

The International Dimensions of the Congo Crisis

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The destruction of the city of Goma by the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano on 17 January 2002 and the death of dozens of people in the town of Uvira as a result of torrential rains three weeks later caught the world's attention in a manner that the Congolese are not used to expect. Humanitarian relief was channelled to both areas expeditiously, and at the African Cup of Nations football finals in February 2002 in Mali, matches involving the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) were preceded by a minute of silence in honour of the victims of the Goma and Uvira catastrophes.

More spectacular in their occurrence and immediate in their destructive fury than the inter-African war for the resources of DR Congo, the two natural disasters attracted greater world attention than the deleterious effects of that conflict, a human-made disaster that is responsible for over three million deaths in the north-eastern region of the country. In a survey of mortality rates in DR Congo, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a United States-based humanitarian non-governmental organisation, found that 3.3 million deaths can be attributed to this war between August 1998 and November 2002. For the IRC, this is "the most deadly war ever documented in Africa, indeed the highest war death toll documented anywhere in the world during the past half-century".¹ Most of the victims were non-combatants or civilians who died as a result of the breakdown of economic, social and health infrastructures, or from hunger, insect and snake bites, as well as attacks by wild animals in their bush hideouts.

Despite the magnitude of the tragedy, the international community has generally remained silent about this crime and its perpetrators internally and externally. It has persisted in observing a policy of benign neglect. Observers ask why it is that the former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been indicted by the international war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, while the key perpetrators of a much larger tragedy in the Congo have gone unpunished, even though some of them have been named in the United Nations panel of experts' report on the looting of Congolese natural resources.²

The report by the UN panel of experts confirms the contention made in my book *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila* that the inter-African war of 1998–2003 in the Congo was basically a war of partition and plunder.³

Who the actors involved in this plunder were, and why the war was basically an externally driven agenda with national proxies, are questions that this article attempts to answer within an overall analysis of the international dimensions of the current DR Congo crisis.

To understand this salient aspect of the crisis, it is necessary to explain the nature of the war, which is the second war in the 1990s to begin with Rwandan soldiers crossing the border into DR Congo.

While the two wars are interrelated, they need to be differentiated.

1996–7: Ousting Mobutu

The first war began on 6 October 1996 as a Rwandan drive to destroy the bases of the genocidal forces made up of the remnants of the army of the *ancien régime* and the extremist Interahamwe militias in the Hutu refugee camps in Zaire, as DR Congo was then called. To pursue and destroy the Hutu forces which would be retreating westward into the vast Congo Basin territory, Rwanda needed Congolese allies to legitimise its invasion. It found them in Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a retired revolutionary involved in cross-border business ventures, and among the Congolese Tutsi, who were fighting for recognition of their

citizenship. While Rwandan troops were officially charged with the task of destroying armed Hutu soldiers and militias, they massacred thousands of Hutu old men, women and children between the Great Lakes in the east and the border between the two Congos in the northwest. (The soon-established Kabila regime prevented the United Nations from carrying out a full investigation of these heinous crimes.)

The war helped launch Kabila's successful seven-month march on the Congolese capital Kinshasa to oust the Mobutu regime, and ended with victory on 17 May 1997. With no political or social base at home, Kabila did not have the kind of military organisation capable of defeating the otherwise weak and demoralised army of Field Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko. He was handpicked by a coalition of African states led by Uganda and Rwanda, and including Angola, Eritrea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, which was determined to get rid of Mobutu, who had been playing a destabilising role in central and southern Africa for years and had become an embarrassment to the continent.

The decay and collapse of the state and its armed forces under the weight of corruption of the Mobutu regime had greatly enhanced the chances of the latter's successful overthrow. For this disintegration not only reduced the capacity of the already weak state to deal with the pernicious effects of poverty and environmental degradation, it also exposed this richly endowed country to external invasion, occupation and plunder. How else can one explain why a country of continental dimensions could be invaded, occupied and plundered by countries of Lilliputian size such as Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi?

President Laurent Kabila began his rule under the tutelage of Rwanda and Uganda. James Kabarebe, the current head of the Rwandan armed forces, served as chief of staff of the Congolese army. And Congolese Tutsi with close ties to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) regime of Paul Kagame occupied senior positions in Kabila's administration, including those of foreign minister, personal secretary to the president, and secretary-general of the regime's political organisation, the *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo* (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo—AFDL). For its part, Uganda stationed a full battalion of its army in the Congo, presumably to stop the incursion of Ugandan rebels back into their country. As President Kabila sought to assert himself as the supreme leader of a sovereign state, this tutelage by Rwanda and Uganda became more and more cumbersome. Hence his decision of 28 July 1998 to send Rwandan and Ugandan troops and advisers home. This is what unleashed the invasion of DR Congo by Rwanda and Uganda five days later, on 2 August 1998.

