

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



BASIC INFORMATION

Population:	57.5 million inhabitants (2005)
GDP:	6,974 million dollars (2005)
GNI per capita:	120 dollars (2005)
HDI:	0.391 (167 th) (2004)

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

DR Congo has been embroiled in conflict since 1996, and there is a significant regional dimension due to the presence of several foreign militias who are operational in different parts of the country, especially the Kivu and Ituri districts. It is estimated that the conflict has caused the deaths of 3.5 million people, either directly in combat or as a result of disease and hunger, while a further 3 million have been displaced. It is estimated that 50,000 people have died in Ituri, with a further 500,000 displaced.

During 2006 the violence and insecurity persistent around the East region of the country was observed, mainly due to the attack led by the AAFB and MONUC against some Rwandan FDLR opposition armed groups sectors.

PEACE AGREEMENTS / PROCESS

The **Lusaka Ceasefire Agreements of 1999** represented the starting point for a long process of reconciliation in which the second stage was the Inter-Congolese Dialogue of April 2002. July 2002 saw the signing of the Pretoria Agreement between DR Congo and Rwanda, which obliged Rwanda to withdraw its troops from Congolese territory while also requiring that DR Congo dismantle the Rwandan militias that were operating from inside its borders. The Sun City (South Africa) Agreement was signed in April 2003, with all parties agreeing to an inclusive undertaking towards democratic transition.

At the end of 2003, the ADF-WNBF Ugandan militia began negotiations on returning to their own country. In March 2005, the Rwandan armed opposition group, the FDLR, announced that it was abandoning its armed struggle against Rwanda and condemned the 1994 genocide. This group, which has not yet complied with its own promise to disarm, have lived as refugees for the last ten years in an area close to the border, from where they have launched regular attacks against Rwanda.

The constants disputes during 2005 on the Transitional National Government **obstructed the general elections holding** as it was previewed. From the goals marked at the beginning of 2005 a Constitution writing was reached, which was subjected to referendum by the end of December, with a wide participation and favourable result.

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In November 2006, around 6,000 militia belonging to three armed groups present in the region of Ituri (north-east) signed a peace agreement with the Government, arranged by MONUC, by which they promise to hand in their weapons and participate in the DDR process.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

The **United Nations Mission for DR Congo (MONUC)** was created in 1999 and subsequently received a mandate to intervene in the DDR process, specially for foreign combatants. The mission costs a total of 1,138 for one year and has 16,700 troops. It has its own radio station (Radio Okapi) which it uses to promote awareness of the DDR process. It previews to end by 30th June 2007.

Since August 2002, the UNDP has introduced a number of projects linked with the DDR process. These include RRM (a rapid financing and operating mechanism to prepare DDR in Ituri), Community Recovery in Ituri (with support from Belgium), the Casualties of War project (at a cost of 6.3 million dollars with contributions of 1 million dollars from Japan and 1.6 million from the UNDP itself), and the Ituri project. The EU confirmed their commitment with the transition process with the implementation of of the EUSEC and EUPOL-Kinshasa missions.

DDR STRUCTURE

Background to the DDR process:

In December 2002, MONUC set up its first centre for the reception of foreign combatants in Lubero. In April 2003, the UNDP presented its first plan for DDR, implementing a Rapid Response Mechanism to deal with certain priority issues of the moment (the reinsertion of internally displaced people from Kisangani, the relaunching of businesses in Bunia, support for the reinsertion of young people demobilised in Kasaï, etc.). October 2003 saw the creation of the Technical Committee for Planning and Coordinating DDR (CTPC/DDR), which was entrusted with drawing up a National DDR Programme based on voluntary disarmament. In December 2003, the Government issued a decree establishing the institutional framework for DDR. The National DDR Programme officially began in July 1994.

September 2004 saw the introduction of a DDR Plan for the Ituri region, a plan which had originally been approved the previous January, with the opening of five transit centres where combatants are disarmed and prepared for reinsertion into the community. The UNDP and MONUC are in charge of the programme.

