of states,

societies, and economies in the GLR. For the most part, the region has steadily entered the post-conflict phase, even though signs of a transition to economic recovery have not found a solid footing, and violent conflicts still confront significant parts of some of the states. The core states of the GLR—Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda—have witnessed improvements in peace and security due to political settlements among former foes. In the contiguous states—Angola, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo—previous widespread challenges to central authorities have gradually weakened. But the lessening of violent conflicts belies formidable obstacles to building durable peace, sturdy governance structures, and sound economic institutions. Armed insurgencies and rebellions in Burundi, Eastern Congo, and Uganda continue to challenge legitimate authorities, exacting a toll on civilians, and impeding the return to economic normalcy. Furthermore, although peace agreements ended the spates of violent conflicts in the GLR, the resulting political compromises still exhibit signs of fragility as elites jostle to adapt to new and untested rules of competition.

These regional security trends form a large part of the transitional uncertainties between conflict and recovery in which regional actors are still refining and defining post-conflict institutions. Some states are further along in rebuilding institutions of order, participation, and prosperity, but others face overwhelming odds in meeting these objectives. Given this context, the dangers of relapse into conflict may potentially overshadow the regional gains in the restoration of durable peace and security. This is particularly pertinent in the GLR which has had legacy of weak regional institutions for security, stability, and development.

Security and Development in the Core GLR States

Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda

Since the upsurge of violent conflicts in the 1990s, the optic of security has primarily centered on probing the ability of states, as the principal actors in security and development, to provide order, stability, and prosperity.[1] The GLR has been insecure largely because its constituent units were enmeshed in protracted violent conflicts that spilled over borders, and served as a major impediment to socioeconomic development. States fuelled conflicts in neighboring states and dealt with the conflict's fallout, linking the region in an interlocking pattern of insecurity. At the height of regional convulsions, international initiatives such as the MDRP attempted to reestablish stability in individual states while also working to support multilateral approaches for regional problem-solving.

In the current post-conflict phase, the destiny of the region hinges on the quality of efforts to resurrect functional institutions of governance, reconciliation, and economic development. Post-conflict institutions in these countries are essentially works-in-progress: leaders confront divergent state building concerns of recapturing armed and rebellious groups, dealing with

competitive pressures of pluralism, and restoring basic economic activities and service delivery. Managing these priorities points to the fact that although security is the prerequisite for development, development is also a cause and consequence of security. Security is necessary for the resumption of economic development, but tangible movement on the economic front is likewise required to obtain the legitimacy and confidence that is critical to stability. This analysis focuses on four countries of the GLR—Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda—that highlight themes between the intersection of internal and regional security. As the core of the GLR, these countries have defined the security parameters and trajectories of the GLR in the past, and they will continue to do so in the future.

Burundi

Burundi's transitional period ended in 2005 with the triumph of the former rebel movement, the CNDD-FDD (*Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense et la démocratie*), marking a peaceful transfer of authority to a representative and democratically elected government. Under a carefully crafted constitution that seeks to end ethnic antagonisms between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, President Pierre Nkurunziza was elected with a decisive majority.[2] The Burundi MDRP made progress in the integration of former government security forces and CNDD-FDD rebels in a new national defense force, contributing to the consolidation of peace. Following the termination of the mandate of the United Nations Operations in Burundi (ONUB) in December 2006, the United Nations established a small integrated office, BINUB (*Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi*) to assist

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[1] For recent discussions on security and development issues in the Great Lakes see Michael Nest and others, The Democratic Republic of Congo: Economic Dimensions of War and Peace. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006; Gilbert Khadiagala, (ed.), Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Region. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006; John Clark, ed.), The African Stakes in the Congo War. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002); P. Daley, Challenges to Peace: Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Third World Quarterly, 27, 2006; and Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, International Interventionism, Democracy, and Peace-Building in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Regional Perspective to Challenges, African and Asian Studies 4, 2005: 21-50. For instructive policy reports see John Lunn, The African Great Lakes Region: An End to Conflict? London: House of Commons Research Report No. 06/51, October 2006, and Ndeye Sow, Gender and Conflict Transformation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, London: International Alert Report, 2006.

[2] For discussions of Burundi's protracted transition see Filip Reytnjens, Burundi: A Peaceful Transition after War?, African Affairs, 205, 2006; and D. Peterson, Burundi: A Beacon for Central Africa, Journal of Democracy, 71, 2006.

in reconstruction, socio-economic development and national capacity-building. South Africa continued its mediation efforts under the auspices of the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi to help the new government reach an agreement with the rebel movement, the FNL (*Forces nationales de libération*) that remained outside the peace process. These initiatives culminated in the September 2006 peace and cease-fire agreement between the government and the FNL, an agreement that also established the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) to monitor the implementation of the agreement.

