

Cross-analyses of conflicts in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo¹

Stabilisation support pool of Congolese civil society experts

March 2017

¹ (excerpts, full French text available on www.pole-institute.org and www.peaceworkafrica.net)

Introduction

“The aim of the stabilisation process is to change the relations between State and society by fostering continuous negotiation of the respective responsibilities of public players and communities, on the basis of which accountability and trust can start to be built. This process must therefore work both ways: top down – allowing the State to fulfil its obligations, and grassroots up – providing the requisite means to make the State accountable to the population. In so doing, stabilisation opens the way to more sustainable development and governance interventions.”²

Any stabilisation action must by definition establish trust between the different players and boost the capacities of the local players who alone can ensure the action has a lasting effect.

It follows that stabilisation in DRC can only be sustainable and effective with the participation of all the key players, in particular civil society based in the different areas of stabilisation.

This publication aims to share the efforts and products of the “*Stabilisation support pool of Congolese civil society experts*

” which has been operational since 2016. It wishes to emphasise the considerable contribution of the local experts in conflict analysis and their complementary viewpoints on stabilisation in DRC. Civil society resource persons represent an important link between the international players, the people and institutions intervening in the different zones and the population on the ground.

In a context where it is the international experts and other specialists *ès-crises* who are usually called upon first and whose voices are heard, we felt it was important to make the contributions of local experts visible and shareable, all the more so as they are often responsible for producing the ground-work for the analyses as sub-contractors of the international consultants. We also feel that in a country as fragmented as the DRC there is decisive value added in creating relations between players from different origins and horizons for a spectrum of comparative analyses that make it possible to reveal common interests and gain a better understanding of the diverse points of view of the stakeholders.

History

Since April 2015 and with the support of German Cooperation, the MONUSCO Stabilisation Support Unit (SSU) - which works in partnership with the state programme called STAREC - , has been seeking to boost local capacity in terms of stabilisation and in order to do so, to cooperate with local experts from civil society who have formed a “stabilisation support pool”.

These experts from a variety of different areas meet regularly to exchange ideas and go into more depth on the appropriation of the ISSSS strategy and analyse the conflicts in their areas. They constitute a multi-disciplinary, multi-ethnic group with complementarities and strong synergies.

Here are the identity, the vision, the interests and principles they have chosen for themselves:

² The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) validated by the government of DRC and the international actors in April 2015

Pool of resource persons in support of the ISSSS strategy

1) *Origins*

- civil society organisations active on the ground
- different areas in eastern DRC: Sud-Kivu (Bukavu, Fizi-Baraka, Ruzizi Plain), North-Kivu (Grand Nord and Petit Nord), Ituri (South Irumu, Mambassa), Haut-Uélé (Faradje), etc.
- different communities (a fine lesson which shows that pluralism is not an impoverishment but rather an enrichment)

2) *Legitimacy*

- our daily work with the communities
- our analysis skills and expertise in relation to the issues at stake, as well as the dynamics of the conflicts in our respective areas of intervention
- our trademark: the quality of our work in terms of peace building

3) *Our vision, our goal?*

- To live in a stable DRC
- To build a Congolese network of regular analysis of the context in different corners of Eastern DRC
- To promote the competencies of civil society in the stabilisation process
- To become a resource able to support all stages of the stabilisation process: context analysis, identification of community needs, strategic analysis meetings with the international organisations involved in stabilisation, STARECs, SSU, etc; facilitation of meetings for presentations and dialogue with the population in the different areas of stabilisation
- To make sure the interests of the communities are taken into account and that civil society organisations are involved in the stabilisation efforts

4) *Principles*

The pool is neither an NGO nor a rigid structure and still less a secret society; it's an open structure. But to be a part of it, there are some basic principles to be followed:

- Members should be Congolese and civil society players
- Open minded and enquiring
- Analytical skills and ability to share information
- Pluralism and respect of diversity (gender, ethnic groups, belief systems...)
- Commitment to positive change
- Not be known as a perpetrator of destabilisation

5) *Challenges*

- The sustainability of the pool, beyond I4S activities/beyond the persons within the SSU who initiated the involvement of civil society in the strategy
- The life of the pool between meetings: how can we strengthen the network, the links?
- ...

Goma, 03 June 2016

In collaboration with SSU and STAREC, experts from the pool facilitated between July 2015 and November 2016 the presentation of the ISSSS provincial strategies in Uvira, South Kivu, in Kitshanga, North Kivu and in Bunia, Ituri. Around a hundred people actively participated in each of these presentations, representing all the sensitivities of the areas in question and including representatives of the government, civil society and the different communities and layers of the population.