Type of DDR:

Multiple, with paramilitary groups, foreign militias, child soldiers and reform of the armed forces, combining reintegration and demobilisation services in a common procedure. DDR for DR Congo combatants and DRRR (repatriation and resettlement) for foreign combatants.

Enforcing bodies:

At first, the programme was coordinated by the UNDP, which designed an Interim DDR Strategy. Since April 2004 the programme has been coordinated by the government of DR Congo through its National DDR Commission (CONADER), though it still has support from the UNDP, MONUC, UNICEF and other organisations, and operates within the financial framework of the World Bank. A Fund Management Committee was also established initially, though this has now become part of CONADER following arguments about the inadequacies of both organisations.

Strategic aspects of the programme:

There are three different facets to DDR in DR Congo:

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1. The demobilisation of some of the country's armed forces and internal armed groups in order to create new armed forces.
2. The demobilisation of Congolese militias operating in the Ituri region.
3. The demobilisation of foreign militias and their repatriation to their countries of origin (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Congo).

In addition, a number of guiding principles have been established for reinforcing human safety, reforming the Armed Forces, contributing to regional stabilisation, contributing to the recovery of the economy and optimising public resources:

- *Political principles*: national ownership, integrated approach, regional dimension.
- *Institucional principles*: PNDDR as unique activities chart, institutional integrity.
- *Operational principles*: decentralisation, flexibility, transparency and rigour, specific treatment, gender perspective, HIV/AIDS prevention and sensitization.

Groups to be demobilised:

Around 150,000 former combatants, of whom 23,000 are foreign fighters (mostly comprising 4,000 Burundians, 4,000 Congolese and 15,000 Rwandans), 15,000 Congolese militias from the Ituri region and 112,000 soldiers and members of other militias.

- *Congolese militias*: MLC, RCD-Goma, RCD-ML, RCD-N, Mayi-Mayi.
- *Militias in the Ituri region*: UPC, PUSIC, FNI, FPDC, FAPC.
- *Foreign combatants*: Interahamwe, FDLR, former Rwandan FAR, ADF (Uganda), FDD (Burundi).

Vulnerable groups:

It is estimated that child soldiers may represent between 10 and 20% of all those demobilised (more than 33,000) and between 1999 and 2005, 7,400 have been demobilized. Through its MDRP programme, the World Bank has introduced a number of special programmes for child soldiers at a cost of around 18 million dollars, collaborating specifically with *Save the Children* (2.5 million dollars), IRC/IFESH/Care (7 million dollars), the Belgian Red Cross (2.1 million dollars) and UNICEF (5 million dollars). In January 2005, the United Kingdom government donated a further 3.9 million dollars for the demobilisation of children and the prevention of their potential re-recruitment. In April 2005, *Save the Children* worked with the Rwandan government to plan for the return of 2,500 child soldiers included among the ranks of the FDLR. It mustn't be forgotten the presence of *Secours Atlantique*, AAS et *Simaza développement*, GADERES, AASD and APEE, BICE, HRW, SOS Grands Lacs, SACD and BVS.

The *Synergie d'Éducation Communautaire et d'Appui* (SECA) program promotes improved stability in war-affected areas by facilitating the reintegration of young former combatants into their communities. To support these objectives, SE*CA uses three tools: 1) a youth education and skills program to train war-affected youths in agriculture, civic education, health, conflict management, reconciliation, personal values, numeracy, and literacy; 2) a media program that supports access to information concerning issues key to the transition; and 3) an in-kind, small-grants program that supports information dissemination projects and community-identified activities that are a priority for the economic, political, and/or social revitalization of the community.

On another hand, CONADER, the Ministry for the Feminine Condition, UNDP, MONUC and UNIFEM has implemented several initiatives on the women and girls associated with armed groups introduction in order to implement specific programs. Entry into the DDR process will have to be carried out in stages before December 31st. The armed groups will enter the holding centres during the first half of December. The Government, for its part, is committed to proposing to Parliament the establishment of an amnesty law for all members of the groups that have signed the accord, to recognising the ranks of the officials in the armed groups and arranging the regrouping of the members of the group.