1998–2003: Partition and Plunder

Within three days of Kabila's decision, all of the prominent Congolese Tutsi in his government had left Kinshasa on one pretext or another for foreign destinations. On 2 August, a co-ordinated assault on Congolese sovereignty and Kabila's rule took place as Rwandan and Ugandan troops began invading DR Congo; the important Goma garrison of the Congolese army joined the invaders; and those Rwandan soldiers who were still in Kinshasa and their Congolese allies rose up against the regime. The idea was to take over the seat of power in Kinshasa as quickly as possible, with the rebels in the capital being joined by reinforcements from Rwanda and Uganda. Kabarebe even commandeered private airliners to ferry troops from Goma to the former Belgian military base at Kitona in the south-west for an eventual march on Kinshasa.

Rwanda and Uganda had miscalculated with respect to the regional dynamics. They did not anticipate the interventions of Angola and Zimbabwe on Kabila's side. A major regional power, Angola defeated the Rwandan and Ugandan troops in the south-west before they could move up from the port of Matadi and the Kitona base for Kinshasa. And Zimbabwe sent troops to help defend the Ndjili International Airport in Kinshasa.

In addition to these allied actions, popular resistance played a crucial role in defeating the rebels in Kinshasa, as they faced an unarmed but determined public that was not afraid to take on the enemy with whatever weapon it could put its hands on, including machetes, bicycle chains, and the “necklace”—a burning tyre placed around the neck—as the ultimate tool of popular justice. Unfortunately, the privatisation of justice and anti-Tutsi hysteria resulted in many innocent civilians being hurt or harassed simply because they were or looked like Tutsis.

Having failed to overthrow Kabila and to replace him with a more pliable puppet, Rwanda and Uganda, later joined by Burundi, settled on a de facto partition of their big neighbour to permit unimpeded access to its resources. The idea that Rwanda and Uganda intervened on the side of Congolese rebels was pure myth, as the rebels themselves were a creation of the two states, the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (Congolese Rally for Democracy—RCD) by Rwanda, and the *Mouvement de libération du Congo* (Congo

Liberation Movement—MLC) by Uganda. The first group was established nearly two weeks after the invasion, and the second several months later, when it became evident that the RCD enjoyed no popular support in DR Congo.

Unlike the first war, in which the survival of Rwanda's RPF regime was a major factor, this was a new type of war altogether, a *war of resources*. This was a war in which there was little engagement between the belligerents, and even allies would fight over turf for the control of resources. The best example of this particular behaviour is the fighting that erupted three times between the Rwandan and Ugandan armies in Kisangani in 1999 and 2000. On the other hand, a war of resources is a war of partition and plunder that is waged against a territory and its civilian population, in which men are perceived as competitors or potential enemies and women are sexually violated.⁴ The brutal and anti-civilian character of a war of resources is best captured in the October 2003 instalment of the UN panel of experts' report:

In 1999 and 2000 a sharp increase in the world prices of tantalum occurred, leading to a large increase in coltan production in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Part of that new production involved rebel groups and unscrupulous business people forcing farmers and their families to leave their agricultural land, or chasing people off land where coltan was found and forcing them to work in artisanal mines. As a result, the widespread destruction of agriculture and devastating social effects occurred, which in a number of instances were akin to slavery.⁵

Having described the nature of the war and its twin causes in the decay and collapse of the state in the Congo, on the one hand, and the envy of its abundant resources by its neighbours and other external actors, on the other, it is now possible to delineate its international dimensions. Noteworthy in this regard are the major powers; transnational networks, both legitimate and criminal; and African interests, particularly those of Congo's invaders and allies. Each of these three constituencies has played a role in the evolution of the current crisis in DR Congo.