Three years into the post-conflict phase, the fledgling democratic institutions and the peace process faced tremendous strains arising from wrangles in the ruling CNDD-FDD and between it and opposition parties.[3] The instability slowed the government's post-conflict reconstruction efforts and ignited a new phase of violent confrontation with the FNL. After disagreements about the disarmament and reintegration of its forces into the national army, the FNL suspended its participation in the JVMM in July 2007, accusing President Nkurunziza of failure to free up to 3,000 prisoners and grant immunity to its leaders. In April 2008, there was an escalation of rebel attacks against government military positions in Bujumbura and its environs, killing 33 people and reigniting fears of a full-scale relapse into civil war.[4] Amidst the escalating violence, South Africa and Burundi's neighbors stepped up diplomatic efforts to restart talks between the government and the FNL. In May 2008, both parties signed a new ceasefire agreement in Magaliesberg, South Africa, in which they pledged to implement the September 2006 peace agreement.

The agreement also led to the return of FNL leader Agathon Rwasa from exile in Tanzania. On his return, Rwasa entered into negotiations with President Nkurunziza to resolve matters that are blocking the implementation of the September 2006 agreement, including the amnesty for FNL rebels, promotion of the rule of law, security sector reforms, land reforms, and socio-economic recovery. In August 2008, the government also issued amnesty decrees that provided legal status for FNL dissidents and established a technical committee under the national commission for demobilization and reintegration to verify the status of dissidents. As part of the peace initiatives, President

Nkurunziza authorized the establishment of a permanent National Independent Electoral Commission to prepare a draft legal framework for the elections scheduled for 2010. Furthermore, a meeting of all political parties in Bujumbura in August 2008 sought ways to promote a permanent dialogue on political issues, including amendments to the constitution, a law on political parties, and an electoral code to bring more stability to the country.

Shifting the Burundian negotiations to Bujumbura reflects the growing confidence among the previously fractious parties about local approaches to problem-solving. This may also lessen the chances of a reversal into civil conflagration. But a recent briefing to the United Nations Security Council by the Chairman of the Burundi Configuration of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UN PBC) warned that there are still many obstacles to the achievement of peace. Among the security challenges are issues of insufficient DDR, widespread availability of weapons, and societal mistrust of the security forces. Noting that the demobilization and reintegration of the FNL has barely started, the briefing also pointed to the slow pace in the reintegration of other former rebel movements in state institutions. The government has also acknowledged that demobilized soldiers are a "time bomb" in the absence of lack of improvement in their living standards. The briefing identified other challenges in the administration of justice such as the need to strengthen its capacities, creating an effective transitional justice system and an independent human rights commission, and launching the truth and reconciliation commission.[5]

Burundi is one of first countries to benefit from the resources of the newly-established UN PBC that is informed by the view that in the post-conflict phase, there is need for basic levels of development to help the transition from relief to development and peace. Despite this, Burundi still requires much more sustained efforts to mobilize significant resources to deal with both

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[3] See, for instance, Burundi MPs in Death Threat Plea, BBC World Service, September 21, 2006.

[4] Fighting Displaces 20,000 people, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, 9 May 2008; FNL Rebels 'Still Recruiting Children',UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, June 9, 2008.

[5] Recent Developments, Including Cessation of Hostilities, Positive but Peace Process Faces Challenges, United Nations (New York), UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, August 27, 2008; and Security Council Press Statement on Burundi, United Nations (New York), Press Release, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, August 27, 2008.

short and long term problems of combating poverty, refugee resettlement, security sector reform, democratic consolidation and the fight against impunity. Donors pledged US$665.6 million in May 2007, but by August 2008, only 30 per cent had been disbursed primarily in peace-building activities. Still lagging behind were pledges for social and economic development that would put the country on the road to post-conflict recovery.

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Since the end of the regional war that tore through the GLR from 1998 to 2004, the DRC has taken important steps to restore stability, security, and national reconciliation. The multiparty transitional government established after the conclusion of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) in South Africa in 2002 laid the foundations for the return to stability and the engagement of donors with the government on post-conflict reconstruction programs. Following free democratic elections in 2006, the government of President Joseph Kabila has tried to undo decades of state collapse, social dislocations, and economic decay. In resuscitating state institutions, the government has embarked on measures to improve its capacity to manage and regulate the vast natural resources for the benefit of the majority.[6] Despite these improvements, the search for security and development in the DRC is occurring in the circumstances of unending civil conflict in Eastern Congo, a legacy of war-decimated infrastructure, and difficulties in social and economic rehabilitation. In recognition of the fragility of the stabilization process, the United Nations Mission in the Congo (MONUC) has retained its presence pending the establishment of a

secure environment and the consolidation of democratic institutions.

The run-off in the presidential election of October 2006 between President Kabila and his challenger, Jean-Pierre Bemba, produced an acrimonious outcome when Bemba appealed the result in court amidst escalating violence in Kinshasa. The Congolese Supreme Court confirmed President Kabila as the winner of the elections at the end of November 2006, but Bemba continued to contest the result. After violence broke-up again in March 2007 between Bemba's security forces and the police, Bemba found refuge in the South African embassy in Kinshasa before opting for exile.[7] Bemba was recently arrested in Belgium for war crimes committed in the Central African Republic in 2003.