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In the middle of October 2006, Amnesty International denounced in a report that at least 11,000 minors continue in the hands of armed groups, over two years after the government had launched a national programme to liberate child soldiers and reintegrate them in civil life. The organisation published a new report in which it warned that the DDR programme did not satisfy the protection and support requirements of minors. Amnesty International complained that the case of girls is especially serious, since in some areas, girls constitute less than two percent of the minors liberated from armed groups that join the DDR programme, despite the fact that they make up approximately 40% of the minors used by the armed forces and groups.

Budget:

The World Bank, the main financing body for this programme, has put the cost of DDR at 200 million dollars, amounting to a unit cost of \$1,228 per person. Of this, 100 million dollars are provided by the IDA and the other 100 million by the MDRP (the World Bank's programme for the Great Lakes), which is financed with contributions from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the World Bank. The MDRP has also provided 18 million dollars for special programmes for child soldiers, 5 million dollars for community macro-projects and 4.6 million dollars for a special programme to support the establishment of a Rapid Reaction Mechanism for DDR. These projects are managed by the UNDP. USAID has donated 3.25 million dollars for the reintegration of former combatants in their communities (2.25m in 2004 and 1m in 2005). The specific DDR process for Ituri, from which around 15,000 people are expected to benefit, has a budget of 10.5 million dollars.

Donor	Millions of \$	(%)
World Bank (IDA)	100	50
MDRP	100	50
TOTAL	200	100

The government has offered support by providing land, offices, security and other services. Each demobilised combatant receives a total of \$380 in cash during the different **stages of the process**. By stages, costs break down as follows:

Stage	Unit cost (\$)	Total cost (\$M)	Percentage (%)
Demobilisation	230	34	17
Reinsertion	441	66	33
Special groups	-	16	8
Reintegration	300	45	22
Admin. and other items	257	39	20
Total (estimate)	1,228	200	100

By **years**, the cost estimated by the World Bank is as follows:

Year	Total cost (\$M)	(%)
2004	55.2	27.6
2005	103.5	51.7
2006	24.7	12.4
2007	16.5	8.3
TOTAL	200	100

Timetable:

From 2004 to 2007 (36 months).

Other issues:

- **Justice:** Combatants accused of crimes against humanity will be excluded from the programme and their cases will be brought before the courts. On the reform of the

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judiciary, Action Aid emphasizes the need for a transitional justice process and recommends an increase of the number of international prison officers.

- **Security Sector Reform:** There is no reliable data on current troop numbers or the plans in place to reduce them. Initial figures mentioned cutting armed forces numbers from 300,000 to 150,000, but a report from the UN Secretary General in mid-March referred to the target of reducing the number of troops from 350,000 to 200,000. In May 2004, the government acknowledged for the first time that its armed forces totalled 345,000 troops, a fact that could result in the eventual target being modified. It was estimated that the census of members of the armed forces being carried out by a South African team would be completed by December 2005, though initial results showed that it had been able to identify less than half the soldiers initially declared by the Transitional Government.

The government plans to create 12 brigades of 4,200 trained troops from a mixture of former combatants from various sources. Initial experiences were not successful due to poor conditions at the “mixing” centres, which resulted in a very high number of desertions.

10 reintegration centres have also been created. By the middle of March 2005, around 11,500 soldiers had turned up at these centres and handed in their weapons. These measures are also aimed at cutting military spending by some 29 million dollars per year. In May 2005, the EU established a mission known as “EUSEC DR Congo” to provide help for security sector reform in DR Congo. One of the experts posted in the country will be assigned to CONADER. The mission has a budget of 1.6 million euros and will last for one year.