The Major Powers

The two major powers involved in the region are the United States and France. Since both have a strategic interest in rare metals, they would like to see their transnational corporations have access to these resources. For this reason, and for fear that such resources might fall into the wrong hands, particularly those of international terrorist groups, they cannot remain indifferent as to who holds state power in the various countries of the Great Lakes region. It has been reported that al-Qaeda, the major terrorist organisation in the world today, has "used diamonds purchased in Sierra Leone [and] the Democratic Republic of the Congo ... to fund its activities, in turn laundering these commodities through Dubai".⁶ More importantly, the global interests of the United States as a superpower and France's neo-colonial alliances and stakes in central Africa require that they remain engaged in this region.

The United States sees its major interest in Africa as fighting transnational threats including Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, narcotrafficking, and humanitarian disasters. A close ally of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda as guardians on the frontline vis-à-vis the Islamist threat from Sudan, Washington supported their sponsorship of Laurent Kabila to remove its former ally Mobutu from power. But Kabila's incompetence, erratic behaviour, and friendship with countries to which the United States is hostile, such as Cuba, Libya, and Sudan, did not endear him to American policymakers.

Until July 1998, US military personnel were training Rwandan troops in counter-insurgency, and a US military and diplomatic team was sighted at the Rwanda-Congo border when war broke out on 2 August 1998. Officially, the team was there to assess the Rwandan government's ability to prevent another genocide. There could be no better expression of support for Rwanda's aggression in DR Congo, which Kigali justified in terms of preventing another genocide. Thus, despite official US statements that Rwanda and Uganda had to withdraw their troops from the Congo, both countries continued to receive assistance from the United States and the World Bank. This encouraged the invaders to continue their aggression in the Congo.

As the number one power in central Africa, France has had a major stake in the region's political dynamics. In Rwanda, Paris supported the Hutu regime of Juvénal Habyarimana against the Tutsi RPF. Its UN-approved post-genocide intervention in June 1994 resulted in bringing to DR Congo the remnants of Habyarimana's regime and military with a lot of equipment and supplies. Together with the Interahamwe,

this military machine posed a serious threat to the newly established RPF regime in Kigali, and its raids into Rwanda were the immediate cause of the war of 1996–7.

A major reason for France's intervention was to stabilise the Mobutu regime and help rehabilitate the discredited dictator internationally. The rehabilitation had in fact begun in October 1993 at the Francophone countries' summit in Port Louis, Mauritius. It continued with efforts by the Western Troika (the United States, France and Belgium) to withdraw support from Etienne Tshisekedi, the prime minister elected in 1992 by the Sovereign National Conference, in favour of Léon Kengo wa Dondo, a Mobutu protégé who was strongly backed by the Bretton Woods institutions as a supposedly competent technocrat. The fact that Kengo had presided over the greatest pillage of the country's wealth during his previous two terms as prime minister (1982–6 and 1988–90) escaped the attention of institutions and people who were mostly interested in debt recovery. During his third term (1994–7), he and his interior minister, Gérard Kamanda wa Kamanda, did their best to help Mobutu block the transition to democracy. France's support for both Mobutu and Habyarimana was thus a major factor in the present crisis.

On the other hand, France's military disengagement from Africa and pressures from its African allies such as President Omar Bongo of Gabon have resulted in increased French support for Congolese resistance to domination by the Anglophone regimes of Uganda and Rwanda. France was responsible for the June 2000 UN Security Council decision to set up a panel of experts to investigate the illegal exploitation of the natural resources and other wealth of DR Congo by its neighbours, and the French permanent representative to the United Nations was then the most vocal critic of Rwandan and Ugandan aggression in the Congo. France, along with Belgium, has also played a role in mobilising European Union support for the Kinshasa government under Joseph Kabila, who succeeded his father Laurent Kabila as DR Congo's president following the latter's assassination in January 2001. This has provided much needed leverage for the government and other Kinshasa-based political and civil society organisations in negotiations for a political settlement with the Rwandan- and Ugandan-backed rebels.

Transnational Networks

The second major external actor in DR Congo is transnational networks, both legitimate and criminal. The more legitimate interests are represented by transnational mining corporations. Mining transnationals from around the world have joined their South African counterparts in a new scramble for concessions and exploration rights all over Africa. They seek to exploit both the new opportunities of the post-Cold War era, such as the push towards privatisation, and also Africa's possession of a large supply of resources, which by and large have been depleted in the developed countries.

