



**Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)  
Peace Operations Estimate – MONUSCO**

**United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
(updated 15 April 2018)**



[MONUSCO Deployment Map](#)  
[Link to MONUSCO Mission Website](#)

[Link to MONUSCO Fact Sheet \(February 2018\)](#)

[Link to CIA Country Fact Sheet Demo Rep of Congo](#)

**Executive Summary**

Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains precarious, with a surge of violence throughout 2017 that suggested “[a dramatic escalation of conflict](#).” The violence continued to intensify into 2018 which is the agreed-to year for national elections, resulting from months of negotiations amongst many domestic and most regional and international parties. The incumbent president, [Joseph Kabila](#), remains [in power](#) despite the end of his second presidential term in 2016 and the apparent desires of “[a full 74 percent](#)” of the Congolese population (according to the New York University-based Congo Research Group and the Congolese polling agency, BERCI). Natural resource wealth, combined with a

population in poverty and human rights abuses, contribute to the dense landscape of armed and criminal groups.

### Major considerations are:

- While the UN Security Council recently renewed the MONUSCO mandate, [relations](#) between the DRC government (GoDRC) and UN/MONUSCO—as well as other regional and international entities—remain problematic for several reasons. Prominent among them are President Kabila’s intransigence regarding his departure from office, and the continued violence of the [DRC government security forces](#) against its own population.

*In March 2017, United States (U.S.) Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) [remarked](#): “The UN peacekeeping mission is mandated to partner with the government...In other words the UN is aiding a government that is inflicting predatory behavior against its own people. We should have the decency and common sense to end this.”*

- Many of the domestic political opposition groups, DRC neighbor-states, and regional and international entities express little [confidence](#) for the December 2018 national elections to occur as planned. Or, if the elections do occur, there is little confidence in the electoral process for many reasons, to include (but not being limited to): voting equipment controversy (paper or electronic), the inadequacy of voter registration and related citizenship determination (such as misidentified or duplicate registrations and displaced persons’ voting rights), and polling security.
- While the DRC contains some of the world’s most abundant of [natural resources](#), it remains “[one of the world's poorest countries](#).” In one report:

Ten out of 100 children in Congo die before they reach the age of 5, and more than 40 percent have stunted growth due to malnutrition. Poor governance and largescale abuses by armed groups and members of the Congolese security forces - fueled by widespread impunity and struggles for control over the country's vast resources - have stunted the country's development and left countless victims. Today, more than 13 million Congolese affected by recent violence are [in need of emergency assistance](#), including food, sanitation, shelter, and education, according to the United Nations.

Further, the estimated [\\$24 trillion of mineral resources](#) also perpetuate the conflict in that both the GoDRC (and associated individuals) and non-state armed groups have the wherewithal to buy arms through illegal exploitation of those assets.

### Mission Overview

**1. Background.** The DRC was a formal Belgium colony for over 50 years (1908-1960). Within five years of independence, Joseph Mobutu—a former Army colonel—came to power. He changed his name to [Mobutu Sese Seko](#) and changed the country’s name to Zaire. He ruled Zaire for more than 30 years as “president” with brutality and inconsistent (and reportedly fraudulent) elections.

After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, over one million Rwandan Hutus sought refuge in the predominantly Tutsi areas of Zaire, beginning the [First Congo War](#). Within two years, [Laurent Désiré Kabila](#) led a rebellion against then-President Mobutu Sese Seko. With the active support of both [Rwanda](#) and [Uganda](#), Kabila’s forces

*[Laurent Désiré Kabila](#) was a Tutsi, with [apparent Marxist tendencies](#) in his early political career. Called a “[beacon of hope](#)” by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in his first year of his presidency, he was soon assessed by some as more tyrannical and corrupt than [Mobutu Sese Seko](#), whom he had violently replaced.*

seized the capital city of Kinshasa in 1997, established a government, and renamed the country as “Democratic Republic of the Congo,” or DRC. However, apparently disappointed by Laurent Kabila’s governance (and its impact on border security), by 1998 [both Uganda and Rwanda](#) were supporting armed groups rebelling against the Kabila administration. Angola, Chad, Namibia and Zimbabwe aligned with President Kabila with varying levels of support.

*The period between 1998 and 2003 are often referred to as the [Second Congo War](#).*

The UN Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo ([MONUC](#)) was established by [UNSCR 1279\(1999\)](#) as part of the [Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement](#) between the DRC and five regional States (Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe). MONUC personnel were on site by 2000 with direction to facilitate the implementation of the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and well as several other tasks. While DRC elections were intended as part of the agreement, they were continually delayed. The 2001 assignation of Laurent Kabila resulted in the appointment of his son, Joseph Kabila, to the presidency. The DRC’s continued instability hindered the electoral process for several more years, allowing Joseph Kabila to maintain presidential power from 2001 until 2006, during several peace negotiations and agreements ([such as the Pretoria Accord](#)). However, during the summer and fall of 2006, [MONUC](#) (among other regional and international representatives) supervised the DRC’s “[first free and fair elections in 46 years](#),” resulting in Joseph Kabila’s first elected five-year term.

[MONUSCO](#) replaced the earlier MONUC on 1 July 2010 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution ([UNSCR](#)) [1925\(2010\)](#) with new tasks assigned by mandate, to include support of Joseph Kabila’s administration. MONUSCO (among other regional and international representatives) supervised the 2011 elections and the Kabila’s installation for his second elected five-year term. Due to DRC’s continuation of violence and abuse over the next five years, the [Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region](#) was signed on February 24, 2016, by representatives of 11 countries, the Chairs of the African Union (AU), the [International Conference on the Great Lakes Region \(ICGLR\)](#), the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#), and the UN. Soon afterwards, it became apparent that President Kabila would decline to leave office at the end of his last term. He explained his decision by citing the lack of an elected successor—a situation made possible by the GoDRC’s inability or unwillingness to conduct elections. His decision was validated by the DRC’s [Constitutional Court](#).

**2. Mandate.** [MONUSCO's mandate](#) remains unique in its authorization of the Force Intervention Brigade, or FIB [simply called “Intervention Brigade” in [UNSCR 2409\(2018\)](#)]. The entire mission is a multi-disciplinary UN presence, which—until **31 March 2019**—directs MONUSCO’s strategic priorities as:

*(a) Protection of civilians... (and) (b) Support to the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and the electoral process...in order to hold credible elections...*

*The December 2016 agreement is often referred to as the [Saint Sylvester “Global and Inclusive” Agreement](#) because it was finalized on Saint Sylvester’s Day: December 31.*

It also identifies “[priority tasks](#),” such as: Protection of Civilians; Implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and Support to the Electoral Process; and Protection of the United Nations (personnel, facilities, and equipment). Further identifies other tasks:

- Stabilization and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
- Security Sector Reform (SSR)
- Sanctions
- Child Protection

- Gender, Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse
- Humanitarian Access
- Support to the Group of Experts
- Mission Effectiveness
- Exit Strategy

While the revised mandate did not include any new tasks, it did place “the [Intervention Brigade under direct command of MONUSCO Force Commander](#)” in order to “neutralize armed groups.” (Previous mandates had the Intervention Brigade operating separately from the other MONUSCO forces.) Of note, paragraph 35 continued to authorize MONUSCO “to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate and requests the Secretary-General to immediately inform the Security Council should the MONUSCO force or police fail to do so.”

According to the [U.S. State Department at the UN](#), the purpose of the MONUSCO’s Force Commander’s assumption of the Force Intervention Brigade is:

...to make the mission more responsive by clarifying that the Force Intervention Brigade operates under the command of the UN Force Commander... (which) allows the Force Commander to deploy the Force Intervention Brigade throughout the entire country, rather than confine the force to the East, and ensures that a unified command structure will respond to the needs of the Congolese people.

[UNSCR 2360\(2017\)](#) renewed the DRC sanctions and the mandate of the Group of Experts. The DRC sanctions are essentially an arms embargo, travel ban, and assets freeze. Thirty-five individuals and nine entities are named in the current version, which was updated with four new names on [February 1, 2018](#). While the sanctions will expire in August 2018, they are expected to be renewed by July 2018 for another twelve-month period.

**3. Deployment.** Despite the 2018-directed reduction of personnel, MONUSCO remains the [largest UN peace mission in personnel size](#). The authorized troop ceiling is now at 16,215 military personnel (which includes the 3,000-strong FIB), 660 military observers and staff officers, 391 police personnel, and 1,050 personnel of formed police units. The revised mandate maintains the guidance of previous mandates to deploy “[specialised \[sic\] capabilities](#),” which is further described as “information-gathering assets and specialized infantry.”