The structure established for integration into the Armed Forces begins with the initiation of the Military Integration Structure and its awareness and information campaigns. From this point, regrouping (disarming and identification) and guidance centres are created, as well as reintegration centres in the event that they are not sent to the DDR programme. Once integrated, they are deployed in brigades on the ground. With regard to reform of the police, *Action Aid* recommends the promoting, assisting and training of police personnel and strengthening their coordination with other authorities. For its part, in January 2007 Amnesty International denounced the chaotic transition carried out, and violations of human rights in the reform of the security sector, either due to a situation of endemic corruption or because of a lack of information regarding human rights and the usurping of police powers, mainly by the Armed Forces.

DDR STAGES

Since September 2004, the seven armed groups operating in the Ituri region have been able voluntarily to sign up to the Plan for Disarmament and Community Reintegration in Ituri (DCR Plan), which is focused around seven transit centres. The FNI armed group has been the one that has taken a most active part in this plan. It is organised by CONADER, with support from various United Nations agencies MONUC, the UNDP and UNICEF, along with some development agencies (MEMISA and GTZ). The UNDP has allocated 2.3 million dollars to the plan, which it is estimated will cost 10.5 million dollars, with funds coming from France, Belgium, Japan, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Spain and the MDRP. It is expected that 15,000 combatants will be disarmed and reinserted, of which 6,000 are expected to be children. Combatants who have been accused of crimes against humanity will be excluded from the programme and their cases brought before the courts.

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Disarmament:

The regional effect is a strong component due to the diverse origins of the weapons caused by the porous nature of the country's borders: arms from Rwanda in the region of Goma, Uganda, use of an Antonov by the *Mai Mai* militia in South east and Southern Kivu, the use of Lake Tanganyika to bring arms from Burundi and Tanzania. These facts demonstrate the constant violation of the arms embargo imposed on the country and prolonged until July 2007.

Implemented by MONUC, this phase's activities are carried out in two phases: the pre-disarmament, with the identification and implementation of the reception, awareness and communication structures. For its part, the disarmament phase as such involves the registering of combatants and the collecting of weapons and ammunition.

Demobilisation:

The UNDP tried out a new system for the registration and identification of former combatants in DR Congo, using a digital iris recognition process that allowed 500 people to be registered each day. The identification process, beginning in March 2003, lasted for three months and was carried out in 25 centres distributed all over the country. The database was financed by Japan.

All demobilised members of the Rwandan militias are registered and prepared for transfer to a transit centre. During the following two days they receive food, medical care, shoes and repatriation documents, which allows them to be transferred to a Rwandan camp managed by a Rwandan Demobilisation Commission with financial help from the World Bank. Once there they receive further medical care, basic information, orientation courses, some money and a survival kit.

The 15,000 Congolese militia members in the Ituri region are quartered in seven camps in the region. Demobilised combatants are each given 50 dollars for transport home to the communities in which they are to be reinserted. Children are separated from adults and passed on to agencies that specialise in their protection.

Reinsertion and Reintegration:

Each demobilized receives 110 dollars at his exit from the orientation centre, as well as 25 dollars during a year. They also receive shoes, cooking utensils and other items required in order to subsist. After registering at provincial offices they receive \$150, with a further \$150 paid in cash a few months later. In the middle of 2005, USAID gave 2.5 million dollars in aid to assist reintegration activities in the Ituri district. In October it agreed to free up 6 million dollars for the reinsertion of 15,000 former combatants in Bunia.

At the end of November 2005, the head of MONUC, W. Lacy, announced that 12,000 former combatants had already been repatriated to their countries of origin. Of these, 8,000 had come from Rwanda (both regular armed forces and Interahamwe militia members) and a further 2,000 from Uganda. As regards combatants from the Republic of Congo, a government team from DR Congo travelled to Brazzaville at the end of January 2005 to begin the task of identifying and registering former combatants from their country who had served under Mobutu Sese Seko between 1965 and 1997.

EVOLUTION OF THE DDR PROCESS

In February 2005, the leaders of the Mayi-Mayi groups in Kananga agreed to disarm. By mid-March 2005, the total number of foreign fighters and their dependents that had been repatriated to Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi had risen to 11,410.

At the beginning of May 2005, around 12,000 former combatants who had been disarmed, including 3,600 children, joined the first brigade of former militia members to work as support

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staff for the MONUC mission following training from South Africa and Belgium. A further 7,000 combatants and 4,000 family members returned to their homes.