In spite of the economic ruin of the country and its political turmoil, DR Congo is still attractive to mining transnationals because of its abundant wealth in minerals and the relatively high mineral content of Congolese copper, cobalt and gold ores, which is among the highest in the world. Thus, although their long-term interests require political stability, investors seeking mining contracts do not seem to shy away from war-ravaged countries with a fabulous resource endowment, like the Congo, where strategic minerals such as coltan are found. Likewise, they have no respect for diplomatic formulae such as national sovereignty and territorial integrity that may stand in the way of short-term profitability. They make deals with whoever controls a mineral-rich territory, including warlords and invaders, as they have done in north-eastern Congo with the AFDL, Rwanda, the Ugandan warlord Brigadier James Kazini, and the rebels of both the RCD and the MLC.

The abundance and diversity of Congo's minerals had given the country its colonial-era distinction as a "geological scandal". In the wake of the real life scandals of the wild rubber atrocities of King Leopold of Belgium's Congo Free State, colonialism established a system of mineral exploitation that consisted of extracting raw materials for export, with little or no productive investment in the country from which they were extracted, and little or no effort to protect the environment. This system has remained intact since independence as a national curse, in that DR Congo's enormous wealth attracts numerous outsiders who eventually find local collaborators to help them loot the country's natural resources. As in Leopold's day, the national wealth is monopolised by Congo's rulers and their foreign business partners to the detriment of the mass of the people, who remain among the poorest of the global poor. This is the real scandal of the Congo.

For Mobutu, as for his successors, all that mattered, and seems to matter today, is the amount of money foreign businesses are prepared to pay up front to win lucrative contracts, and the percentage of earnings that will later go back to political authorities or warlords. Rebel groups, beginning with Kabila's AFDL,

have discovered that making deals in this manner is a good way of raising money for warfare. In one transaction in May 1997, the AFDL received an initial payment of \$50 million, with a further \$200 million promised over four years, from Consolidated Eurocan Ventures of the Lundin Group of Vancouver, Canada, for a copper and cobalt investment deal worth \$1.5 billion. Jean-Raymond Boule, the principal owner of American Mineral Fields, a company registered in Canada but operating from Arkansas in the United States, even loaned his executive jet to then-rebel leader Kabila for his visits to cities under his control in the Congo and for diplomatic missions in Africa.

As these violations of the country's sovereignty by mining corporations demonstrate, even legitimate businesses may engage in improper activities, particularly in conflict situations in which the rule of law has broken down. The UN panel of experts' report on the illegal exploitation of Congolese resources lists 85 business enterprises that the panel considers to have violated OECD guidelines for multinational corporations. Of these, 21 companies are Belgian, 12 are South African, 10 are British, 8 are American, 5 are Canadian and 4 each are German and Zimbabwean. Moreover, the panel recommends the placing of financial restrictions on 29 companies, and a travel ban and financial restrictions on 54 individuals, most of whom are connected with the 29 companies. These include individuals with close ties to presidents Joseph Kabila of DR Congo, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Travel bans and financial restrictions are also urged against the Russian arms merchant Victor Bout and a number of Antwerp-based diamond dealers.

The other type of transnational actor in DR Congo is crime networks, including arms merchants, drug traffickers, money launderers and Mafia groups of all kinds, some of which are identified in the UN panel of experts' report as "unscrupulous business people". Transnational criminal networks have entered into alliances with states and warlords to profit from the crisis and to plunder Congo's natural resources with impunity. The trade in coltan, diamonds, gold, timber, coffee and other resources of Congo's soil and forests has enriched individuals all over the world. While detailed information on the criminal networks is difficult to obtain, the proliferation of small arms, such as Kalashnikov rifles that can be purchased for as little as \$10 a piece, and the role of illicit finance in helping to sustain armed conflict in resource-rich areas like north-eastern Congo, are clear manifestations of the active involvement of these networks in fuelling the crisis.

Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi

Transnational mining companies and criminal networks are not the only external forces likely to fish in troubled waters. The UN panel of experts' report has shown that the major interest of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi in DR Congo is to plunder the country. This is the main rationale for President Museveni's strategy of the "Somalisation" of the Congo, which has included creating Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC and supporting up to three different factions of the RCD breakaway group originally led by Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Mouvement de libération* (RCD-ML).