The FIB “[represents one of the most active, offensive military efforts in the history of the U.N.](#)” It is [comprised of country contributions](#) from the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#), specifically Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania. It consists of three infantry battalions, one artillery and one special force and Reconnaissance Company.

The Security Council established it in 2013 to include no more than 3000 troops total within MONUSCO’s authorized troop ceiling (at the time) of 19,815. It was intended to be a [short-lived entity](#), representing an offensive force to stabilize the situation and protect civilians. The FIB’s authorized strength has remained constant throughout MONUSCO’s increases in total personnel numbers (2014 and 2016) and decreases (2015, 2017, and 2018).

The largest [Troop/Police Contributing Countries \(T/PCCs\)](#) as of February 2018 includes Pakistan (3,467), India (2,921), Bangladesh (1,890), South Africa (1,185), and Tanzania (1,143). Other significant contributors (over 500 uniformed personnel) include: Malawi, Morocco, Nepal, and Uruguay.

China provides 220 personnel to MONUSCO (all uniformed) and the Russian Federation provides 23 personnel (of which 19 are Experts, not uniformed). The United States contribution remains at three staff officers. The Ukraine is the largest of the European contributors with 267 personnel, almost all uniformed.

There are only [747](#) uniformed women deployed in MONUSCO, or 4.4% of the total uniformed force. Bangladesh and South Africa provide the largest number of women among their contingents.

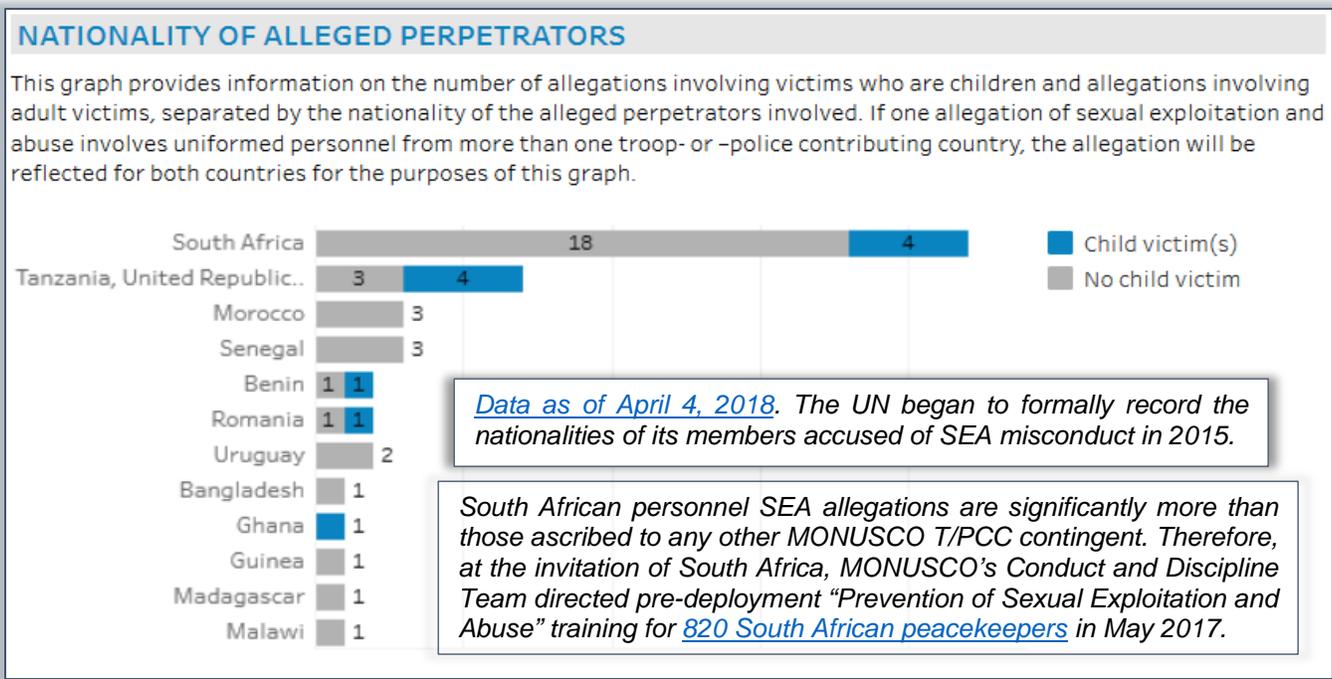
Regarding general conduct and performance of MONUSCO’s deployed personnel, the UN Secretary-General’s [March 2018 report](#) (prior to mandate renewal) highlighted:

Two special investigation teams visited MONUSCO...to examine the circumstances surrounding the attack against the company operating base at Semuliki, North Kivu, which resulted in the death of 15 peacekeepers, and the response of the company operating base in Kamanyola to the clash on 15 September between Burundian asylum seekers and FARDC, which left 37 civilians dead. Both investigations identified **a number of systemic performance issues** [emphasis added] to be addressed by the Secretariat, MONUSCO and troop-contributing countries.

It is not yet clear what “systemic performance issues” may exist or how they will be addressed.

According to the UN’s database, there were **165 sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** allegations against MONUSCO personnel (civilians and uniformed) since 2010. Over two-thirds of the allegations involved uniformed personnel. Despite continual education and training, SEA allegations remain fairly constant in MONUSCO. The largest recorded number was in 2011, but there were still 20 recorded allegations in 2017.

*There were 181 alleged SEA perpetrators in MONUC from 2007-2010. Data prior to 2007 is unavailable.*



Thus far in 2018, there are four SEA allegations and all are against South African uniformed personnel. The UN reports [69 paternity claims](#) against MONUSCO personnel since 2010 to date. The largest number of claims was in 2016 (20). There are seven paternity claims thus far in 2018.

In 2017, **71** MONUSCO personnel (civilians and uniformed) were alleged to have engaged in “[other misconduct](#),” marking it as the most undisciplined UN mission for that year. Of the 71, over half were uniformed personnel. The average number of “other misconduct” allegations per year for the past eight

years among uniformed members only (nationality not provided) is 50, with a peak of 88 allegations in 2011 (the first full year of the MONUSCO mission).

Thus far in 2018, there are 12 allegations recorded, of which three are Category 1 (most serious). One of these allegations includes abuse and torture of detainees.

*In comparison, the average number of "other misconduct" allegations per year for 3 years of MONUC (2007-2010) among uniformed members only (nationality not provided) was 165 (previous years' data unavailable).*

*"Other misconduct" may range in behaviors from traffic violations to extortion, embezzlement, and other abuses of authority. They are also categorized by levels (1 or 2), "depending on the risk such incidents would present to the organization."*

**4. Casualties.** MONUSCO suffered [145 fatalities](#) thus far (over 70% being uniformed personnel) during its eight-year tenure. Only 34 fatalities are listed as due "malicious acts" (less than 24%). Fatalities due to attack-related injuries, disease, or accidents account for over 60% of total fatalities.

The number of MONUSCO fatalities thus far is similar to that experienced by its predecessor mission, MONUC. In the eleven years of MONUC (1999-2010), it suffered [161 fatalities](#), of which 72% were uniformed personnel and 21% of the total fatalities were due to malicious acts.

*The UN Development Program, Malicious Acts Insurance Policy, February 4, 2003, defines "malicious acts" as fatalities as a result of "war; invasion; hostilities; acts of foreign enemies, whether war be declared or not; civil war; revolution; rebellion; insurrection; military or usurped power; riots or civil commotion; sabotage; explosion of war weapons; or terrorist activities." In contrast, "accidents" is defined to include "stray bullets, friendly fire, and road accidents" and other incidents, such as natural disasters.*

Tanzania lost the largest number of peacekeepers in MONUSCO, for a total of 28 persons. Of that total, fifteen were killed in a single [December 2017 attack](#), an event that highlighted [the capabilities gap](#) inherent in MONUSCO at the time. The next largest fatality number is the DRC itself, which lost 21 peacekeepers in MONUSCO and 35 in the earlier MONUC. The U.S. accounts for [four total peacekeeper fatalities](#) across both MONUC and MONUSCO. The most recent MONUSCO fatality was in January 2018 in an attack that killed [one Pakistani peacekeeper](#).