The major impediment to the reconstruction in the DRC remains taming the East which has barely recovered from vestiges of war. At the center of the conflict are the North and South Kivu provinces where the consolidation of state authority by Kinshasa and MONUC have confronted various armed militias involved in localized ethnic and resource warfare. In recent years, the battle lines have primarily been between remnants of Rwanda's Hutu militias implicated in the 1994 genocide which have reconstituted themselves as the FDLR (*Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda*), pitted against Congolese Tutsi militias, the CNDP (*Congrès National pour la Défense du peuple*), led by Laurent Nkunda. Caught in between these conflicts are the Congolese national army, the FARDC (*Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*), Mai-Mai militias, and other armed groups contesting assorted local grievances.

The problems of pacifying the East stem, in part, from the slow pace at which the government has rebuilt an effective military capacity to put its imprimatur on an ethnically fractious region. But they also reflect the difficulties of restoring security where armed groups have become accustomed to autonomous existence because of access to lucrative natural resources. From this perspective, Eastern Congo remains an un-captured entity of the DRC, posing a long-term source of instability and constituting a continuing magnet for regional interventions.[8]

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[6] For a balance between optimism and pessimism on the DRC's reconstruction see Edward B. Rackley, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Undoing Government by Predation, Disasters, 30, 2006: 417-432; David Gootnick, The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Major Challenges Impede efforts to Achieve U.S. Policy Objectives, Systematic Assessment of Progress Needed. Washington, DC: United States Government Accounting Office Testimony, March 8, 2008.

[7] Lavinia Mahlangu, South Africa Trying to Resolve DRC Violence, BuaNews, March 30, 2007.

[8] For analyses of this scenario see Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers, The Politics of Rebellion and Intervention in Ituri: The Emergency of New Political Complex? African Affairs 103, 204: 385-412; and F. Reyntjens, The Privatization and Criminalization of Public Space in the Geopolitics of the Great Lakes Region, Journal of Modern African Studies 43, 2005.

The government's containment of the Nkunda-led North Kivu insurgency has combined sticks and carrots that have yielded mixed results in the improvement of security. Formerly a commander in one of the rebel movements, Nkunda controls a substantial military force in North Kivu and has galvanized the fears of Tutsis in the region against the onslaught of the FDLR, FARDC, and other militias. In January 2007, President Kabila concluded an agreement with Nkunda that specified the gradual integration of CNDP troops into the national army. As part of this agreement, both pledged joint efforts to rid North Kivu of the FDLR, viewed as a threat to the civilian population and a threat to Rwanda's security.[9] But this agreement collapsed in mid-year, leading to renewed fighting between the government army and Nkunda's forces. The latter also accused the government of working with the FDLR and anti-Tutsi militias in the region, further widening the rifts.

The military stalemate between the two forces was broken in December 2007 when a weakened FARDC failed to dislodge the CNDP from its strongholds. This also occurred against the backdrop of a worsening humanitarian situation in which more than 400,000 people were displaced, scores of civilians were killed or abducted, and widespread rape and looting and destruction of property occurred. As a result, the Congolese government made another peace overture through a grand conference in Goma that sought an end to the conflict and formulated a plan for peace, security and development in the Kivus. In January 2008, the government signed an agreement with 22 armed groups committing all parties to an immediate ceasefire and disengagement of forces from frontline positions. In addition, the agreement envisaged the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the armed groups; others would form part of the national army.[10] Yet since the signing of the agreement, North Kivu has remained the centre of Congo's violence and humanitarian disasters. According to a MONUC report in April 2008, although there had been some progress in meeting the provisions of the Goma deal (the *Amani* Program), there had been only a reduction-rather than a halt-in fighting.[11] Other reports have pointed to the bleak regional picture that is reminiscent of the 1990s: the pervasiveness of malnutrition, cholera, malaria, and other preventable diseases; high death rates among civilians; the rape of hundreds of women and girls; and the recruitment of many children into armed service. After severe fighting

between the FDLR and CNDP in April 2008, the UNHCR suspended assistance to an estimated 900,000 people.[12]

Although the region witnessed remarkable tranquility throughout the summer of 2008, heavy fighting broke up in late August 2008 between Nkunda's forces and the FARDC. Described as some of the worst fighting in the region since the Goma agreement, the skirmishes ignited a new phase of civilian displacement. The fighting came amidst warnings from humanitarian agencies about a renewed phase of rearmament and recruitment by all sides in the conflict. Mistrust and the absence of a discernible progress on the drivers of conflicts have ignited the rearmament process. For the government, the dilemma is that as it tries to beef up its authority by moving weapons in the region, the rebel movements respond in kind, creating a new arms race. Human rights reports have indicated rebel forces have begun to recruit fresh forces not just from the Kivus, but also from Rwanda and Burundi.[13]

The linchpin to enduring security in Eastern Congo and the region at large is the disarmament of the FDLR— estimated at about 6,000 forces, 30 per cent of whom are Congolese citizens — a goal that has eluded the DRC, its neighbors, and MONUC since the late 1990s. Although the FDLR problem has typified the intersection of interstate and intrastate dimensions of insecurity in the GLR for the last 14 years, its intractability best captures the formidable obstacles to the short-and-medium term stabilization of the region. In addition, this issue links questions of state capacity, bilateral relations, and regional and international pressures into a complex web that seems difficult to untangle. Battle-hardened in guerrilla warfare over this period, the FDLR seems militarily much stronger than the FARDC that lacks the essential capacity to forcibly disarm it.[14] Working with MONUC, the Kabila government has tried both force and persuasion to deal with the menace of the FDLR.