The experts from the pool also developed a simplified tool for updating conflict analyses which is used to summarise and structure the analyses and is regularly adjusted and improved.

As a foundation for the tool and to situate the work, the pool developed a brief outline of the underlying causes of conflict and of the persistent challenges that can be reworked as required but which seems up till now to remain valid for all the areas. This is useful for avoiding the repetition of general remarks when updating the conflict analyses. Here are some excerpts.

1. Underlying causes of conflict and persistent challenges

There are deep underlying causes of the conflicts in Eastern DRC which appear to have remained more or less unchanged for the past twenty years. We believe we should keep them in mind as a general framework and check from time to time whether they have altered. The challenges that can be identified must be dealt with.

...

Underlying causes

The political, economic and cultural dimensions are intertwined.

More **political**

Insecurity

Armed violence related to mercantilism

Despite the military operations of the FARDC, with partial and recently once again increasingly the support of MONUSCO and attempts at demobilisation, the armed groups are proliferating. The names and certain players, as well as certain alliances change, but the structural problem remains.

FARDC and police ("law enforcement") threaten the population and fight among themselves for their share of the cake: security or insecurity forces?

For many young people the only way to survive is to join an armed group.

Inhumane detention conditions.

Broad swathes of land have no security or government.

The poor state of the infrastructure.

The growing gulf between the statements of the political class and the realities experienced by the population.

The State does not provide security or basic services for the population but collects an increasing amount of tax with no tangible return for the population.

More **economic**

Multiple taxes that are increasing

Rising prices

Increased pauperisation of the majority of the population

Young people with no prospects: unemployed and exposed to violence

War economies; links between armed groups including FARDC and economic transactions governed by arms

Exploitation of natural resources with no positive tangible benefits for the population concerned.

Persistent, increasing conflicts over land ownership.

Institutionalised corruption.

More **cultural**

(Culture is the expression of the way a human group reacts to the challenges of history)

The culture of violence is increasing

Fear and resignation are gaining ground

The fragmentation of society and the search for scapegoats is systematic

Conflicts between communities

Multiple conflicts marked by ignorance, hatred and exclusion

Discrimination against many groups, especially women

Civil society fragmented, partially manipulated and corrupt.

“Popular” justice and vengeance in reaction to impunity

Marginalisation on an international level

Persistent problems with many neighbouring countries (Congo Brazzaville, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Southern Sudan and Tanzania)

Borders seen as obstacles and not as opportunities.

International community and MONUSCO are perceived as saviours and a solution to everything.

The interests of corporations and networks from Europe, the US, China in the “Congolese comptoir” where everyone helps themselves

Major challenges

Lack of efficiency, vision and responsible attitudes on the part of leaders and the political class

How to demand accountability of the decision-makers regarding the inhumane situations the population is experiencing?

How to move beyond the “theatre” of development and peace?

Insecurity and fear

How and with whom can we provide the population with minimal security?

Pauperisation

How to channel the resources and multiple riches of the country for the benefit of the population?

How to combat organised crime?

Manipulation, ignorance and dependences

How to free minds from all sorts of beliefs and prejudices that crush the spirit?

How to move beyond an attitude of dependence on the International community and make them responsibly accountable?

How can we create peer alliances with the civil society organisations in the Northern hemisphere?

Fragmentation at all levels of society.

How to overcome ethnic and other cleavages and divisions?

How to develop a culture of citizenship?

How to boost the capacity of civil society members who are responsible, committed and aiming at alliances that resist manipulation and corruption?

The tool³ prompts for the updating, every few months, of the following key points:

1) Essential elements of conflicts in your area

Please designate three elements of conflicts you deem decisive and essential in your area. These elements may or may not be related to the root causes described at the end of the document. In this case, delve until the root causes are exposed.

2) Forces in favour of peace, Forces against peace. Key players

Key questions:

- Who profits from the conflict?
- Who are the players or stakeholders in the conflict (in favour of the conflict or for a transformation towards peace)?
- What are their interests, needs, goals and concerns?
- What are their perceptions or position on the key issues?
- What are their connections to the others and what is the quality of these relations?
- What power or instrument of influence do they have?
- Which new alliances can favour an approach of peace or an aggravation of conflict?
- What is their potential role or contribution for peace?
- What triggers could contribute to stopping the conflict/a major escalation of the conflict?
- What has changed since the last analysis?