Despite the dangerous nature of modern peacekeeping, a [2014 UN casualties analysis](#) suggests that "overall UN fatalities are not substantively on the rise" once data is controlled for deployment numbers. Instead, "total fatality ratios for the period 1990–2011 are declining...for all three levels: the national contingent, UN mission, and global levels." Yet, the deaths of [195 peacekeepers in only four years \(2013-17\)](#) due to "malicious acts" steered a review of the subject. In January 2018, the UN released its "[Cruz Report](#)" which argues that "a lack of leadership and a reluctance to move aggressively against potential attackers are responsible for the worst spate of United Nations peacekeeping fatalities in

*In November 2017, the UN Secretary-General appointed [Lieutenant General \(retired\) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz of Brazil](#) to conduct a review of peacekeeper fatalities and injuries due to hostile (malicious) acts and to make recommendations. General Cruz has 40 years of military experience, to include service as Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from 2013 to 2015. His review did not address mandates, but focused on operational issues in the five "most dangerous" of the UN's current peacekeeping missions: MONUSCO; The UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS); and the UN-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).*

the organization's history." The report identified four broad areas where the UN "must take actions to reduce fatalities":

- (1) Increase personnel awareness of the risks and empower them "to take the initiative to deter, prevent, and respond to attacks";
- (2) Equip and train personnel "to operate in high-threat environments";
- (3) Achieve a "threat sensitive mission footprint," aligning mission mandates to limit threat exposure; and
- (4) Ensure leadership accountability to prevent fatalities and injuries.

While many observers applauded the report for its candor, critics [highlighted](#) that the report "explicitly sidesteps the fundamental discussion of whether peacekeeping should deploy to such dangerous and problematic environments in the first place."

## **Situation**

**5. Drivers of Conflict.** This [generation's violence in the DRC](#) has origins in the 1994 Rwanda genocide and the resulting refugee crisis. The Second Congo War (1998-2003) involved DRC forces (with Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe allies) against Uganda and Rwanda supported rebels, with a death toll estimated as high as five million people.

In the aftermath of the Second Congo War, armed groups with varying *raison d'être* ("[not purely ethnic in nature](#)") remain a significant driver to the instability and continuing violence in the DRC. However, the GoDRC still appears more concerned about its political future than in addressing the issues and concerns of the opposing parties and armed factions.

The extensive and valuable resources and minerals of the DRC—estimated to contain \$24 trillion of untapped mineral resources—remain a tension point for conflict. The mineral trade provides financial means for groups to operate and buy arms. In an effort to prevent funding armed militias, the U.S. passed legislation in 2010 to reduce the purchase of "conflict minerals." As a result, multinational companies stopped buying minerals from the DRC, putting many miners out of work and even driving some to join armed groups to gain a source of livelihood. Rebel groups exploit the lack of control and have illicitly extracted and sold the resources to external companies to fund their own political and personal gains. It is estimated that rebel groups control more than 50% of all resource mines.

There are hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Congolese due to the continuing violence. In addition, drought and flooding contributes to both food insecurity and lack of pasture. A poorly understood concept of "[transhumance](#)" further exacerbates conflict. Complicating any solution, current GoDRC officials tend to be closer aligned to the herders than the farmers, and much transhumance occurs across international borders, specifically from Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

*"Transhumance" is defined as the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer. In the DRC, the practice interferes with stasis agriculture as cattle trample cropland as herders move them to the best pasture available.*

Politically, there are many conflict drivers. Before President Kabila's controversial 2016 decision to remain in office, there was his 2015 [découpage](#) action in which he sub-divided the eleven provinces into twenty-six (a change which was set in motion in 2006 and that was supposed to have occurred by 2010). The perceived intent of *découpage* was the dissolution of the large provincial power bases of some political rivals who "will have fewer resources at their disposal and therefore be less viable candidates at the national level." With no planned implementation or financial assistance, the lack of election of governors for the new provinces led the GoDRC to appoint special commissioners as administrators—

suspending the authority of the governors and assemblies. All the new appointees were political allies of President Kabila.

The upcoming December 2018 elections will likely exacerbate conflict. The UN Secretary-General's [March 2018 report](#) (prior to mandate renewal) highlighted:

The political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains tense, with continued differences among Congolese stakeholders regarding the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016, notably with respect to the holding of elections and confidence-building measures. Although the Government and the ruling Majorité présidentielle took encouraging steps in preparation for presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 23 December 2018, they made no significant efforts in the implementation of confidence-building measures, including the opening of political space. The opposition continued to call for the swift implementation of confidence-building measures to create conditions conducive to the holding of peaceful and credible elections. However, it remains divided over whether the President, Joseph Kabila, should be in office during the transition period.

## 6. Significant Events.

### a. Recent Events.

- **13 April 2018.** The UN hosted a ["high-level humanitarian"](#) donor conference in Geneva on behalf of the DRC (for [\\$1.7 billion](#)). No GoDRC representatives attended, ["denying that \(the\) nation faces a humanitarian crisis at all,"](#) calling the appeal for donors ["a demonization campaign"](#) against the DRC, and ["warning of unspecified consequences"](#) for European nations that participated in the conference.
- **1 April 2018.** [Gunmen murdered a priest](#) while he ate lunch with a group of friends following Easter Mass. The affiliation of the gunmen was not immediately clear.
- **April 2018.** Two judges [resigned from the DRC's constitutional court](#) "in a move likely to undermine the transparency of elections in December." (The constitutional court is the level of authority for election challenges.)
- **April 2018.** The main opposition party in the DRC (the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, or UDPS) [announced its candidate](#) for the December 2018 elections. It will be Felix Tshisekedi, son of former premier Etienne Tshisekedi who died in Brussels in February 2017. Meanwhile, Kabila's party (People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy) continues its [search for a "pliant" successor](#), which may be defined as "a new leader who can manage the country's political and security systems without being so bold as to pursue corruption charges against (Kabila) or (Kabila's) family."
- **March 2018.** Significant communal violence ([arson against whole villages](#)) in remote parts of the DRC was reported. It allegedly began in December 2017 and accelerated in February 2018. The perpetrators were not identified.
- **25 February 2018.** GoDRC security forces again [attacked churches after Sunday Mass](#).
- **2 February 2018.** The President of Botswana reportedly ["blamed"](#) President Joseph Kabila for his country's humanitarian and security crisis.
- **1 February 2018.** The UN Security Council [added four new names](#) to the DRC sanctions list.
- **23 January 2018.** The UN condemned the DRC's security forces for its [violence against protestors](#)—which included attacks on churches—in December 2017 and January 2018.
- **16 January 2018.** The UN announced the appointment of [Lieutenant-General \(Rtd\) Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor of Nigeria](#) to lead the special investigation into "the Kamanyola incident" of September 15, 2017, in which almost 40 Burundian refugees were killed by GoDRC security forces during a protest.
- **January 2018.** [The CENI announced the end of voter registration.](#)
- **January 2018.** Belgium, ["a historic ally \[sic\]...broke off its bilateral relations with the DRC..."](#)
- **7 December 2017.** Tanzania suffered fifteen peacekeeper deaths from a single [December 2017 attack](#).
- **December 2017.** President Kabila [approved a new electoral law](#).

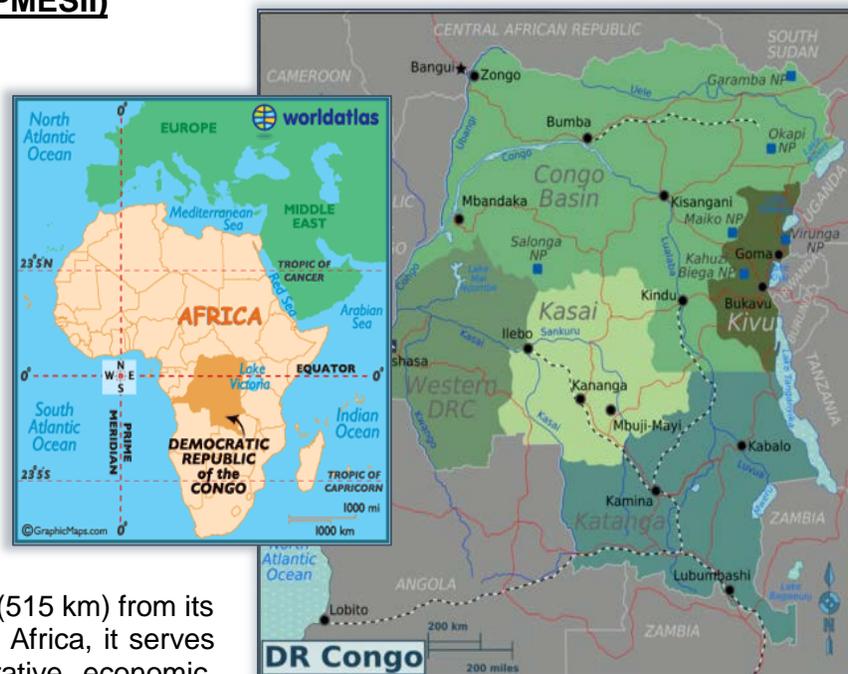
- **December 2017.** The U.S. announced sanctions against [Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler](#), a financial associate of President Kabila, for having "amassed his fortune through hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of opaque and corrupt mining and oil deals" in Congo.
- **22 November 2017.** Representatives of the [Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo \(DRC\) and the region](#) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, "to review the status of preparations for elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and discuss coordinated regional and international support to the electoral process."**9 October 2017.** Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) [attacked a MONUSCO base](#).
- **November 2017.** The DRC's CENI, [published a new electoral calendar](#).
- **October 2017.** The UN [activated a "Level 3" emergency](#) for humanitarian aid for the DRC.
- **15 September 2017.** Almost 40 Burundian [refugees were killed](#) by GoDRC security forces during a protest regarding detained personnel near Kamanyola. Among the dead were children. The survivors moved to areas closer to MONUSCO encampments.
- **21 June 2017.** The UN Security Council adopted [UNSCR 2360\(2017\)](#) to renew sanctions until 1 July 2018. They also noted a "new criterion" for sanctions against individuals—Attacks on peacekeepers or UN personnel, including the Group of Experts.
- **4 May 2017.** UN Security Council members [noted the lack of consensus](#) regarding the "special arrangements" of the December 2016 agreement implementation "and called on all parties to remain committed to the agreement and the overarching objective of organising [sic] peaceful, credible, free, fair and inclusive elections by the end of 2017."