During June, after a three month period in which combatants were invited to disarm voluntarily, MONUC began a programme of enforced disarmament in Ituri. It is estimated that around 14,000 of the expected 15,000 former fighters have now been disarmed, though the remainder continue to mount attacks against the civilian population. In addition, many demobilised combatants have spent more than two months in transit camps, a situation that could lead to the failure of the programme if they are not reintegrated as quickly and effectively as possible in order to avoid potential acts of violence and looting. Around 1,000 militia members in Ituri joined the disarmament process at the end of October 2005.

Although in early December 2005 MONUC monitoring team members oversaw the handover by ex-combatants of Ugandan origin who expected to be repatriated of 34 assault rifles and their subsequent destruction, the Security Council warned a few days later (21 December) of sanctions on the countries of origin should the disarmament of foreign combatants not end successfully by 15 January 2006. At the end of 2005 it was estimated that just 15% of combatants had reoriented their professional careers.

At the beginning of 2007, the BM urged the state authorities, especially the military structures, to assume their responsibilities in the DDR process. For its part, CONADER inaugurated a new guidance centre, with a maximum capacity of 1,000 people, and with the aim of receiving every ex-combatant wanting to return to civil life in a period of one year. Finally, an ICG report warned of the need to carry out an RSS in the country, pointing to the enormous differences in salaries and incentives existing between the demobilisation of combatants with respect to the low proportion earmarked for improvements in the administration of the Armed Forces and police, and denouncing the lack of coordination by the IU police and military missions.

At the beginning of March 2006, some 300 ex-combatants from the armed opposition group *Mai Mai* protested due to the irregularities and the slowness in the admission procedure in the CONADER guidance centre in the province of Kalemie. The same occurred in May, when another 200 former combatants from the *Mai Mai* militia handed in their weapons to MONUC troops in the province of Kananga in exchange for a guarantee of their safety. In May 2006, the General Secretary of the UN issued a report regarding a full and comprehensive strategy for the disarmament, repatriation and resettling of foreign combatants in the DR Congo. This report includes the military, political, economic and justice aspects, including the contribution of MONUC, based on incentives and penalties of all kinds to resolve the problem of foreign armed groups in the country, some of which are also involved in various economic activities. The main goal of this repatriation was to collaborate with the Transitional Government in the holding of an electoral process in a secure environment, in parallel with the reform of the Congolese security sector. In general lines, this report carried out an evaluation of the foreign armed groups and urged the coordinated efforts of MONUC with the Government of the DR Congo, and at the same time, a greater cooperation between this Executive and those of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. In addition, it demands an increase in the international support for the reform of the Congolese Armed Forces enabling them to carry out their functions, as well as the essential role of donors for the adoption of sub-regional economic measures.

The lack of application of the resolutions for foreign armed groups should be highlighted, anticipating the possibility of having to do so by force, especially in the east of the country. Among the demobilised foreign troops, in March 2006, the following data was compiled:

Country	Ex-combatants	Civilians	TOTAL
Rwanda	4,415	4,203	8,618
Uganda	406	276	682
Burundi	3,605	124	3,729
TOTAL	8,426	4,603	13,029

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At present it is calculated that some 13,000 ex-combatants have been repatriated to their respective countries since 2002, while between 8,000 and 9,000 remain in the country, specifically 5,000 in northern Kivu, and between 3,000 and 3,500 in southern Kivu. The process of integrating the army is being carried out in parallel with the DDR process in the Congolese ex-combatant's civil society, with the support of international donors. However, the reform of the security sector and the DDR has been much slower than planned due to a series of problems related to administration, subsistence, command and control, capacitating and discipline.