3) Identification of the determining factors in the conflict

ISSSS has identified four drivers of conflict for all the priority areas:

- Security dilemmas

- Mobilisation around land and identity
- Illegal exploitation of natural resources
- Regional dynamics

Describe the factors determining the conflict you are experiencing in your area.

- 4) The study of the dynamics at work between the factors and actors
- 5) Your essential ideas on how conflicts evolve

This **tool** is not the only basis of the conflict analyses carried out, it is just a **matrix which improves and facilitates the summarising of the work** and enables the comparison of the analyses of the different moments and different areas. You will find in this publication seven analyses produced on this basis in the four provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu, Ituri and Haut Uélé. (areas of **Fizi, Ruzizi Plain, around Kitshanga, South Lubero, South Irumu, Mambasa and Faradje, Haut-Uélé**). You will notice the various cells of the pool in the areas have applied the tool in different ways. We resisted too much uniformity at this stage and opted rather for multiple approaches.

The itineraries of two war chiefs (from South and North Kivu) as well as the history of the armed group FPRI in Ituri allow a better grasp of the place these key players hold and their links with other protagonists.

We then tried to summarise the elements that emerge from a comparison of these different analyses as a first step towards the cross-referencing of the elements gathered and the identification of the place these expertises can hold in the concert of the national and international analyses.

But we also chose to present **the more individual points of view of the members of the pool** on some specific subjects. These are discussed by the members of the pool and open a window on cross-cutting aspects, historical reviews, of the particular elements.

These are articles on the:

- question of the legitimacy of the institutions in crisis and how it relates to the violence
- humiliation factor in the conflicts in the Great Lakes region
- potential of the young people in stabilisation
- Mai Mai phenomenon in the North of North Kivu
- Bwito collectivity, victim of a zero sum game of massacres
- history of Kitshanga and its evolution over the past hundred years
- Nyamilima: a multi-ethnic enclave at risk of exploding
- Burundian refugees and the local population in the area of Fizi
- challenges of urban life in Bukavu
- stabilisation in South Kivu and women
- rise in “popular justice” and inter-ethnic conflicts buoyed by the young students in Fizi territory
- situation of the indigenous peoples in the Mambasa area
- challenges of the lack of jobs seen by the communities in the area of Mambasa

- cohabitation conflicts between refugees, displaced persons, returning groups and local population in the Haut-Uélé.

In the appendix, we present the tool in its entirety and elements of methodology developed by other players who inspire the continuous work of the pool towards enhanced conflict analyses.

In summary: Who will this publication be useful for? We hope this work will be used by practitioners on the ground in the different areas of DRC and elsewhere. But we also want to promote and valorise the expertise of the local Congolese players on the conflict situations often commented on and analysed by the international specialists but which necessarily draw on the experiences and information of the local players. Finally we would like to illustrate the complementarity and synergies between the different local, national, international state and non-state players. Stabilisation is continuous work for the long haul. Local actors are indispensable. Crossing their analyses and points of view to forge synergies, allow them to cooperate openly, critically and constructively creates a solid basis for stabilisation in these troubled times.

*Christiane Kayser
consultant*

with the members of the

Stabilisation support pool of Congolese civil society experts Goma, March 2017

Members of Stabilisation support pool of Congolese civil society experts in DRC

March 2017

The pool is an open structure composed of researchers, analysts and facilitators from civil society working in the 13 areas designated priority by ISSSS which accepts new members on the basis of their skills, experience, knowledge of the field and legitimacy vis-à-vis the local population.

South Kivu

Annie Bukaraba, Bukavu
Odile Bulabula, Bukavu
Loochi Muzaliwa, Bukavu
Jonathan Magoma, Bukavu
Prosper Hamuli Birhali, Bukavu
Tharcisse Kayira, Bukavu
Evariste Mfaume, Fizi

Ituri

Jacquie Budza Malosi, Bunia
Eric Mongo Malolo, Bunia
Kalongo Rwabikanga, Bunia
Timothe Londroma Kitenge, Bunia
Abbé Alfred Buju, Bunia

North Kivu

Nissé Mughendi, Butembo
Kennedy Wema Muhindo, Butembo
Jean-Louis Nzweve, Butembo
Moise Kavunga, Beni