## b. Upcoming Events.

- **20 April 2018.** The UN is expected to [de-activate its "Level 3" emergency](#) for humanitarian aid for the DRC.
- **July and August 2018.** UNSCR mandate of the Group of Experts and sanctions expires.
- **December 2018.** DRC national elections to be conducted.
- **31 March 2019.** MONUSCO mandate expires.

## Operational Environment (GPMESII)

**7. Geographic.** Predominately a tropical climate, with hot and humid in equatorial river basin; cooler and drier in southern highlands; and cooler and wetter in eastern highlands. Located in central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has a 25-mile (40-km) coastline on the Atlantic Ocean but is otherwise landlocked. It is the second largest country in Africa (after Algeria) and largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. The capital, Kinshasa, is located on the Congo River about 320 miles (515 km) from its mouth. The largest city in central Africa, it serves as the country's official administrative, economic, and cultural center.



[The environment is a casualty of armed conflict](#). Poaching threatens wildlife populations; refugees and internally displaced persons are all responsible for significant deforestation and soil erosion in attempts to create shelters and bare-subsistence farming.

**8. Political.** The DRC has been categorized as a “[semi-presidential republic](#)” led by President Joseph Kabila, with a civil law system based on Belgian Law as well as tribal law. The president is directly elected by simple majority popular vote for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term). The last election was on 28 November 2011 with Kabila [receiving 49% of the votes](#) in a process many observers considered “[marred by serious voting irregularities](#)”.

[Suffrage](#) is both universal and compulsory for all citizens 18 years of age and older. Citizenship is only by descent (at least one parent must be a citizen) or naturalization (with five-year residency requirement). There is no birthright or [dual-citizenship recognized](#). Citizenship determination compounds the electoral process in that many of the population are without documentation, either due to displacement or lack of local government institutions.

[Joseph Kabila](#) received military training in China and fought alongside his father, Laurent Kabila, in a 1997 coup against Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled in the DRC as a dictator for more than 20 years. Laurent Kabila took power; Joseph became president in 2001 when his father was assassinated. He was formally elected in 2006, and secured another term in controversial elections in 2011.

While he initially had allies among regional and international governments, his intransience about leaving office by 2016, in accordance with the DRC constitution, has eroded his support. His family allegedly owns more than 70 DRC corporations.

President Kabila’s 2017 appointment of his most recent Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, highlighted the DRC’s [issues with dual-citizenship](#): “The Congolese Constitution stipulates that Congolese nationality ‘cannot be held concurrently with any other nationality’ and that to occupy an official position in government, one has to be a Congolese citizen”. (Minister Tshibala was allegedly a Belgian citizen through naturalization.) Most recently, one of the presidential candidates—[Moïse Katumbi](#)—is also believed to have [naturalized Italian citizenship](#).

The DRC’s Constitution unequivocally limits the president to two terms. Therefore, presidential elections were planned for 2016. However, in 2016 President Kabila [indicated his intention to run again beyond his term](#)—or at least to delay the elections beyond the 2016 expected date. This event generated much of the current violence in the DRC. In May 2016, the DRC Constitutional Court supported President Kabila by ruling that the president may remain in power if there is no elected successor, thus providing Kabila a narrative to support his stay as president as long as there are no elections.

The **Catholic Bishops of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO)** brokered DRC’s late December 2016’s political transition agreement (called the [Saint Sylvester “Global and Inclusive” Agreement](#)), which was designed to avoid further violence. While the agreement appeared useful at the time, it encountered its first significant challenge in early February 2017, when the leading Congolese opposition figure, [Etienne Tshisekedi](#), died in Brussels. A divisive figure himself, he “was to lead the monitoring committee tasked with applying the deal.” His death—and the subsequent controversy regarding his funeral arrangements—increased tensions in DRC throughout 2017. In [December 2017](#), President Kabila again refused to schedule elections, citing concerns for electoral funding. At that point, the previously neutral Catholic Church began to organize protests through its Lay Coordination Committee—“[all of which have ended violently](#).”

There are approximately 278 parties registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Many—if not most—of the political parties' platforms are based in tribal and ethnic issues; many—if not most—of the parties have armed groups associated with them. President Joseph Kabila's People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD) is the largest in parliament. The "G7" political opposition alliance includes the *Union Nationale des Fédéralistes Congolais* (UNAFEC), the National Union of Democrats and Federalists (UNADEF) and *Avenir du Congo* (ACO). A relatively new opposition coalition is the "[Rassemblement](#)," (French for "a gathering"). Co-founded with the late Etienne Tshisekedi, then a leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), and former Katanga Governor Moïse Katumbi, the new coalition was another attempt to develop a cohesive strategy to oust President Joseph Kabila. In April 2018, [UDPS named Felix Tshisekedi](#) (son of Etienne Tshisekedi) as its leader and presidential candidate in long delayed polls due at the end of the year. President Kabila's PPRD [must also choose a candidate](#),

*Moïse Katumbi was a political ally of Kabila for over a decade, serving as a governor of a province. However, he broke from his party in September 2015 when it became apparent that the president would not relinquish power. Katumbi expected to run for presidential office that November. He is popular in part to his management of the Congolese football club "TP Mazembe" which are reigning leaders of the African Champions League. He is a co-founder of [Rassemblement](#). In May 2016, he was tried and convicted in absentia for "hiring foreign mercenaries."*

assuming Kabila does not attempt to stand for election again, despite the two-term limitation as outlined in the Constitution.

**9. Military/Security.** The security situation in the DRC remains volatile. Main threats are rebel groups and criminal networks, although the number of armed community self-defense entities are increasing. [Allegedly](#):

...over 120 armed groups are active in eastern Congo. Many of these groups receive support from the Congolese government and security forces, while others have formed coalitions against the Kabila government. Yet the gravest threat to Congolese civilians comes from the security forces meant to protect them. According to the UN human rights office in Congo, some 1,180 people were extrajudicially *[sic]* executed by Congolese "state agents" in 2017, far more than those killed by any of the armed groups and a threefold increase over two years.

MONUSCO has responded with aerial operations and taken immediate steps to strengthen the protection of civilians through increased joint police and military patrols and redeploying additional troops of its FIB. Serious tensions exist between communities, especially local ethnic groups, migrants and the internally displaced (IDPs), who increased from 50,000 to 500,000 in a three-year span (2011-14) and continues to grow. There are several influential players in the military/security arena:

**a. State Armed Groups.**

**The Army (*Forces d'Armees de la Republique Democratique du Congo*, or FARDC), Navy (*La Marine Nationale*) and Congolese Air Force (*Force Aerienne Congolaise*).** Estimated at 140K in strength, the FARDC was formed after the Second Congo War to integrate various armed groups and serve as a unified national armed forces. By 2010, the international community funded over \$14 billion in military professionalism initiatives, training, and education. Additionally, the FARDC has at least 14 bilateral technical assistance agreements. Despite these efforts, the FARDC appear to lack

*In 2013, FARDC [members trained by U.S. Special Operations](#) "joined with other Congolese soldiers to rape 97 women and 33 girls as they fled a rebel advance in eastern Congo in November," according to the United Nations. The training program was called Operation Olympic Chase, and was led by the State Department and the U.S. Africa Command, which oversees U.S. military operations on the continent.*

any commitment to neutralizing the other armed groups. In many cases, there is evidence of collusion between the FARDC and armed group “allies.” Coordination of operations between MONUSCO and the FARDC was suspended during a dispute over the professionalism of two Congolese generals. Attempts to renew the relationship have faltered over reports of the GoDRC’s forces participating in [violent activity against civilians](#) (particularly against opposition parties and demonstrators) either directly or indirectly (by allowing non-state armed groups to attack the population and communities in their stead).