[9] For a chronology of these events see Rebecca Feeley and Colin Thomas-Jensen, Getting Serious about Ending Conflict in the Congo, Enough Project Report, March 19, 2008.

[10] Goma Conference Reaches Agreement, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, January 29, 2008.

[11] After Two Key Deals, What Progress Towards Peace in North Kivu?, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, May 14, 2008.

[12] See, for instance, Hundreds Flee New Violence in Strife-Torn Region, UN Agency Says, UN News Service (New York), April 24, 2008; and Saeed Shabazz, Violence Continues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, New York Amsterdam News, January 31-6 February 2008.

[13] Fragile Peace in Eastern Congo," BBC News, July 22, 2008.

[14]"Congo Has No Means to Disarm FDLR Rebels', Rwanda News Agency, (Kigali), August 27, 2008.

Following the conclusion of the Nairobi Accord between Rwanda and the DRC in November 2007, that specified an Action Plan to disarm the FDLR, MONUC launched a DDR program that targeted the FDLR and its splinter groups, including the Rally for Unity and Democracy (*Ralliement pour l'Unité et la démocratie, RUD*) and the Popular Rwandese Assembly (*Rassemblement populaire rwandais, RPR*). As part of these efforts, MONUC teams and FARDC embarked on a public awareness campaign to provide the options of either forcible disarmament and repatriation to Rwanda or peaceful surrender of weapons and voluntary repatriation with dignity to Rwanda. Public awareness campaigns have also highlighted the social and economic opportunities under MONUC's DDR and Rwanda's National DDR that are available to those who chose voluntary repatriation. As part of these initiatives, the government reached a roadmap agreement in Kisangani in May 2008 with the RUD and RPR for voluntary disarmament in return for a guarantee of their security.

According to MONUC, the number of combatants repatriated on a voluntary basis via the MONUC DDR process between January and mid-May 2008 rose 25 per cent compared to the same period last year because of the sensitization campaigns.[15] The FDLR, however, renounced the Kisangani roadmap and has continued to launch attacks against civilian and government targets. The implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan on the FDLR has benefitted from increased political and diplomatic efforts between the Congolese and Rwandan governments, but given the persistence of mistrust between Rwanda and the DRC, there are qualms as to whether both could resume bilateral relations that would endure and help in the unraveling some of the security problems. The underlying cause of conflict is the proxy war that is still being fought between Congo and Rwanda through various rebel groups that still retain a presence in Eastern Congo. At the end of August 2008, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and head of MONUC, Alan Doss, and the European Union's Special Representative to the Great Lakes

Region, Roland Van de Geer, admitted to facing serious difficulties in defeating the FDLR, blaming the DRC for prevarication. Kinshasa, in turn, accused MONUC of inadequate response to meet the continued threat of the FDLR.[16] In the medium-term, it seems that regional dynamics of cross-border infiltration of violent groups will continue to task the GLR, posing a continuing security threat that diminishes the positive trends in the post-conflict phase.

The bleak prognosis of the FDLR problem contrasts markedly with the progress in stabilization that the DRC has witnessed in the Ituri region. Following the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from Ituri in September 2002, a power vacuum ensued, pitting the two major ethnic groups, the pastoralist Hema and agriculturalist Lendu, against each other. But with inter-ethnic violence in Ituri reaching genocidal levels and with MONUC unable to contain it, the UN Security Council authorized an EU Interim Emergency Multination Force (Operation Artemis) to supplement MONUC. The French-led 1,400 force deployed in Ituri from June to September 2003, and restored a modicum of peace around the major town, Bunia. With the relative return to peace in the region, MONUC was able to deploy more troops to meet the continuing violence.

But the stabilization of Ituri gained momentum in 2004 with the launch of a DDR program that targeted combatants and children associated with armed forces and groups. In the first phase of the program implemented by the MDRP, over 15,000 troops had been demobilized by June 2005. During the second phase, the government contracted the UNDP; in the last phase, the UNDP ran a program that demobilized 1,799 ex-combatants in 2007. International investment in DDR in Ituri took weapons away from armed groups, enabling local government structures to assume the dominant military power during an admittedly difficult transition process. Recently, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) confirmed the return of 900,000 IDPs and refugees to their communities, in a sign of significant social and communal recovery. As a result of these efforts, donors, provincial governments, and members of the legislature embarked on a participatory process in May 2008 to establish consensus on the priority needs for stabilization and reconstruction in Ituri.[17]

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[15] Implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan Underway, United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), May 28, 2008.
[16] The UN Should Enforce its Mandates, The New Times (Kigali), August 29, 2008.
[17] Workshop Held to Validate the Priority Action Plan for the Stabilization of Ituri, MONUC News, May 13, 2008. See also the recent report on Ituri by the International Crisis Group, Four Priorities for Sustainable Peace in Ituri ICG Report (Brussels), May 13, 2008.