Nene Morisho, Goma
Kakule Molo, Goma
Christian K. Sondirya, Goma
Onesphore Sematumba, Goma
Godefroid Ka Mana, Goma
Jean-Pierre Lindiro Kabirigi, Goma
Luc Nkulula, Goma
Serge Kambale, Goma,
Fred Bauma, Goma
David Kalenda, Goma
Pacifique Buluhiro, Goma
Soeur Deodata Bunzigiye, Goma

Haut-Uélé

Jean Claude Malitano Apayima

Kinshasa

Marie-José Mavinga Kumba

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Cross-analyses of conflicts by local experts: an essential basis for working with local, national and international factors and actors

By Christiane Kayser, consultant with the Stabilization Support Unit

The seven conflict analyses presented in this publication illustrate a phase in the progress of the work of local resource-persons in their support of stabilisation efforts in eastern DRC. Through the use of a tool they developed together and which is still being perfected, a better understanding can be gained of the specific features of each area, but also the intersecting themes and common sources of leverage that can be harnessed to bring about real change. We shall later elaborate on this point.

First of all, what place does local cross-analysis hold among all the efforts to comprehend and analyse this complex country as big as a continent which challenges the individual analysis capacities of the players?

It has been interesting to follow the discussions in the American magazine *Foreign Affairs*, between several eminent DRC specialists who work in European and American universities and other institutions.

On the one hand, Séverine Autesserre emphasises that focusing on the tensions around the elections and Joseph Kabila's attempts to stay in power is not the way forward towards stabilising the nation. She makes the point, as she does in her books, that poverty, unemployment, corruption, criminality, and poor access to land, justice, and education that are at the root of the long-standing violence that has plagued DRC for decades.⁴ She stresses the fact that, in this immense country, to make progress towards peace, we must focus on the local players who can work on the underlying causes of the problems.

In their response, Jason Stearns, Koen Vlassenroot, Kasper Hoffmann, and Tatiana Carayannis argue that focussing on local problems and local solutions is "misguided", for local events are influenced or even dominated by global, regional and national processes such as the laws on conflict minerals, civil wars in neighbouring countries, UN peacekeeper interventions and political changes in Kinshasa.⁵ Local conflicts are therefore not the primary causes of the violence in the eastern part of the country. And the players on the ground do not have enough clout to deter the brutal militia or solidly-entrenched networks behind the conflicts. The local people are manipulated, the conflicts are not local in origin and the valiant efforts of local initiatives do not bring results. As an alternative to this, the authors present in-depth political reform, including fair and honest elections, that would open the door to real change in the state institutions and the way they operate. A dream that many Congolese people and friends of the Congo have long nurtured but the path towards which has yet to be found. Most probably due to the same actors and factors that hinder local initiatives.

⁴ Foreign Affairs, "What the Uproar Over Congo's Elections Misses," March 1, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/democratic-republic-congo/2017-03-01/what-uproar-over-congos-elections-misses?cid=int-lea&pgtype=hpg>

⁵ Foreign Affairs, "Congo's Inescapable State, The Trouble With the Local", March 16, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/democratic-republic-congo/2017-03-16/congos-inescapable-state>

Why is this controversy between highly experienced, well-intentioned people of interest to us here?

We are of the opinion that the question is not one of local versus national, civil society versus State, but of gaining a better understanding of the multiple influences and identifying the levers of change.

In this respect, the analyses and articles by the Congolese experts presented in this publication underline several points which would conceivably be conceded by Séverine Autesserre and the authors who responded to her, all of whom work frequently in the field with these local colleagues:

- *The conflicts in Eastern Congo are influenced by a number of local, national and even international factors and actors that are inextricably linked*

You only have to look at the drivers of conflict identified by the ISSSS and validated by the local experts: **security dilemmas, mobilisation around land and identity, illegal exploitation of natural resources and regional dynamics**. If we look further we find that these drivers do not depend or thrive exclusively on local factors or factors that are national, regional or even international. It becomes clearer when we look at the **underlying causes and persistent conflicts** mentioned in the analyses by area: increased insecurity and activism of armed groups with the complicity of certain State players, undermining of State authority, the power of a predatory State that no longer fulfils its sovereign functions, conflicts over property between traditional authorities and politico-administrative authorities, mafia-style management of natural resources; but also deep social divisions within and between communities, persistent suspicion and a lack of social cohesion, extreme poverty in the vast majority of the population, a young generation with no jobs and no future that turns towards the armed groups, a culture of violence that is taking root, the native people's rejection of all foreigners irrespective of their nationality, etc.