The violence extends to UN and other humanitarian workers, as demonstrated by the kidnapping and deaths of two UN human rights monitors in early March 2017. The kidnapping was allegedly committed by unknown parties, yet some sources indicate the DRC military [found the bodies](#) within a day of disappearance, but did not share that information with UN authorities until several days later, implying some complicity in their initial loss.

Seven DRC military officers [were arrested and charged](#) with war crimes by a DRC investigative authority, stemming from allegations by several international organizations and other nations accusing them of ["summary executions"](#), among other atrocities, based on a video of the same. The United States, France, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) each called for investigation into a [video](#) that purports to show soldiers casually killing several unarmed civilians along a roadway. Initially, the DRC’s information minister claimed the [video](#) was filmed in another African country, and that it was produced by nongovernmental organizations “to destroy the image of the D.R.C.”

**[Garde Républicaine](#)**. The **Republican Guard** was previously known as the Special Presidential Security Group. It is estimated to be a division-strength unit that is much “better trained, equipped, and paid than the FARDC.”

**[Agence Nationale de Renseignements \(ANR\)](#)**. The 12,000-strong ANR is the DRC’s national intelligence agency. Despite constitutional limitations, the ANR “routinely carries out surveillance of political opponents and is deployed in anti-riot roles alongside the police and military. [It has also been accused of widespread human rights violations](#), including beatings, torture, disappearances, and extra-judicial killings.”

**[The Congolese National Police](#)**. The European Union (EU) supported a decade-long comprehensive multiyear police training program that ended in 2016. “Despite these initiatives, the PNC [largely remains in the mold of a partisan force](#) that...has been...part of an array of security institutions over which the presidency has direct control.” In June 2016, the U.S. imposed sanctions on the Kinshasa police chief, known as [“esprit de morts” or “spirit of death”](#).

**[Youth Recruits](#)**. According to [one report](#):

In the days leading up to the February 25 (2018) protests, ruling party officials and senior security officers paid at least several hundred youth recruits - including many from the ruling party’s youth league - and gave them instructions to infiltrate churches, arrest priests when they attempted to march after the services, beat those who resisted, and provoke violence and disorder to prevent the marches from going forward and to “justify” a brutal response from the security forces.

**b. Non-State Armed Groups**. Over [seventy armed groups](#) operate in the DRC, particularly in the eastern part. Many armed groups are [remnants](#) from the various wars or spill-over from neighboring country wars. Several are part of [local self-defense groups](#). Some of the armed groups are part of a political party. Only a few armed groups are any part of any regional or global terrorism movement, although alliances of convenience do exist. A multi-period disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is [in its third phase](#), initiated in late 2015. While the programs appear successful, the participants have been known

to be “[recycled](#)” frequently. Currently, the largest and/or most significant of the [non-state armed groups](#) appear to be (if alphabetical order):

**Allied Democratic Forces (ADF):** [The ADF](#) is a [Ugandan-led Islamist rebel group](#) and is one of the oldest in the DRC, operating in the mountains of eastern DR Congo. Members want to establish Shari’a law in Uganda. The ADF was formed around 1998 from discontented sectors of Ugandan society after the overthrow of Idi Amin. In June 2010, the FARDC launched an attack called “*Operation Ruwenzori*” against the ADF. The ADF currently number approximately 500 combatants but the high level of secrecy in the organization and its compartmentalized structure make it difficult to ascertain its overall strength. Despite two years of operations against it, the ADF remains able to coordinate simultaneous attacks on the FARDC and MONUSCO, with several hundred civilians killed since 2014, and tens of thousands of others displaced. They are suspected in the [December 2017 attack that killed fifteen Tanzanian peacekeepers](#) as well as the earlier [September and October 2017](#) attacks that killed another three peacekeepers.

However, some observers note that the ADF may not be as strong as the GoDRC purports and that, in fact, the ADF may serve as a “[scapegoat](#)” for the FARDC’s own actions or inactions. In addition: “[The group](#), which is largely composed of converts, is not thought to have any significant links to other Islamist extremist organisations [sic] in Africa or the Middle East, though a video recently surfaced showing fighters apparently in DRC claiming allegiance to Islamic State.”

**Bakata Katanga:** The [Bakata Katanga](#) (“Cut off Katanga” in Swahili) is based on Katangan identity issues and claims to defend the region against exploitation by Kinshasa and reportedly has ties with secessionist organizations. The Bakata Katanga are allegedly connected to politicians with national prominence.

**The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR):** [The FDLR](#) is the largest illegal foreign armed group operating in the DR Congo and often considered the [most abusive](#). While there is currently a growing number of Congolese among their ranks, the group is primarily formed from Hutu members of the Rwandan government and army ousted in 1994 as well as Rwandan refugees. Its public purpose is to use military pressure to open “inter-Rwandan dialogue” with the current Rwandan government, but its covert purpose appears to be to overthrow the Rwandan government. The FDLR currently operates in eastern DR Congo and Katanga province. Its current strength is estimated to be 2000 combatants.

**Enyelle and Independent Movement of Liberation and Allies (MILIA):** [MILIA](#) conducted targeted killings against the Boba before moving south.

**Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI):** [FRPI](#) is an active armed militia and cattle thieves, attempting to evolve into a political party in DRC’s north-eastern region of Ituri. Meanwhile, some estimate the FRPI account for almost 25% of human rights violations in DRC.

**Kamwina (Kamuina) Nsapu Militia.** DRC soldiers allegedly killed over 100 civilians of the regionally dominant Luba ethnic group, to include almost 40 women in February 2017, and thousands were displaced. The militia group—many of whom were children--apparently sought “to avenge the death of their leader, **Jean-Pierre Mpandi**, whom the tribe had named their “Kamwina Nsapu”. The DRC called it an inter-tribal conflict that they forcefully resolved.

*Jean-Pierre Mpandi was the son of a deceased clan chief but was not officially recognized by the provincial governor as his father’s replacement. His home was raided by government authorities, and he responded by inciting his tribe to attack “any and all representatives of the state”. He was subsequently killed in August 2016 in a fight with security forces.*

However, in March 2017 the militia group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two UN workers (including one American) and the [beheading of 42 police officers](#).

**The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA):** [The LRA](#) is a Ugandan rebel group currently operating along the northern border areas of Congo as well as in the eastern Central African Republic. In 1988, Joseph Kony created the LRA with the claim of restoring the honor of his ethnic Acholi people. It was based in a spiritual rebel movement "[Holy Spirit Movement](#)." In September 2005, the LRA moved to the DRC and began a violent expansion campaign. The LRA includes "recruits" forcefully abducted from the DRC, South Sudan and the Central African Republic to use as sex slaves and child soldiers. LRA soldiers quickly gained a reputation for [murder, torture, rape](#) and mutilations. In May 2010, the U.S. Congress passed the "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act," which follows the U.S. State Department inclusion of the LRA on the Terrorist Exclusion List in 2001 and designation of Joseph Kony as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13324 in 2008. In October 2011, 100 U.S. soldiers assumed advisory roles in support of regional militaries. In 2013, the U.S. military launched [Operation Observant Compass](#), increasing the number of soldiers and military aircraft. By March 2017, the U.S. announced it is [removing its military](#) and high-technological equipment from the operations. While the LRA appears significantly reduced in size and [number of attacks on civilians per year](#), it is not eliminated yet.

**Mai Sheka:** A group formed in 2009 by [mineral resource businessmen](#), it believes that the land should belong to the original, indigenous inhabitants. Sometimes referred to as a "[self defense militia](#)" it is primarily "composed of members of DRC's Nande, Hunde and Kobo communities...in opposition to rivals from the Nyaturu group, which also represents ethnic Hutus." They gained attention due to their aggressive sexual violence campaign in 2010. In conjunction with the FDLR, they mass-raped more than 240 civilians and, afterwards, looted their homes and shops. A MONUSCO base was within miles of the sexual attack but was not notified until days later, and therefore was unable to protect the citizens. Mai-Mai groups are the [most prolific recruiters of child soldiers](#) and perpetrators of human rights abuses, to include a recent attack on 25 Hutus, who were hacked to death and beheaded.

