

Democratic Republic of Congo

The year 2012 closed with an escalating crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The fragile political environment in the wake of the November 2011 presidential and legislative elections and the subsequent outbreak of violence in eastern DRC stemming from the mutiny of the March 23 movement in April 2012 are only the most recent manifestation of chronic problems in the region, including the authoritarian drift of the state and a mix of domestic and regional conflict drivers unresolved since the Second Congo War formally ended in 1999. While the international community suffers from a severe case of “Congo fatigue” and is frustrated at the slow pace of political reform, donors continue to support programs in the face of recurrent setbacks to stability and development in the country rather than risk a total breakdown. The UN Security Council has struggled to map out the position of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), which was unable to stop rebel groups from capturing the strategic city of Goma in late November.

Background

The UN Security Council first authorized the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission, the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), in 1999 in response to a regional request following two wars in the DRC that engulfed much of the region, and the subsequent signing of the Lusaka cease-fire agreement. While the agreement formally ended hostilities, it left

unresolved many of the underlying causes of the conflict. MONUC was eventually authorized at a strength of 22,016 uniformed military and police personnel, making it the largest UN peacekeeping mission. In its eleven years of existence, the mission developed its focus according to the changing circumstances on the ground, from supporting implementation of the cease-fire agreement to assisting the political transition process.

In 2009, in keeping with its reinforced mandate, MONUC focused largely on the unfinished business of the stabilization of eastern DRC. A series of joint military operations with the Congolese national armed forces against armed groups in the east, while yielding important results, also came under heavy



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**UN Organization Stabilization Mission
in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)**

• Authorization Date	28 May 2010 (UNSC Res. 1925 [as MONUSCO succeeding MONUC])
• Start Date	1 July 2010
• SRSO	Roger Meece (United States)
• Force Commander	Lieutenant-General Chander Prakash (India)
• Police Commissioner	Abdallah Wafy (Niger)
• Budget	\$1,347.5 million (1 July 2012–30 June 2013)
• Strength as of 31 October 2012	Troops: 16,966 Military Observers: 688 Police: 1,401 International Civilian Staff: 977 National Civilian Staff: 2,895 UN Volunteers: 543

For detailed mission information see p. 270

criticism for lapses in protecting civilians. These operations, conducted with the national army, known for human rights abuses, exposed the operational tensions in the mission's mandated activities.

On 28 May 2010, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1925, substantially reconfiguring the mission, reframing it as a stabilization mission, and renaming it MONUSCO. Resolution 1925, which came on the heels of efforts by the Congolese government to see a substantial reduction in the UN's presence, authorized the withdrawal of up to 2,000 troops from the country while maintaining the previously authorized ceiling, further concentrated the mission's attention on civilian protection and military operations in the east, and established a reserve force that can react, in principle, to incidents throughout the country.

Elections in 2011

On 20 December 2011, President Joseph Kabila was sworn in for a second five-year term in office, following elections in November that were widely denounced by international observers as lacking credibility and that spurred violent incidents in some parts of the country. Attempts to protest election results publicly

were met with quick and overwhelming force by state security forces, while Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the opposition, was kept under house arrest by state authorities and pressured by the international community not to take to the streets in order to avoid what many feared would be widespread violence.

The fragmented nature of the Congolese opposition and the lack of persistent, coordinated pressure from the international community to address the many irregularities of the elections—due partly to an ambivalence among international diplomats toward Tshisekedi as a viable alternative to Kabila—allowed the Alliance pour la Majorité Présidentielle (AMP), President Kabila's fraying majority, to weather the immediate unrest. However, the crisis deepened throughout 2012, and the president's legitimacy eroded in the eyes of the Congolese people.

Key Developments

Escalating Violence and Calls for a Regional Force

The political crisis spurred by the 2011 elections coincided with a dramatic deterioration of security in eastern DRC in early 2012 as former members of the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) defected from the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and began launching coordinated attacks on national forces.