By the end of 2006 107,840 demobilised combatants had been counted, 70% of those expected, with 99,752 reinserted (81%) and 44,816 reintegrated, 50% of the total. Nonetheless, MONUC itself admitted that a great many demobilised ex-combatants continued to be unhappy about the failure to make the promised payments, and have consequently protested violently in various parts of the country. In parallel, this United Nations mission opened two new centres in the district of Ituri for the voluntary disarmament of the 18,000 troops still to be demobilised in this area, although only 2,000 had carried out this process by the end of the quarter. It should be remembered that the armed groups that operate in this region had not been formally recognised in the 2002 Pretoria Agreement. In addition, USAID began rehabilitation programmes in the same area at a total value of 6.4 million dollars, focused on some 11,200 ex-combatants. In July 2006, around 4,000 combatants had been demobilised, and some 2,100 weapons collected in the Ituri district. There remain other problems to be solved in this region: a lack of mechanisms to ensure the payment of the former combatants, lack of political desire to accept demobilisation, the Government's limited capacity to integrate them in the Armed Forces, lack of security guarantees, lack of structure for arranging the rehabilitation of the ex-combatants and a complete absence of female demobilisation.

CONADER later announced the suspension of the disarmament and demobilisation programme due to the lack of funds, with 65% of the combatants, some 60,000 troops, having passed through these centres. This programme had already had problems since its outset, with a high waiting time for payments to those demobilised during the reintegration phase, which had caused new cases of violence. As a response, the MNRP(WB) insisted that the closing of the demobilisation camps was not due to a lack of funds, but rather the excessive cost of maintaining them for the few troops that there were in them. CONADER denied responsibilities for the lack of implementation of the reintegration programmes and blamed it on the UNDP.

Chief among the main challenges to be met are the following: to fight against the flow of new arms coming from the East, to disarm civilians on a community level, the need to speed up the census of FARDC combatants, to impede the emergence of new armed opposition coalitions, the centralising of the PNDDR data and coherence in administering actions.

Around 6,000 militia belonging to three armed groups present in the Ituri region signed a peace agreement with the Government at the end of November 2006, arranged by MONUC, by which they agreed to hand in their weapons and participate in the DDR process. The three groups have offered the exact figure of their combatants to the Congolese Armed Forces: 3500 militia from Cobra Matata's Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front (FPRI); 1,800 from P. Karim's Integrationist Nationalist Front (FNI); and 500 from M. Ngoudjolo's Congolese Revolutionary Movement (MRC).

At the end of 2006 the demobilisation process began in the Ituri region and in southern Kivu. Of these, 110 belonged to the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front (FPRI), 687 to the Mai-Mai militias and at least 1,300 were soldiers under the command of the renegade General L. Nkunda (these latter integrated into the Armed Forces). In addition, MONUC announced its intention of considering the carrying of weapons in the district of Ituri as an illegal act, unless the bearer has the agreed authorisation. Finally, the Armed Forces have announced that in their restructuring process 14 of the 18 planned brigades have already been formed. In the reintegration process, it was calculated that between 3,000 and 5,000 soldiers will be integrated into the Armed Forces in the region of North Kivu.

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ASPECTS TO BE EXAMINED

Planning:

- Distrust on the DDR process from the DR Congo government itself.
- Difficulties for coordination in the CONADER headquarters.
- Slow repatriation of foreign militias.
- Pressure from leaders on combatants willing to disarm.
- Precise number of combatants not known, since 30% - 40% of them may be "ghost soldiers", i.e. false combatants.
- Misgivings about the effectiveness of enforced disarmament.
- Late opening of orientation centres and delays in payments, giving way to discontent among militia members.
- Lack of centres in north and centre of the country.
- Fewer arms handed over than expected.
- Political agenda closed, bad public governability, lack of coordination and mobilization of material and economic resources.
- Slow reestablishment of State authority in all the extent of the territory. Delay on the implementation of decentralized structures.
- Delay on SSR process, with only 12 out of 18 brigades receiving minimally acceptable training to guarantee state security.
- Insecurity.

Financing:

- Lack of trust from donors regarding the organisations running the DDR process. Delay and bad execution of the economic resources.
- Internal tensions among these organisations.
- Government tendency to maximise bilateral agreements in order to take greater advantage of individual offers of aid.

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