Museveni's generals and other military commanders have been more successful in making business deals than in waging war in the Congo. Thus, beginning with his half brother, General Salim Saleh, and Uganda's then-army chief of staff, General Kazini, who is said to be Museveni's cousin, the major activity of the Ugandan army in north-eastern Congo until 2003 was the systematic looting of natural resources. (The UN panel of experts recommends a travel ban and financial restrictions for both Saleh and Kazini, as well as financial restrictions for three of Saleh's companies and one of Kazini's.) A regime of pillage reminiscent of the Leopoldian era was established, with Ugandans and Rwandans dividing among themselves the gold, diamonds, timber, coffee and tea of the north-east. As indicated above, the military clashes of 1999 and 2000 between Rwandan and Ugandan troops in Kisangani were basically a case of fighting over turf and resources.

There is no doubt that a major concern of the RPF regime in Kigali was the threat posed by the *génocidaires*, who were still committed to finishing off the deadly task they had set for themselves in 1994. But if the Rwandan army could not contain rebel incursions along the 217-km border between Rwanda and DR Congo, what made Kagame and his military strategists think they could wipe out the threat by unleashing their troops in the vast interior of Congo? In their arrogant belief that they could hunt down and kill the last Hutu extremist, the Rwandan militarists were determined to take advantage of the collapse of the Congolese state and army to set up a puppet regime in Kinshasa, or at the very least a buffer zone in eastern Congo, involving the Tutsi settlement and economic exploitation of that region. They demonstrated their true intentions by giving foreign firms mining concessions for the exploitation of rare metals in the

occupied territory, and by making sure that Rwanda, and not Uganda, took the lion's share of Congo's resources. As one Ugandan daily commented with respect to the 1999 clashes between the Ugandan and Rwandan armies in Kisangani, "though the Ugandans made money, they got crumbs as Rwanda took the lucrative deals."⁷

Burundi, the third partner in the anti-Kabila coalition, also sought to justify its limited military involvement as arising out of the need to stop incursions by Congo-based Hutu extremists. However, until the imposition of economic sanctions against Burundi in the wake of a coup d'état there in July 1996, it was the major market for gold smuggled from the Congo. With Uganda and Rwanda deeply involved in the gold trade, Burundi could not afford to be left out of the scramble for Congo's riches.

Angola and Zimbabwe

Originally, four countries came to Laurent Kabila's rescue when the war erupted in 1998: Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad. Of these, the first two are those with significant interests at stake in DR Congo. They justified their intervention in the Congo war as support for a fellow member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) facing external aggression, in accordance with international law and the charters of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity. While this justification was plausible, there is no doubt that the personal motivations of the leaders involved as well as the economic and geopolitical interests of their countries influenced the decision to intervene.

For Angola, these interests were basically two-fold. First, Angola needed to protect its petroleum and diamond exploitation zones, particularly the oil-rich area from its north-west to Cabinda, which is partitioned by a slice of Congolese territory. The occupation of the Atlantic region of DR Congo by the anti-Kabila alliance in August 1998 was a clear and present danger for Luanda, not only because of its potentially negative impact on industry and commerce, but also in view of the alleged collaboration between the alliance and UNITA, the Angolan rebel movement led by Jonas Savimbi.

Second, the Luanda government feared that Savimbi would once again use an unstable Congo as a rear base for his rebellion, as he did during the Mobutu regime. More than its fellow SADC members Zimbabwe and Namibia, Angola has an evident interest in the stability of the Congo, a country with which it shares a long land border of 2,511 kilometres. Having already intervened in 1997 in both Congos, by helping to put Kabila in power in Kinshasa and restoring the *ancien régime* of Denis Sassou-Nguesso in Brazzaville, the Angolan government was eager to establish its credentials as a regional power in central Africa.

Both Angola and Namibia followed Zimbabwe in advocating a military role for SADC in DR Congo. Zimbabwe took the initiative in making their intervention a collective defence action against an external threat through the SADC "Organ for Politics, Defence and Security", then chaired by President Mugabe. These legal niceties were a convenient cover for Zimbabwe's real intentions, which had to do with the economic and geopolitical interests of the governing elite.

The Kabila government reportedly owed millions of dollars to Zimbabwe for military equipment and supplies obtained during the seven-month war of 1996–7. After the regime change in Kinshasa, a number of Zimbabwean businesses and state enterprises extended credit to DR Congo for the purchase of goods in various sectors, but failed to receive payment. Moreover, with its population of fifty–sixty million people, the Congo represents an attractive market for Zimbabwe's goods and services, especially considering that Zimbabwean textile, agro-industrial and other enterprises have been losing ground, even at home, to competition from South Africa and suffering from the detrimental effects of globalisation. In the area of clothing, for example, the textile factories of Bulawayo were having a hard time competing with better-quality imports.