Since 2009, CNDP rebels, formerly supported by the government of Rwanda, who were integrated into the national army as part of the 2002 Kinshasa-Kigali peace deal, have dominated local economies in North Kivu. Their integration greatly benefited the CNDP as it solidified and legitimized its control over the "petit nord" area of North Kivu. These former CNDP contingents refused to deploy outside of North Kivu, and maintained a parallel chain of command that continued to control economic networks tied to Rwanda based on illicit mineral extraction.

During the 2011 elections, these former CNDP elements allied themselves with Kabila

and carried out a campaign of intimidation to force voters in North Kivu to cast their votes for the incumbent president. This dominance and intimidation was so deeply resented by Kivutian populations that it cost Kabila his popularity and the vote in North Kivu, despite this having been his power base in the 2006 elections. Efforts by Kabila following the November 2011 elections to regain some control over the Kivus by threatening CNDP commander Bosco Ntanganda with arrest and by trying to dismantle CNDP networks, led to the mutiny and the emergence of a new rebellion in eastern DRC. In May 2012 the defected soldiers named themselves the March 23 movement (M23)¹ and rapidly gained ground.

The M23 does not pose the only security problem in the Kivus. Several smaller armed groups are being mobilized as a reaction to the M23, some of them composed of ex-Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) fighters, motivated by anti-Tutsi, anti-Rwanda, and nationalistic sentiments. These Mayi-Mayi groups, although weakly organized and difficult to track, are growing in numbers. Intimidation and fear-mongering by the M23 and its CNDP predecessor are also fueling ethnically charged self-protection activities among local populations. These various smaller groups are believed to be following the same pattern of abuse and repression of local populations that has been carried out by the M23, and have the potential to control parts of the territory of North and South Kivu, thus posing a growing security threat.

Regional confidence in the capacity of MONUSCO to quell the activities of armed groups was low during 2012. On 15 July the African Union announced that it was “prepared to contribute to the establishment of a regional force to put an end to the activities of armed groups” in the DRC.² The neutral force initiative of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), while initially a welcome expression of regional interest to end the violence, has since stalled. Zimbabwe has offered troops, Tanzania has also offered troops as well as a force commander, and South Africa has offered



AFP photo/Phil Moore

An Indian UN peacekeeper walks past trucks of Congolese M23 rebels as they withdraw from the city of Goma in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1 December 2012. Hundreds of Congolese M23 rebels began the withdrawal from Goma as promised under a regionally brokered deal, after a twelve-day occupation of the city. Around 300 rebels, army mutineers who seized Goma on 20 November in a lightning advance, were seen by an AFP reporter driving in a convoy of looted trucks north of the main town in DRC’s mineral-rich east.

some logistical support, but financing and further logistics support remain unaddressed. There are also questions about the modalities of how this so-called neutral force would relate to MONUSCO, including whether this would be a hybrid force, a regional force supported by the UN, or a troop enhancement of the existing UN operation.

Amid discussions about military action, the deteriorating security situation in the Kivus underscored the urgency for a revived, sustained political process in the region. There is growing recognition that without sustained international pressure on the M23 and its supporters and a comprehensive political process to accompany any military response, the security and humanitarian situation in the region risks further deterioration, as military power-sharing, the dominant paradigm of past attempts to end the violence in the DRC, has repeatedly failed to yield sustainable results.

A high-level UN meeting on eastern DRC, convened by UN Secretary-General Ban

HIV/AIDS and UN Peace Operations

Recognizing for the first time the devastating impact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic can have on global security, the Security Council in July 2000 passed landmark Resolution 1308. The resolution mandated the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to take relevant steps to curb the risks posed by the unchecked spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, noting especially the disproportionate effect that it has on women and children.

In June 2011, building on the gains in mitigating the risks posed by HIV/AIDS over the past decade, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1983, recognizing the important role that peacekeepers play in awareness and prevention in missions abroad and in their home countries. The resolution further requested that the Secretary-General ensure the implementation of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention programs for all UN missions.

