
Volume 1

Issue 2 *Report of the International Conference:
"IC/GLR: Progress, Challenges and
Opportunities"*

Article 15

October 2008

Peace, Security and Reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Case of the Southern Kivu (DRC)

Philippe Kaganda Mulume-Oderhwa
Université Officielle de Bukavu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/pcmr>

Recommended Citation

Mulume-Oderhwa, Philippe Kaganda (2008) "Peace, Security and Reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Case of the Southern Kivu (DRC)," *Peace and Conflict Management Review*. Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/pcmr/vol1/iss2/15>

This Presentations and Discussions is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Peace and Conflict Management Review by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

The last armed conflict in Ituri fostered the birth of several other politico-military movements, of tribal and ethnic tendency. One could mention PUSIC for the territories of Irumu and Djugus (Hema), FNI for the territory of Djugu and Irumu (Lendu and Lendu-Bindi), FPDC for the territory of Mahagi (Alur) and FAPC for the territory of Aru. Sponsored by Uganda, their mission consists mainly of destabilizing UPC, which is not under the thumb of Ugandan politics in Congo.

The armed groups in the Southern Kivu and Ituri have always had, with the exception of UPC, relationships with the Government of Kinshasa. The Maï-Maï and the Lendu fighters would be, according to the government terminology, patriot resistants against the Republic enemies.

For this reason, they are supplied with arms and assisted by government military advisers. In some places, like Ituri, FAC elements take part in fighting side by side with the Lendu fighters.

Moreover, these Congolese armed groups have always collaborated actively with the armed rebels or groups of the neighboring countries that operate from the Congolese territory. One could mention for example, the cases of Interahamwe and FDLR of Rwanda that operate with some Maï-Maï groups in the Southern Kivu and NALU and ADF of Uganda which, in their turn, at a given time, formed a coalition with the Lendu fighters to fight against the Ituri-based Ugandan army.

Even though some have been created or perceived at first with the aim of protecting their respective communities, obviously, in the Southern Kivu and in Ituri, the armed groups are inflicting terrible sufferings among the civil populations: slaughters, looting, rapes, setting on fire dwellings, destruction of socioeconomic infrastructures are causing constant movements of the civil population who seek refuge in the neighboring countries.

The worse situation of this infra human disaster can be observed notably in Ituri, where the genocide operation carried out by the Lendu and RCD-KML fighters, with their allies (Interahamwe, May-May, NALU, ADF, Government...), have decimated several thousands of the Hema population. In the meantime, FDLR fighters have granted themselves the right of life and death on the civil populations in Bushi and Urega where, in the Southern Kivu, the former kill, rape women, plunder as they see fit.

Peace, security and reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The case of the Southern Kivu (DRC)

Philippe Kaganda MULUME-ODERHWA, Université Officielle de Bukavu

The Democratic Republic of Congo like all the other African countries of the Great Lakes Region in general and the Southern Kivu in particular have been confronted with the problem of peace and security for two decades. The logic of conflict and violence has damaged the socio-economic tissue while delaying any impetus to sustainable development. The political transition of more than one decade mingled with repetitive wars (AFDL in 1996; RCD in 1998) which ended in an electoral process didn't bring back peace and security to the Southern Kivu.

Indeed, the Province of the Southern Kivu is currently living a situation of non-peace, insecurity, social rejection because of the presence of local armed groups and Interahamwe, identity-based conflict and bad governance. That state of affairs has entailed several consequences at internal as well as external level: slaughters and massacres, the decrease of agricultural production, rape and violence against women, destabilization of the neighboring countries, etc. Obviously, this is as a result of an antagonism between the conflicts of interest and those of aspiration.

Peace and security are disrupted by the presence of the armed bands called May May, FDLR and Interahamwe; identity-based conflicts and the disparity in the distribution of and the access to resources.

As regards the representation in the politico-administrative institutions, there is an open harsh struggle between the communities for the occupation of higher political and administrative positions. The geopolitical and even ethno-political logics are given much magnitude in the political stakes by the transmission agents such as Churches, political parties, non government development organizations, tribal associations.

The military implication of Rwanda in the last two wars in RDC developed in the collective memory a social aversion against the Rwandan state considered as the enemy of the Congolese State.

This feeling is still more expressed in the neighboring provinces of North-Kivu and South-Kivu where the populations have had a feeling of being the victim of the deterioration of the diplomatic relations between the two States since the 1994 genocide which led to the massive

arrival of refugees until today (atrocities of Rwandan military factions: Interahamwe, Rasta, FDLR) including the consequences from the wars led by the various rebellions.

Faced with the challenge of sustainable development, now is the time to consider the mechanisms for achieving peace, security and reconciliation in the Southern Kivu. Among the endogenous and exogenous factors of peace and security, one can mention among other things the integration of the armed groups and/or their demobilization, the destruction of Interahamwe militiamen, the improvement of the regional economic and political cooperation.

Reconciliation also supposes the emergence of attitudes of acceptance and peaceful cohabitation between all ethnic groups living in the Southern Kivu with proper enforcement of national political implications; what requires the committed responsibility from the Congolese state and the States of the sub-region.

In spite of the heavy militarization of the Province, the antagonisms linked to the occupation of the space as well as the competition of identities in the political and administrative spheres, hopes for a reconciliation can be perceived. In this respect, the revival of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, the International Conference of the States of the Great Lakes Region, the Amani Forum and the other regional initiatives allow the process of reconciliation in Congo get moving again.