**March 23 Movement (M23):** M23 was made up primarily of ethnic Tutsis allegedly supported by the Rwandan government, rebelling against the GoDRC for supposedly reneging on the 2009 peace deal which included issues of land and mineral resource control. By 2013, it was defeated by the FARDC and MONUSCO's FIB. The DRC conducted an [amnesty program](#) with some measure of success and the M23 allegedly converted to a strictly political movement. However, there are continuing reports of M23 (or ex-M23) members still operating as armed members, although the political movement leadership denies these claims. In particular, in February 2017, Uganda announced their authorities detained tens of M23 members [trying to return](#) into the DRC from Ugandan camps "into the general public." It is not clear if those members intended to continue opposition activities, or if the current M23 leader, Sultani Makenga, remained in the custody of Ugandan authorities. (Makenga is the subject of U.S. and EU [sanctions](#).)

**National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP):** [CNDP](#) became a political party in 2009 and a few thousand of its fighters joined the Congolese army.

**The National Liberation Forces (FNL):** [The FNL](#) is a Burundian rebel group originally formed in 1985 as the military wing of a Hutu-led rebel group called the PALIPEHUTU. Both the PALIPEHUTU and the FNL signed a peace agreement in September 2006 and became simply FNL. Many FNL integrated into the national Burundian army in 2010, and the remnants restarted rebel activities to fight the Burundian armed forces. The FNL currently appears to be in an alliance with Mai Yakutumba and FDLR.

**Nyatura Rebels:** [Nyatura Rebels](#), a Congolese Hutu militia, collaborated with FDLR rebels and the Congolese army to defeat M23.

**Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC):** [FPLC](#) is involved in human rights violations including ethnic killings, torture, rape, and mutilation.

**Raia Mutomboki:** [Raia Mutomboki](#) started operating in 2011 for self-defense against attacks perpetrated by the FDLR.

**Organized Criminal Elements (Domestic and Transnational):** [Organized crime in the DRC exists at all levels of society](#). Local collaborators include a complex and dynamic mix of legitimate business people; Islamist extremists, terrorists, and kidnapers; police and army officers; militia groups; and local politicians. Crime exists in many forms, the most prevalent being [corruption](#), [looting of mineral resources](#), drug and human trafficking, kidnapping, and poaching.

**c. Other International Actors.** In 2015, the DRC made it very clear to its international partners that it would no longer tolerate what it sees as interference with its sovereign prerogatives, the sharpest anti-international-partner rhetoric since 2011. The DRC singled out MONUSCO for additional criticism, declaring the head of MONUSCO's human rights division as *persona non grata* for supposed anti-DRC government bias. This perspective appears unchanged.

**Regional Neighbors: Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda.** Burundi shares a border with the DRC as well as significant concerns about Rwanda and alleged [Rwandan actions that contribute to the instability](#) in both countries. Burundi believes Rwanda is recruiting refugees to oust its government. At the same time, the DRC suggests that Rwanda is [recruiting and arming](#) Burundian refugees, providing them Congolese ballot cards, then sending them into the DRC "to cause trouble." [Uganda](#) allegedly supports many of the rebel armed groups, including the M23, although Uganda denies this claim. Compounding the DRC's relationship with Uganda is the issue of the [40,000 DRC refugees in Uganda](#).

## **Other Countries.**

**China.** China's ongoing interest in Congo's minerals, which includes purchase of mines and mining rights, has geopolitical ramifications despite the global economic slowdown. China is a TCC for MINUSCO and other African peace missions. It also pledged the [African Union with USD\\$100 million in military assistance for its peacekeeping operations](#). China certainly has significant—and increasing—business interests in Africa. Some observe that:

In essence, China deploys peacekeeping troops because it needs to protect its multi-billion investments and numerous assets, enterprises and citizens abroad. Through its peacekeepers, Beijing can also elevate its status as a responsible stakeholder and security provider in the international community and improve operational capabilities of Chinese military and police forces.

**Russia.** It is unclear what bilateral formal relationships—other than diplomatic—may exist between Russia and the DRC. However, in September 2017 a [Russian plane](#) carrying military cargo crashed in the DRC, killing all aboard. Allegedly, the plane was chartered from Russia in support of the FADRC.

**International Organizations.** There are many other international agencies operating in DRC, beyond the UN. Some examples are:

**The African Union (AU) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IGCLR).** The

AU is engaged in many activities to reduce or mitigate instability in the DRC. On 6 April 2016, the AU formally named former Togolese Prime Minister Edem Kodjo to facilitate a dialogue to address the electoral processes for the planned—but not conducted—November presidential elections. However, most major opposition parties refused to participate and doubted the AU’s impartiality. Regardless, the AU and IGCLR endorsed the October agreement, which contributed to Kabila motivation to remain in power. The AU may be losing patience with Kabila, however, as indicated in the March 2018 meeting of its Peace and Security Council (PSC) [where it](#) “...reaffirmed its commitment to the independence and sovereignty of the DRC, in conformity with the relevant instruments of the AU...[and]...the need for the full implementation of the Political Agreement of 31 December 2016...”

*[The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region \(IGCLR\)](#) was established in 2008.*

**The European Union (EU).** The EU deployed a [short term mission](#) to DRC in 2007, to assist the UN mission then known as MONUC. By 2010, the EU spent \$14 billion to support rebuilding efforts, including security sector reform, and in 2014 committed to another \$1 billion to fund these initiatives through 2020. The EU also designated DRC officials for the first time in 2016.

**The Southern African Development Community (SADC).** The SADC has “[decades of security engagement and regional diplomacy](#)” in the DRC, intervening twice by force: 1) 1998, with intervention by Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to beat back a Rwandan and Ugandan invasion; and 2) 2003, leaving a force to assist the DRC’s security sector after the war. MONUSCO’s FIB, deployed in 2013, is essentially a SADC force. However, the SADC involvement in the DRC’s failed 2016 peace negotiations may have weakened its reputation as an [impartial and highly influential actor](#).

**10. Economic.** Over half the DRC’s fiscal revenue is sourced by the extraordinary mineral wealth, with copper and cobalt as “the bedrock” of the economy. There was a significant reduction in production of both minerals in 2016, followed by an [increase by 9% in 2017](#). This inconsistency affects foreign currency reserves and [worker livelihoods](#) as well as putting pressure on the Congolese Franc in a politically tense period (the Franc “[depreciated by more than 30 per cent in the past 12 months](#)”).

International business policies and laws impact the availability of the mineral resources for legal export, although corruption and criminal activity also undermine the influx of money into GoDRC coffers. Consequently, DRC looks to additional avenues for export material, such as [logging in protected areas](#). Although the DRC is at a much higher growth rate than any other Sub-Saharan African country, long-term issues (such as continued corruption, an uncertain legal framework, and a lack of transparency in government policy) negatively impact the economy. As an observer [highlights](#):

The potential opportunities that a stable Congo could bring to the Congolese people and the broader region are mind boggling. The country is teeming with natural resources - gold, diamonds, coltan, tin, uranium, and oil - just to name a few. Congo is Africa's biggest copper producer and the world's largest source of cobalt- a metal that has tripled in value in the past 18 months, given the surge in demand for electric cars. Congo is home to immense biodiversity and the world's second largest rainforest, which serves as a significant carbon sink for greenhouse gases. Congo's rivers have the hydropower potential that could one day power half of sub-Saharan Africa. With 80 million hectares of arable land and diverse climate conditions, Congo has the agricultural potential to feed much of Africa. And the country's volcanoes, gorillas, and stunning landscapes present enormous opportunities for the tourism industry.

**11. Social.** The DRC ranks 20th in the world in population size (over 79 million); and is on track to become one of the top ten most populous nations in 2050, with an estimated population of 194 million. The

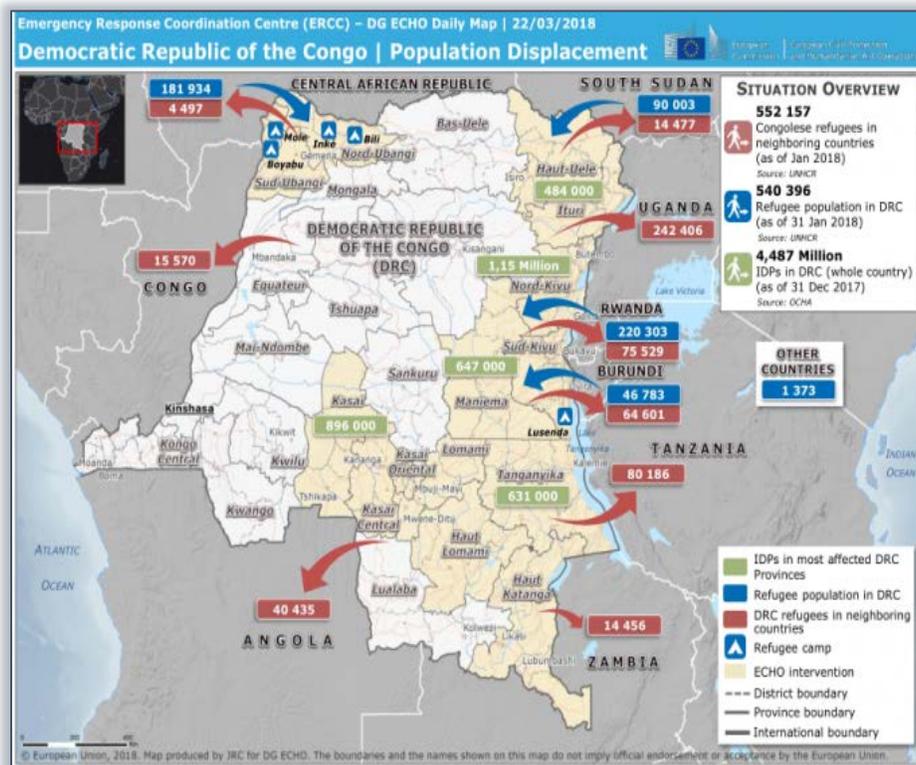
Congolese population is made up of over 200 African ethnic groups, the majority being Bantu. The four largest tribes are Mongo, Luba, and Kongo (all of Bantu ethnic origin) and Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic ethnic origin.) These four tribes make up 45% of the total DRC population.