Following these resolutions, the UN now has integrated HIV/AIDS programs

in all peacekeeping operations. The UN has eight HIV/AIDS units and nine focal points in its sixteen peacekeeping missions, ensuring the implementation of programs to reduce the risk of mission personnel contracting and transmitting HIV. HIV/AIDS officers also provide advice to heads of missions on HIV/AIDS-related issues in the context of mission-specific mandates, and coordinate with relevant local partners.

On an operational level, peacekeeping missions strive to incorporate HIV/AIDS awareness in their work, including in post-conflict demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration processes and in security sector reform. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), for example, integrated HIV/AIDS sensitivity in training national military personnel, while the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) assisted national authorities to address HIV/AIDS in Haiti's prisons.

Increasing budgetary constraints, however, severely impede the efforts of

peace operations in fulfilling the Security Council's mandates. Financial, logistic, and other constraints, such as limited human resources, affect the ability of HIV/AIDS units and focal points to mobilize full HIV/AIDS training, services, and programs. The lack of HIV/AIDS resources is particularly pressing for UN political missions, which could benefit from support for staff in the form of awareness and prevention programs and services. As of November 2012, only two political missions, the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), had focal points deployed to provide HIV/AIDS-related assistance. None of the fifteen field-based political missions maintain HIV/AIDS officers or dedicated HIV focal points. Plans to extend HIV/AIDS awareness to the other political missions may further strain already limited resources.

Ki-moon in New York on 27 September 2012 in the margins of the UN General Assembly, suggested that the deployment of a high-level effort could provide the impetus to launch a political process to end the violence. However, while there are calls for a high-level UN envoy to the region, negotiations between the Kinshasa government and the M23 rebels have been driven by the ICGLR. This has been called into question, as the ICGLR is chaired by Uganda, an alleged source of support for M23.

The Fall of Goma

The rapidly escalating violence in the Kivu between the FARDC and the M23 throughout the year further destabilized the already fragile, war-torn region. On 16 November, soldiers from the FARDC and the M23 engaged

in heavy clashes near the town of Kibumba. The town eventually fell to the rebel movement, which soon advanced to the edge of Goma. The M23 gave the government a twenty-four-hour ultimatum for peace talks, a proposal rejected by Kinshasa, before advancing on the regional capital. On 20 November, M23 forces occupied the city of Goma, meeting limited resistance from the FARDC, who fled in advance of the attack, and MONUSCO peacekeepers. While the M23 withdrew from Goma eleven days later following an agreement with the ICGLR that set the stage for negotiations, the group has maintained positions nearby, posing a continuing threat to the city.

MONUSCO came under heavy criticism for its inability to stop the fall of the most strategic city in the east, despite the deployment of attack helicopters to slow the rebels'

advance. The mission evacuated out of Goma a number of senior Congolese officials, including nearly two dozen magistrates who were targeted by M23. The rebels used advanced weapons and more sophisticated operations than expected. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Hervé Ladsous, argued that the mission was mandated to assist the FARDC in protecting civilians in the area rather than engage directly with the rebels, an impossible task after national forces fled.³ In December, Ladsous presented several options to the Security Council in response to the fall of Goma, including deploying a regional force as proposed by the ICGLR, providing additional force enablers for MONUSCO, and supporting an expanded version of the joint verification mechanism of the ICGLR,⁴ which was launched in September in an effort to address the continued conflict in eastern DRC.

The UN Group of Experts on the DRC, in its final report, issued on 21 November 2012, documented evidence of Rwandan and, to a lesser extent, Ugandan logistical, financial, and recruitment support for M23, highlighting the total breakdown of the earlier rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda.⁵ The findings of the final report were similar to those of the group's interim report, released in June 2012. The November final report also recommended placing several M23 leaders on the UN sanctions list. Following this recommendation, in December the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on M23 as well as travel and asset sanctions on the M23's president and one of its top commanders.