Ituri exemplifies the few islands of stabilization and recovery amidst the continuing violence, human rights abuses, and lawlessness in post-conflict DRC. The Kabila government has expended considerable resources in exerting its sovereignty over Eastern Congo, but these efforts have not borne fruit because of the legacy of state collapse, deep-seated animosities in the region, and the prevalence of interests emboldened by the region's rich resources. These sources of insecurity are likely to continue for many years to come, irrespective of Kinshasa's experiments with forms of power decentralization. The Goma grand conference was a momentous shift in the government's approach to the stabilization of the region, but it will take time before all warring factions in the region can gain confidence to work toward resolving the ethnic, communal, and resource conflicts that continue to tear the Kivus apart. In the long run, perhaps, resolving the cycle of conflicts in the East, as has happened in Ituri, may shift national priorities to questions such as security sector reform, reconstruction of the health and education systems, and enhancing economic governance of natural resources for development. In the short-to-medium terms, the DRC will muddle along poised between order and disorder, with public institutions that barely meet the gigantic responsibilities that have accumulated over many years of dysfunctional institutions.

Rwanda

Unlike its neighbors, Burundi and the DRC, Rwanda has advanced farther toward security and internal stabilization, reversing the institutional decay and social tremor occasioned by the genocide of 1994. Under the leadership of President Paul Kagame and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), Rwanda has also worked to reduce ethnic antagonisms between the Hutu and Tutsi by giving less prominence to ethnic identification. On the economic front, the government has initiated poverty reduction programs and marketed itself as an attractive destination for foreign investment.[18] After the withdrawal of Rwanda's troops from the DRC in 2002, the priority has shifted to working within bilateral and multilateral institutions to seek to address the threat emanating from the FDLR and its allies in Eastern Congo. As Rwanda's relations with the DRC and Uganda have improved

over the years, the government has been able to focus more on the domestic imperatives of reconciliation and economic development.

President Kagame won the 2003 presidential elections amidst widespread intimidation of the opposition and media. The government has made up for the flaws in governance by restoring order and security while boosting economic activities and service delivery. Donors have also given the government resources to manage post-genocide economic and social reconstruction, lauding the government for putting in place macroeconomic stability, supportive regulatory environment, and measures to tackle corruption.[19] As the next elections approach in 2010, the main challenge is whether the government will have regained enough confidence to permit a free and fair electoral process or whether the elections will mark the consolidation of Kagame's presidency. The parliamentary elections slated for September 2008 will give an indication of the future direction of political competition in the country. Some critics have charged that the Kagame government has consolidated Tutsi hegemony at the expense of democratic governance, potentially laying the seeds for a Hutu political backlash. But recently the government seems determined to correct this image by loosening its grip on the media, opposition, and civil society actors.[20]

After the end of its intervention in the DRC, Rwanda has taken a cautious approach toward the stabilization of the Congo, particularly in the East. Although its key rebel ally, the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD) performed poorly in the 2006 national and local elections, Kigali has been able to maintain a sufficient presence through its surreptitious ties with Nkunda's CNDP. The determination to curb the menace of the FDLR remains a priority for Rwanda, and through negotiations with the DRC, there is growing convergence for a strategy that embraces coercion and

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[18] For perspectives on Rwanda's reconstruction see Myriam Gervais, <u>Human Security and Reconstruction Efforts in Rwanda: Impact on the Lives of Women</u>, Development in Practice, 13, 2003: 542-551; Jean-Paul Kimonyo, Noel Twagiramungu, and Christopher Kayumba, <u>Supporting the Post-Genocide Transition in Rwanda: The Role of the International Community</u>. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Conflict Research Unit, Working paper No. 32, December 2004.

[19] <u>Kagame Changes Africa for the Better--British Premier</u>, The New Times (Kigali), May 6, 2008.

[20] Filip Reyntjens, <u>Rwanda, Ten Years on: From Genocide to Dictatorship</u>, African Affairs, 103, 2004.

concessions to allow the peaceful return of the majority of the FDLR while the extremist elements are brought to justice. The Nairobi Accords of November 2007, and the Goma agreements of January 2008, seemed to inject renewed momentum for resolving the question of the FDLR to meet Rwanda's long-standing security concerns, but as indicated above, there are enormous obstacles to defeating the FDLR.

Rwanda remains a core player in shaping the modes of regional security in the GLR. The RPF's consolidation of power internally has endowed it with remarkable confidence to have disproportionate power in regional politics. In exerting its power in the region, however, Kigali will invite ire from some of its neighbors in years to come, particularly as its economy diversifies. More important, the legacy of its military intervention in the DRC persists in various forms, particularly as a large segment of its military maintains critical economic and ethnic ties in Eastern Congo. Even if the FDLR threat were to fade in the immediate future, it is unlikely that the RPF government would remain indifferent to the political fate of the old and recent Rwandese migrant populations in the Kivus. It is partly for this reason that the Rwandese diasporas in the GLR have created enduring stakes in Kigali as a bet against continuing insecurity in the region.