As of 2015, the median age is 18.1 years, with 43% of the population 0-14 years, and 21% 15-24 years. Therefore, a sizable majority (64%) of the population is younger than 24 years old. Contraception use is low, due in part to the continuing “cultural preference” for larger families. The average life expectancy is 57.3 years, among the lowest in the world.

The official language is French, accompanied by the unofficial languages of Lingala (a lingua franca trade language), Kingwana (a dialect of Kiswahili or Swahili), Kikongo, and Tshiluba. Approximately 50% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic, 20% as Protestant, 10% as Kimbanguist, 10% as Muslim, and 10% as other indigenous beliefs.

According to some estimates, almost two-thirds of the population is literate, in that they can read and write in one of the languages. However, one in three DRC children do not go to school. As literacy is predominately found among men (78%), it is usually the girls who are not educated.

In addition:



The DRC is a source and host country for refugees. Between 2012 and 2014, more than 119,000 Congolese refugees returned from the Republic of Congo to the relative stability of northwest DRC, but more than 540,000 Congolese refugees remained abroad as of year-end 2015. In addition, more than 1.7 million Congolese are internally displaced, the vast majority fleeing violence in the DRC’s eastern provinces between rebel group and Congolese armed forces. Thousands of refugees have come to the DRC from neighboring countries, including Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and Burundi.

**a. Rule of Law.** The police have violently cracked down on internal dissent. [Protests and demonstrations](#) will continue as the political election process—and progress—remains in doubt. Most legal justice is implemented by external agencies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) rulings against a former Congolese rebel leader (and vice president) guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity (for the rapes and killings committed by his troops in the Central African Republic from 2003 to 2006). It was the first such case to focus on the use of sexual violence as a tool of war.

**b. Human Rights.** The DRC [human rights record](#) remains problematic, with unlawful killings, disappearances, torture, and rape committed by all armed groups, and arbitrary arrest and detention

carried out by state security forces. All actors continued to recruit and retain child soldiers and to compel forced labor by adults and children. There appears to be negligible legal accountability for these activities. As an example, no investigation was completed in regards to [mass grave found in 2015](#). However, the 2017 arrest of seven DRC military officers, [charged](#) with war crimes based on video evidence, is a noteworthy exception.

The [rationale for—and perpetrators of](#)—the continued communal violence is unclear:

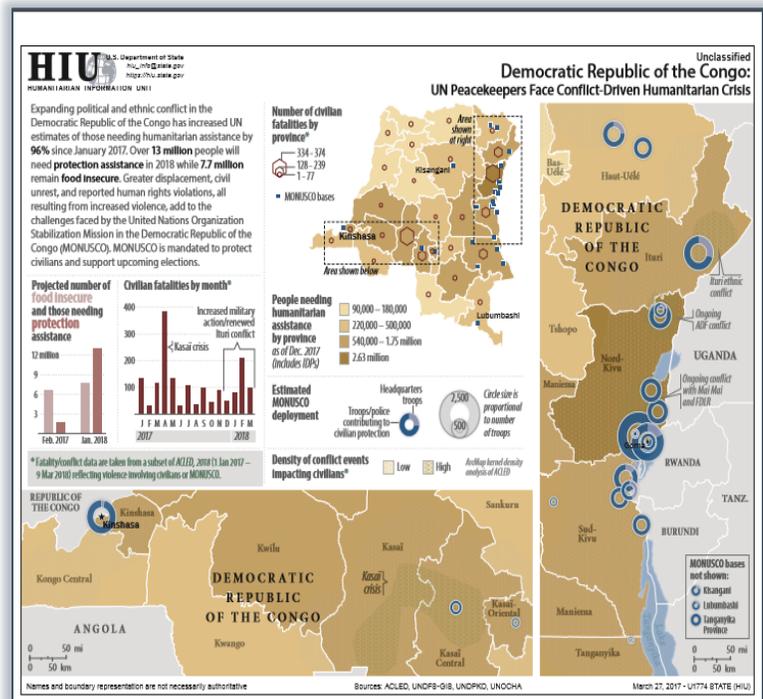
While government officials have insisted that the recent Ituri violence is the consequence of inter-ethnic tensions between the ethnic Lendu and Hema communities, local leaders and survivors we spoke to have been left baffled. While low-level tensions existed - like in many parts of Congo - the communities were not preparing to go to war with each other. Many survivors referred to a "hidden hand" when describing those who might be behind the attacks: Seemingly professional killers came into their villages and hacked people to death with notable efficiency and brutality, in what appeared to be pre-meditated and well-planned attacks. Some alleged that government officials may be involved.

In addition, in April 2018 the [Committee to Protect Journalists \(CPJ\) reported](#) “at least 27 cases in recent months of security forces briefly detaining, threatening, or assaulting journalists as they covered violence and protests calling for President Joseph Kabila to step down.”

**c. Humanitarian Assistance.** In March 2018, the UN Security Council met [to discuss the humanitarian situation](#) in the DRC, calling it “catastrophic”:

...at least 13.1 million Congolese in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 7.7 million severely food insecure people...the very high number of internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has more than doubled in the last year to more than 4.49 million, and the 540,000 refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the more than 714,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in neighbouring [sic] countries as a result of ongoing hostilities.

They further “expressed concern at increased impediments to humanitarian access in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo resulting from insecurity and violence, as well as continued attacks against humanitarian personnel and facilities.”



Almost 30 percent of children under the age of 5 [are malnourished](#), despite fertile soil and other vast power and mineral resources. Just over half of total population has access to improved water, with better access in urban areas compared to rural areas. In contrast, almost 75% of the population has no access to improved sanitation, with negligible difference between urban and rural areas. Consequently, the risk of disease is very high. In 2016, 25,030 people died from cholera, malaria, measles or yellow fever.

Malaria was the leading cause of death and hospitalization, with over 14.1 million cases reported from January to December 2016, including over 23,800 deaths. The outbreak of "[Angola Yellow Fever](#)," started in December 2015, was declared "[at end](#)" in February 2017, after almost 3,000 suspected cases reported.

*In February 2017, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), announced [a three-year Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#), requesting "\$748 million to address the most critical needs of 6.7 million people...to allow humanitarian partners to focus on preparedness and flexible, long-term funding...between now and 2019." Reductions in U.S. Government funding for aid significantly impact the programs in the DRC.*

**12. Infrastructure.** The DRC faces [the most challenges](#) in regards to infrastructure on the African continent. Over 50% of the existing infrastructure needs attention. Infrastructure development is complicated due to the state's low population density, extensive forestlands, and crisscrossing rivers. There are 198 airports, 26 of which have paved runways. Out of 153,497 km of roadways, only 2,794 km are paved. There are 15,000 km of waterways including the Congo, its tributaries, and unconnected lakes. Although there exists 4,007 km of railways, they are no longer used. However, there have been signs of improvement. External funding has been provided for the rebuilding of the country's road network. The DRC has the largest hydropower resources in Africa, which could lead to meeting its own energy demands as well as providing an additional large export. In order for the DRC to improve dramatically enough to catch up with the rest of the developing world, it will need to spend \$5.3 billion a year for ten years.