While the Group of Experts' report and the experts themselves have been loudly denounced by Kigali, Western donors, including the United States and United Kingdom, have since suspended aid to Rwanda in reaction to its support of the M23 rebellion. Uganda also denounced the charges of the Group of Experts and briefly threatened to pull its troops out of all peacekeeping missions, including the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for which Uganda is the top troop-contributing country.

Security Sector Reform and Stabilization: Stalled Processes

The stabilization and peace consolidation efforts under the DRC government's Stabilization and Reconstruction (STAREC) program have stalled, though one can point to some modest successes. For example, the successful conduct of a census of the army; recent improvements in the justice sector such as the new mobile courts systems, widely considered a success at making justice more accessible in rural areas; progress in police training and sensitization through MONUSCO and the EU Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL RD Congo) training; and the reopening of the military academy. However, the absence of a political process and strategy for security sector reform by Kinshasa has made those efforts piecemeal and unsustainable. Other institutional reforms, like the decentralization project, are either stagnant or progressing extremely slowly, as the crisis in the east and the tensions with Rwanda dominate international attention in the region.

On 7 November 2012 the EU Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUSEC RD Congo) signed a new action program with the Congolese authorities to continue with its mandate to help develop a FARDC reform plan that will reinforce administrative capacities in the human resource and budget domains, support and continue to engage in training, and revitalize the logistical component of

EU Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL RD Congo)

• Authorization Date	12 June 2007 (EU Council Joint Action 2007/405/CFSP)
• Start Date	July 2007
• Head of Mission	Commissioner Jean Paul Rikir (Belgium)
• Budget	\$9.27 million (1 October 2011–30 September 2012)
• Strength as of 30 September 2012	Civilian Police: 16 International Civilian Staff: 21 National Civilian Staff: 19

EU Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUSEC RD Congo)

- Authorization Date 2 May 2005 (EU Council Joint Action 2005/355/CFSP)
- Start Date June 2005
- Head of Mission Antonio Martins (Portugal)
- Budget \$17.65 million (1 October 2011–30 June 2012)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 International Civilian Staff: 50.5^a
National Civilian Staff: 41

Note: a. EUSEC RD Congo has 50 full-time and 1 part-time international civilian staff.

the FARDC. Throughout the year, EUSEC conducted several workshops with civil society and military leaders in order to enhance civil-military cooperation, conducted training workshops on sexual violence and the protection of children, and piloted a biometric system of payments for a regiment in North Kivu. In July 2012 the mission recommended a yearlong extension of the EUSEC mandate, to be followed by a twelve-month final transition phase.

Conclusion

On 28 December 2012, two MONUSCO utility helicopters came under fire by M23 elements, the second time that month that the mission's helicopters had been targeted. These events underscore calls for the UN to regain the initiative on the political front in the DRC, as there is growing awareness that the UN and MONUSCO cannot play a purely technical support role and that there is a need for a political process to streamline and focus efforts to resolve both the short-term crisis in the east and the long-term challenge of the role of neighboring countries and national reform. Toward this end, the UN is conducting a strategic review on MONUSCO, and in December the Secretary-General engaged in discussions with regional powers on developing a political framework for addressing the crisis. This objective is likely to become even more complicated once Rwanda takes its two-year seat on the UN Security Council in January 2013.

Notes

1. The movement is named after a 23 March 2009 peace deal with the government under which the rebel group was to change into a political party, but that the rebels say has not been implemented.
2. "AU Ready to Send Peacekeepers to DR Congo," *Agence France-Presse*, 15 July 2012.
3. "UN Defends Failed Attempt to Halt Capture of Congo's Goma," *Reuters*, 21 November 2012.
4. "DR Congo: UN Peacekeeping Chief Presents Security Council with Options After M23 Withdrawal from Goma," *UN News Service*, 7 December 2012.
5. For the report and its addenda, see <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1533/egroup.shtml>.