Uganda

Like Rwanda, Uganda's recovery has been more rapid and sustained, owing to the long duration of President Yoweri Museveni's government allowing for economic and state reconstruction. By the start of the conflicts in the GLR, President Museveni had built solid structures of governance and security that partly inured Uganda from the worst effects of the regional conflicts. Yet, Uganda has faced a long-running insurgency in the North since the mid-1980s, a source of insecurity and underdevelopment in a large part of the country. In addition, small bands of rebels on the Uganda-DRC border emerged in the late 1990s taking advantage of

the collapse of the Congolese state. Following Uganda's military intervention alongside Rwanda in the DRC, the threat of insurgencies from the west have declined. The decision to disengage from the DRC in 2002 undercut a contentious domestic debate about Uganda's role in the region, but also permitted national focus on resolving the Northern insurgency.

Although furnishing security and prosperity to most of Uganda, President Museveni has had to deal with Northern insurgency. Initially, most of the armed insurgencies were gradually incorporated into government. The exception was the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which has drawn on the grievances of Northern ethnic groups, particularly the Acholi. Over the years, the LRA has been implicated in child abductions, killings,[21] and consigning over 1 million people into IDP camps. Initially reluctant to engage the LRA in peace talks, the Uganda government responded to international pressures and reached out to the LRA through intermediaries starting in September 2004. Peace talks gained momentum when the Vice-President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, took the leadership of the mediation in July 2006 in Juba. With rebel leaders facing indictments in the International Criminal Court (ICC), the negotiations proceeded in fits and starts, reaching a series of agreements as the parties built confidence. Factional rifts within the rebel movement have resulted in the killing of a number of top LRA leaders by its leader, Joseph Kony. The impetus provided by the peace talks was nevertheless crucial in steps toward the return to unprecedented levels of security in Northern Uganda, demonstrated by decreasing rebel attacks and the gradual return of IDPs from camps and into villages. The improvement in security also saw the start of negotiations between the government and donors on economic recovery and stabilization programs for the region.[22]

The Juba talks formally ended in March 2008, but the LRA did not sign the final agreement because of differences over the proposed deal within the movement. As the stalemate persists, the bulk of LRA forces are still scattered in southern Sudan, the DRC, and CAR where they continue to represent a source of insecurity for civilians. Although the Juba talks lessened the pressure for military action against LRA, the collapse of the peace

[21] Marieke Schomerus, The Lord's Resistance Army in Sudan: A History and Overview. Geneva, Small Arms Survey Report, September 2007; Lawrence Kline, Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda, Small Wars and Insurgencies 14, 2003: 113-130.
[22] International Crisis Group, The Northern Uganda Peace Process: The Need to Maintain Momentum, Nairobi, ICG Africa Briefing, no. 46, September 14, 2007.

talks has resurrected calls for collaborative measures between MONUC and regional governments to forcibly disarm these forces. In anticipation of potential attacks on his camps in Congo's Garamba National Park, Kony shifted his base into the jungles of the CAR.[23] Human Rights Watch has learned that since February 2008 the insurgent Lord's Resistance Army group has carried out at least 100 abductions, and perhaps many more, in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Southern Sudan.

There has been a noticeable decline in skirmishes between the LRA and the Uganda military in the North, illustrating the steady improvement in the security situation in the region. But in the absence of a peace agreement that ends the LRA's insurgency, reconstruction in the north and neighboring countries will continue to be postponed. A major security concern that has emerged as Northern Uganda prepares for a post-war recovery is arms trafficking. Reports of illegal arms in the hands of former LRA combatants, army deserters, Karamojong pastoralists, and arms traffickers have increased in recent years. Local leaders have noted that illegal arms may pose a threat to the resettlement efforts as disputes are resolved through violence.[24]

On Uganda's Western borders, the rebel attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the People's Redemption Army (PRA) have become less frequent since Uganda's withdrawal from the DRC. The expansion of MONUC activities in Eastern Congo has helped in undercutting some of the rebel operational areas. Furthermore, bilateral talks between Uganda and the DRC and within the multilateral framework of the Tripartite Plus One Commission and MONUC have contributed to improving security, even though there are occasional reports of rebel recruitment and abduction of civilians in the border areas. Like in Northern Uganda, arms proliferation has emerged as a security threat. In recent years, security forces have seized arms mostly from former rebels such as the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) that abandoned rebellion after signing peace agreements with the government.

As the previous sources of insecurity between Uganda and the DRC in Northern Kivu decline, new tensions between them have been growing ever since oil was discovered in the Lake Albert basin, which is shared by both countries. These conflicts mirror the internal conflicts in both countries over natural resources by diverse groups, but they have also caught both countries unprepared because of weak bilateral institutions to manage these new conflicts. Following the start of oil explorations in Lake Albert almost two years ago, border skirmishes between the DRC and Ugandan security forces arose over Rukwanzi Island on Lake Albert. As a result, President Museveni and Kabila signed the Ngurdoto Agreement in September 2007 that established a joint team of experts to demarcate the international boundary between them. But before the team could start the demarcation, DRC troops forcibly occupied a stretch of no-man's land along the border and moved its border post a few miles inside Uganda in early May 2008. With threats of war looming, Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete mediated between the two leaders in Dar es Salaam, leading to a new agreement for the maintenance of the border status quo pending the completion of the demarcation exercise. Furthermore, the two sides pledged to explore the possibility of elevating their diplomatic representation to ambassadorial levels.[25]