Zimbabwe's governing elite was determined to make good on its investment in DR Congo. During the civil war in Mozambique, Zimbabwe had sent thousands of troops to help the FRELIMO government fight the RENAMO rebels. After the civil war (which ended in 1992), there were no dividends for Zimbabwe's sacrifices, as South Africa, the very country that (under apartheid) had armed RENAMO and tried to destroy Mozambique's society and economy, reaped the lion's share of the benefits of peace. Zimbabwe was determined not to be short-changed this time around. It hoped to garner some concrete gains from its military intervention in DR Congo.

For a year or so, Billy Rautenbach, a Zimbabwean businessman who is reportedly close to Mugabe's entourage, acted as the managing director of Gécamines, Congo's state mining company specialising in copper and cobalt. Zimbabwe had a strong military presence in the southern Congolese city of Mbuji-Mayi,

and Zimbabweans were said to be airlifting diamonds home on a regular basis. With the complicity of some Congolese officials, several prominent Zimbabweans became owners of the two richest diamond mines in Mbuji-Mayi, under a company called Sengamines. While Zimbabwe as a state may not benefit much from the looting of DR Congo's resources, individual members of the country's elite have reaped the spoils of war. Besides Rautenbach and Emmerson Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe's speaker of parliament, they include General Vitalis Zvinvashe, army commander during Zimbabwe's 1998–2002 military engagement in DR Congo.⁸ His trucking company was used to carry supplies for Zimbabwean troops in DR Congo from Harare to Lubumbashi.

African Solutions

The misfortune of the Congo is due to the post-independence failure to consolidate democracy, a failure that is primarily a function of the betrayal of the people's expectations by their political and military leaders, who have placed narrow class interests above patriotism and the general welfare. Rather than serving to meet the basic needs of the population, the enormous wealth of the Congo has been monopolised by its rulers and their foreign allies, represented today by several networks of international financial criminality including states, mafia groups, and rogue business operators, which thrive on profiting from crisis situations.

What is happening in DR Congo has already occurred in the resource wars of Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which gave the world new concepts such as "conflict diamonds" and whetted the appetite of many to follow the example of Liberia's Charles Taylor in moving from warlord to head of state by any means necessary, be it force or internationally supervised elections. The responsibility of the international community in resource wars such as that which has ravaged DR Congo is evident, particularly as regards double standards in implementing international law. For if billions of dollars can be spent in fighting against ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in the Balkans, why it is difficult to devote even a small fraction of that amount to combating similar crimes in Africa?

The major lesson of all this is that Africans have to assume full responsibility for their own problems, just as Nigeria and the regional peacekeeping force ECOMOG have attempted to do in Liberia and Sierra Leone. South Africa's role in facilitating the inter-Congolese dialogue that has resulted in the current process of national reconciliation and transition to democracy is a positive reinforcement of the need for African solutions to African problems. However, since these problems invariably have an international dimension in the current context of globalisation, the involvement of the world community is indispensable. The United Nations played a crucial part in the success of the inter-Congolese dialogue and remains engaged in support of the transition process. Peace and security in central Africa can be established only by restoring a strong state in DR Congo, one with the capacity to play an effective role in ensuring stability and sustainable development in the entire Great Lakes region.

1. International Rescue Committee, "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey", New York, April 2003, p. ii.

2. UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, New York. The report was issued in five instalments between 12 April 2001 and 23 October 2003. Of the five, the most comprehensive is the 16 October 2002 report (S/2002/1146), which contains invaluable data in its findings and annexes.

3. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2002).

4. For this particular aspect of the conflict, see *The War within the War: Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002).

5. UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Panel of Experts* (S/2003/1027), 23 October 2003, p. 5.

6. Jonathan M. Winer, "Illicit Finance and Global Conflict" (Fafo Report 380), Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, Oslo, 2002, p. 38.

7. Charles Onyango-Obbo, "What's the Beef with Uganda, Rwanda, in DRC?", *Monitor* (Kampala), 11 August 1999.

8. On Mnangagwa's role, see UN Security Council, *Addendum to the Report of the Panel of Experts* (S/2001/1072), 10 November 2001, paragraph 78. The panel recommends financial restrictions and a travel ban for both Mnangagwa and Zvinavashe and the placing of financial restrictions on two of Zvinavashe's companies operating in the Congo.