**13. Information.** Radio is the main source of information in the DRC, although many parts of the country are out of range and rely on Short Wave broadcasts on non-local stations (such as BBS World Service). There are two state-owned radio stations and about 100 privately owned stations. The fixed line telephone system is severely lacking – less than 1 per 100 inhabitants has a subscription for a fixed line, ranking the DRC as 217<sup>th</sup> in the World. However, 37.1 million people have cell phones, ranking it as 34<sup>th</sup> in the world in regards to cell phone usage. Internet use is very sparse. There are a total of 290,000 people (less than 1% of the population) who use the Internet, ranking it 143<sup>rd</sup> in the world. Because of sporadic electricity, technology has been unable to significantly improve as of yet. The GoDRC has history of [restricting access to information](#).

## **Peace Operations Functions**

### **14. Command and Control.**

- **Special Representative of the Secretary-General:** [Leila Zerrouqui \(Algeria\)](#)
- **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Operations:** David Gressly (United States)
- **Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):** Kim Bolduc (Canada)
- **(Acting) Force Commander:** Major General Bernard Commins (France)
- **Police Commissioner:** Awale Abdounasir (Djibouti)

**15. Intelligence.** MONUSCO had a [Joint Mission Analysis Centre \(JMAC\)](#) and UAVs ([unmanned aerial vehicles](#), or drones) in order to allow MONUSCO to provide its own intelligence gathering capability, distinct from the DRC's FARDC.

**16. Operations.** While the FIB was created for unique purposes in MONUSCO, its effectiveness is hampered by its uncertain relationship with GoDRC security forces and well as its professional discipline

issues (i.e. child and sexual abuse). According to some observers, the FIB's presence gives some passive MONUSCO contingents an additional excuse to avoid implementing the mandate assertively. However, the decision to place the FIB in direct control by the MONUSCO Force Commander should alleviate some of those issues.

In addition to the FIB and regular military and police contingents and units, MONUSCO deploys [Mobile Monitoring Response Teams](#) “to possibly prevent, investigate and document human rights violations in line with its mandate.” Another concept originating with MONUSCO are the [Community Liaison Assistants](#) (CLAs) that are “national staff, deployed alongside uniformed components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and managed by Civil Affairs components” in order “[to fill a gap](#) in community engagement skills.”

## **17. Protection.**

**a. [Mission Protection.](#)** UN personnel, humanitarian personnel, human rights defenders, and MONUSCO forces are all at constant risk of attack by rebel groups.

**b. [Protection of Civilians.](#)** Rape as a war tactic exists in the DRC more than anywhere else in Africa. Child soldiers in the non-state armed groups are a large issue in the DRC—forced and voluntary. [No case of recruitment by the FARDC has been documented.](#) There are over 2.75 million internally displaced Congolese citizens and over 500,000 refugees in neighboring countries. Estimates vary, but millions of Congolese have died since conflict began in 1998. The IDPs are among the [most vulnerable](#), as a women and children comprise the majority.

**18. Sustainment.** MONUSCO is financed by the UN through an assessment of a “Special Account.” [The General Assembly's approved budget \(2017 - 2018\) is \\$1,141,848,100.](#)

The DRC is so vast and disconnected that it creates problems in delivery of goods, services, and personnel. This slows down any processes of humanitarian assistance, the delivery of essential goods in crises, and the response times in any violent conflict. It takes about 3-4 flight hours to reach eastern DRC from the major airport in Kinshasa that is used for the transition of goods, services, and personnel. The isolation of eastern DRC makes casualty evacuations difficult as well. There is a lack of infrastructure to support immediate response and transportation. This lack of infrastructure also affects the maintenance of UN vehicles. Maintenance is difficult because the conditions of the roads can damage or ruin the vehicles and the transportation of new parts is difficult. In addition, there is no way to repair the vehicles when in such remote locations. Finally, there are units in these remote areas and it is difficult to supply them and respond to them. The UN Country Team and MONUSCO compete for limited infrastructure to perform their respective duties.

## **Issues and Considerations**

**19. Issues.** The major issues confronting MONUSCO in the DRC are summarized as follows:

- Lack of trust between MONUSCO and the GoDRC;
- Lack of [professional standards](#) among MONUSCO uniformed personnel; and
- Lack of security and its impact on the dire humanitarian and economic situations.

Perhaps the most significant issue in the near-term for the DRC is the lack of confidence in the planned December 2018 national elections.

According to one report, [69 percent of the population do not trust the electoral commission to stage fair elections](#). Their doubts are understandable for several reasons. In broad terms, the DRC does not have [a consistent history](#) regarding elections. In addition, the DRC population and international observers were skeptical of the GoDRC rhetoric throughout 2017 that bemoaned the [lack of electoral funding](#) and insufficient security to conduct elections—especially since [a similar situation existed in the elections of 2006 and 2011](#) (when Kabila was elected). The registration process (which allegedly identified “[millions of duplicates](#)”) further undermined electoral confidence. The ongoing election preparations [ignore several portions of the Saint Sylvester agreement](#) between the GoDRC and the various opposition groups. Some of the [opposition leaders remain in exile](#) due to GoDRC-levied legal charges. Further, the CENI’s [April 2018 purchase of electronic voting machines](#)—after a year of claiming lack of funds—suggests, to some observers, an intent to manipulate the electoral process. At the least, the “[unreliable electricity supplies](#)” of the DRC’s infrastructure may result in polling stations that are unable to conduct the elections.

*Namibia is the other African country to use electronic election machines, according to the [Congo Research Group at New York University](#). However, Namibia used them in 2014 for an electoral population of only 1.2 million voters, as compared to the DRC’s estimate of 46 million voters.*

(In February 2018, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley warned the DRC that using “[an unfamiliar technology for the first time during a crucial election is an enormous risk](#).”)

In the end, however, many people simply do not believe that Kabila will allow elections to occur. As expressed by opposition presidential candidate Félix Tshisekedi: “Kabila does not have any intention to leave power...his strategy is [to spread chaos across the country and then delay elections](#) because he’ll claim there is too much violence.”

**20. Considerations.** Naturally, addressing the issues above are the most important considerations for the U.S., the UN, and other international partners, and the DRC. Specifically:

**a. U.S.** The U.S. provides significant development aid, security assistance, and emergency humanitarian assistance to the DRC and [is the largest financial contributor to MONUSCO](#). Therefore the budget cuts to those programs have had direct impact on the DRC. Yet, even the constant advocates of need-based aid for DRC may pause in the face of President Kabila’s intransigence regarding basic democratic principles (i.e., refusing to leave office). Therefore, the U.S. (and international partners) should enhance the narrative theme “that broad international acceptance and the benefits that might flow from that [depend on an open and transparent \(electoral\) process](#).”

*2017’s MONUSCO mandate was [the first adopted](#) since U.S. foreign aid reduction was proposed, and it resulted in a decrease in total personnel to the Mission.*

Perhaps the most pertinent U.S. consideration for the DRC are those apropos U.S. policy and interests in Africa in general. Of the many [long-term U.S. interests in Africa](#), one of the most significant may be recognizing that “China has positioned itself to be a steadfast partner for Africa in a time of geopolitical uncertainty and questionable American commitment to the continent... (replacing) the United States as Africa’s largest trading partner.” Therefore, it may be a “strategic mistake” to disengage from Africa if matters between the U.S. and China escalate.

**b. UN.** In light of this election year, [a few major considerations for the UN and MONUSCO](#) are to: “increase its human rights monitoring,” “continue to denounce any repression of opposition and civil society groups,” “regularly assess the state of electoral preparations,” and conduct “high-level meetings or visits to the DRC at crucial moments – such as when candidates must register – (to) help demonstrate international resolve and interest.”

c. **DRC.** The major consideration for the GoDRC is to actively support a fair electoral process, [including \(but not limited to\) guidance to:](#)

- “allow all candidates to run unless clear and legally justified obstacles exist”
- “provide details of (electoral process) funding, in case foreign support is required to plug deficits”
- “refrain from violence against protesters and, as the election approaches, allow opposition parties to campaign freely...by lifting the general ban on meetings and peaceful public protests and by taking measures to restrict the use of the army and Republican Guard in maintaining and restoring public order”
- “ensure the security of all political actors and prevent the intimidation of opposition candidates and supporters by political party militants”

[Specific to the CENI](#), it “should continue to consult the opposition and civil society on key preparations, particularly an audit of the voter register and procedures for the use of new voting machines, while “reach swift agreement on the role of the joint international expert team with those bodies that have deployed experts on the team...”

Political opposition leaders [are cautioned](#) that, while “an opposition boycott appears unlikely..., shunning the vote would likely prove ineffective, particularly as breakaway opposition factions would participate in any case...giving whatever regime is elected a freer hand.”

## **Resources**

### **21. Key Documents and On-line References.**

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- [Crisis Group, Democratic Republic of the Congo Electoral Poker \(April 2018\)](#)
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- [Enough Project, Eastern Congo – Justice and Accountability](#)
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