The slow pace in strengthening bilateral relations between Uganda and the DRC speaks to the lingering animosities that prevail between them. President Museveni's relations with President Kabila have never warmed up since Uganda's intervention in the DRC, and they are not likely to get better with the new border and resource wars. Instead, the picture for the short-to-medium terms is the worsening of bilateral relations, particularly since the two countries still harbor large numbers of dissidents from each country that can be mobilized at a very short notice. The cold war between Uganda and the DRC mirrors that of the DRC and Rwanda, constituting a regional insecurity fault-line that will continue to affect regional relationships. Although it is unlikely for Uganda and Rwanda to evolve a common position toward the DRC as they did during the mid-1990s, a convergence of interests between Kigali and Kampala on regional security issues is possible in the

[23] Uganda Peace Talks End, The Monitor (Kampala), March 27, 2008.
[24] Arms Trafficking Could Harm Northern Peace Deal, The Monitor (Kampala), March 29, 2008.
[25] Museveni, Kabila Meet in Tanzania, New Vision (Kampala), May11, 2008; Congo Yet to Leave Disputed Area, New Vision (Kampala), May 11, 2008.

future. But the DRC may interpret such convergence as a threat to its security, particularly if Rwanda and Uganda retain permanent proxies in the Eastern Congo.

In the near term, Uganda's energies will be devoted to the Northeastern DRC-South Sudan borders where the LRA has had long-standing operational bases. With Kony unwilling to sign the Juba agreement, the Museveni government may exert more military pressure on the LRA to either induce forced surrenders or defeat the remaining forces. Although the authorities in South Sudan have previously been President Museveni's strong allies in the fight against the LRA, there has been a recent deterioration in the relations stemming from Juba's claims that the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) operating in South Sudan has been involved in atrocities against civilians.[26] If, in future, relations between South Sudan and Uganda further worsen, this will constitute a destabilizing trend in the sub-region, particularly in the face of the lack of movement on disarming or defeating the LRA.

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[26] Skye Wheeler, South Sudan tells Ugandan Troops to Leave, Reuters, June 30, 2008; Uganda Rejects Responsibility of South Sudan atrocities, Reuters, July 6, 2008; Stay Out, South Sudan Tells Army, New Vision (Kampala), June 30, 2008.

Short and Medium Term Scenarios for Regional Security and Development in the GLR

With the steady stabilization in internal governance and security in the GLR except Burundi and the DRC, the broader security environment has inched toward improvement. The building blocks for security and development in the GLR have often been states with control over territories, popular legitimacy, and sufficient capacity to provide the environment for equitable economic development. Efforts at better border controls, inclusive constitutional systems, and restoration of economic activities have started to reduce the worst forms of cross-border cleavages that manifested at the regional level. Yet, regionalized strife remains evident on the horizon as long as steady peace is not attained in Eastern DRC, the epicenter of past instability. As a regional subsystem that links the fates of states and societies together, the contagious effects of conflicts in the GLR will in the near term continue to affect the entire region.

Cumulatively peace and security in the GLR have changed for the better through internal stabilization initiatives which have included DDR processes. As a proxy for the overall improvement in regional security, the UN OCHA has pointed to the end of regional consolidated appeal for humanitarian assistance: "In the case of the Great Lakes Region, whilst acute humanitarian needs persist in several countries, the common cross-border dynamics that originally gave rise to the regional approach are now less influential than country-specific dynamics."[27]

Bilateral agreements among the principal actors— DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda—have bolstered internal stabilization initiatives throughout the region by mending relations and addressing current security problems.[28]

Since the disengagement of regional militaries from the DRC, bilateral arrangements on the Uganda-DRC border have helped to stabilize the Ituri region and checked cross-border attacks by armed dissidents. On the side of Rwanda and the DRC, regular bilateral consultative meetings are starting to tackle questions of security in the Kivus, particularly the fate of the FDLR. Bilateral initiatives have been complemented by the innovative Tripartite Plus One Commission, a mechanism that affords a venue for military and security officials from the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda to meet regularly and work out differences in a structured manner. In recent meetings, security officials from its members have discussed possible joint operations to stamp out the rebel groups and militias in Eastern Congo and, through a joint intelligence sharing strategy, pledged to eliminate rebel groups on their territories. As is often the case with such mechanisms, the problem is how to implement bold declarations that come from these meetings.

As discussed, regional security will depend on the sturdiness of transition processes in Burundi and the DRC, and the resolution of the problem of the LRA in Northern Uganda. These conflicts have cross-regional dimensions that will continue to weigh heavily on the attainment of overall stability. With unending conflicts in Eastern Congo, the future of the DRC remains the central puzzle that is going to define the dynamics of regional security. If, as it appears, the process of stabilization in Eastern Congo will be as protracted as

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[27] United Nations, Humanitarian Funding Update, OCHA Regional Office for Central and East Africa, 4th Quarter, September 1-December 31, 2007, p. 2

[28] For accounts of these initiatives see, for instance, International Crisis Group, Congo: Consolidation Peace, Nairobi: ICG Report No. 128, July 5, 2007; ICG, Congo: Bringing Peace to North Kivu" ICG Report No. 133, October 2007.

it is currently, then the scenario of regionalized strife will persist. In the same vein, a Burundi that does not resolve the problem of internal insurgency may lapse into civil conflict that could potentially draw in other regional state and non-state actors. In Uganda, it is not apparent whether a peaceful solution to the problem of the LRA is feasible in the near term. Although the window of opportunity for a peaceful approach remains, the Museveni government has signaled its resolve to defeat the LRA if it procrastinates on peace and reconciliation.

Unlike most of Africa's sub-regions, the GLR has had problems constructing meaningful multilateral institutions for security and development largely because of the absence of a solid state anchor and the membership of regional states in other integration arrangements. More recently, however, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda have tried to revive the CEPGL (*Communauté économique des Pays des Grands Lacs*) in April 2007. Previously the sub-regional institution for integration, the CEPGL collapsed in the mid-1990s when civil wars engulfed its members. With a €50 million grant from the European Union, the new CEPGL intends to focus on reviving its three institution — the Economic and Development Bank of Great Lakes countries, the Energy of Great Lakes, both based in the DRC; and the Institute of Agricultural Research and Zoology in Burundi.[29] The three countries have expressed hope that the revived organization would open

vistas for expansion into the areas of peace and security. In the short-to-medium term, however, it is unlikely that the CEPGL will have the ability to be a decisive actor on the security front in light of the persistence of suspicions among the three states. Similarly, although Burundi and Rwanda have been admitted into the East Africa Cooperation (EAC), the latter's medium role in contributing to conflict resolution and security in the GLR will be minimal.

In another multilateral initiative, the UN initiated a comprehensive multilateral process billed as the International Conference on the Great Lakes region that embraced 11 regional states — Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, DRC, CAR, and Zambia. In December 2006, these states signed a Security, Stability, and Development Pact in Nairobi, laying the foundations for an incipient regional framework on security and development.[30] In an innovative consultative process leading up to the signing of the Pact, regional states tried to include multiple stakeholders in debates about peace and security. But although it has been hailed as transforming the GLR into a haven for peace, stability, and shared development, to date only seven member states have ratified the Pact, with eight needed for ratification. Moreover, there is skepticism about the near term ability of such an amorphous group of nations to muster the will and capacity to implement a raft of security and economic programs.

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[29] Regional States in Efforts to Revive Organization, United Nations Integrated Regional Networks, April 18, 2007.

[30] International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Dar es Salaam Declaration, December 2006.

Conclusion

The wide array of DDR activities were conceptualized to jumpstart the transitions from wars and violent conflicts to a context whereby states could begin the difficult process of rebuilding institutions of control, order, participation, and human sustenance. As preconditions for stability and security, DDR programs across the region have fortified weak states grappling with militarized communities and groups. Localized objectives of most DDR's stabilization programs—reintegration of armed groups into civilian life and provision of support for alternative livelihoods—have had wider national implications by affording resource-constrained states the ability to withstand pressures from potentially destabilizing groups. Even in the DRC where conflicts persist, there are pockets of security where investment in sustained DDR programs has made a difference in the rebuilding of ties of amity and social consensus as a preliminary step for development initiatives. More important, at the macro-level, as most of the states in the GLR have evolved constitutional frameworks for reconciliation and participation, the DDR programs have been fundamental in the gradual resuscitation of civilian institutions of governance. Where DDR programs have also focused on security sector reforms, they have laid the foundations for more stable civil-military institutions for the future.

The progress on regional stabilization has yet to be completed. The current security context remains fraught with states incapable of incorporating aggrieved armed groups in local and national processes of order, civility, and stability. In the future, DDR programs in the region will have to address the ongoing conflicts, borrowing from the approaches derived from past and existing programs. In addition to the sluggish transitions from war to peace that characterize Burundi, DRC and Northern Uganda, the other prevailing picture in the region is of states that have made tentative institutional steps toward long-term security and development. Where states have made strides in institutional regeneration, the challenge is to build on the gains that accrue from some components of the DDR programs to deepen the search for comprehensive peace-building and economic reconstruction. Experiences elsewhere show that while disarmament and demobilization are the easier phases of DDR programs, it requires more time and resources for the much more difficult reintegration and reinsertion programs that promote socioeconomic schemes to prevent the return to violence. While most of the DDR programs have run concurrently to incorporate these components, to succeed, the downstream activities of the DDR continuum entail the existence of functional states and measurable level of peace and stability. For instance, even in the relatively successful case of Ituri, reports indicate that many of the former fighters who have disarmed, especially children, have not been properly reintegrated into civilian society, primarily because the authority of the state has yet to be fully restored, forcing many civilians to keep weapons for protection.[31] DDR programs that strengthen socioeconomic recovery also need to complement those that target security sector reforms conducted by states that are gaining more confidence through peace, participation, and economic development.

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[31] See for instance, International Crisis Group, <u>Congo: Four Priorities for Sustainable Peace in Ituri</u>, ICG Report No. 140, Nairobi, May 13, 2008.