The reinforcement of migratory movements has led to a strong increase in local conflicts over land and identity in several areas, dragging various players into the violence.

The 'conflict entrepreneurs' are to be found among the political and military players at national, provincial and local level, the diasporas play a role, the interests of regional powers and multinational corporations often fit rather well with those of the local mafias. But let us not forget that, like the voters who are increasingly following populists and political illusionists in many countries in our global world, the population at local level has assimilated the discourse of hatred and exclusion to a high degree. Traumatized, they only feel a minimal amount of security when protected by their own brothers and are suspicious of everyone else. For many a long year it has been the local factors that have allowed different groups to manipulate each other.

- *The political theatre in Kinshasa sacrifices the State and leads all efforts at stabilisation down the garden path.*

In the article *Legitimacy in crisis, anti-state strategies and violence in the Kivus* in this publication, Professor Nissé Mughendi insists on the necessity of adapting the ISSSS with its drivers of conflict:

“It seems that manipulation for the purposes of political intrigue and other strategies that are destructive for the State is the fuel of all these drivers of conflict...”

... For in fact it acts as a junction between the drivers of conflict identified by ISSSS (security dilemmas – mobilisation around land and identity – illegal exploitation of natural resources – regional dynamics) and the underlying causes of the conflicts categorised by the analytical tool designed by the Stabilisation Support Unit think tank, in the political, economic, cultural and international dimensions (international marginalisation)... Manipulation should be made much easier to analyse in the tools used by ISSSS; politicians who manipulate young people or communities should be targeted by stabilisation strategies, in order for them to be more effective. Given the current political gratification of certain ministers suspected of having encouraged local armed groups, this type of manipulation of violence seems to be a winning recipe for those who hope to be a part of the next national unity government.”

- *Since colonialism, the long history of atrocities and humiliations experienced by the population facilitates and cements divisions and calls for a crossing of viewpoints between local players*

In the article *Humiliation: a mainspring of war in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo* professor Ka Mana illustrates the area as a field of permanent confrontation and refers to the murderous cultures that have a profound effect on women and men. Local experts must also work together in comparing the perspectives and “narratives” of each community in order to redefine a way of living together capable of resisting attempts at manipulation.

- *We should avoid examining problems outside of their historical context and take account of the different ways the histories of the communities are perceived.*

Some of the authors in this collection, Onesphore Sematumba, for instance, in his articles on *Nyamilima: a multi-ethnic enclave at risk of exploding* and *The Bwito Collectivity: zero sum game of massacres*, and Jean-Pierre Lindiro Kabirigi in his nostalgic *Kitshanga and its surrounding area: a lost haven of prosperity!* take us through the history and contradictory perceptions of the communities invested heart and soul in these territories. We also see the links between the political, economic and cultural factors that have to be separated to analyse the complex fabric that feeds the interminable conflicts. This is the price that must be paid to identify solid foundations for a sustainable peaceful coexistence that takes into account the interests of all those involved.

- *The mafia-style networks and the interests of the conflict entrepreneurs on a national, regional and international scale cannot be furthered without certain powerful local players*

We were able to anonymously gather examples of the winding and very interesting paths of two war chiefs whom it is not wise to tackle head on in these troubled times: Emmanuel Bwambale Kakolele, known as White Eagle, active in the Northern part of

North Kivu and FARDC general Sikatenda Shabani who terrorises the southern part of South Kivu. Both are key players in their areas and have been at one time or another closely related to the authorities in Kinshasa and to other influential national and regional players. A history of the armed group FPRI, which tyrannises Ituri, can also enlighten us on certain aspects. But the necessary grasp of the paths of such warlords springs from local sources and the historical angle.

- *Young people, who represent the majority of the population, must be encouraged to take part in stabilisation efforts*

The support pool asked young people among their membership to express their thoughts on a non-violent path towards a stable DRC. Fred Bauma, Luc Nkulula and Serge Kambale, activists from La Lucha, give their point of view.

We feel it is not a matter of deciding between “local” and “national” approaches, “State” and “Civil society”, or of becoming infected by the virus of “*there’s nothing we can do because all the decisions are made elsewhere*”, “*it’s the invisible hand*” which generates and explains the revolt and/or resignation many Congolese feel today, and which also gives rise to the numerous conspiracy theories, often absurd, that are going around. Faced with problems that are vital for the population—who have seen various peace agreements and elections come and go and none of their promises kept, with no hope that security and peace can be achieved—the Congolese citizens and communities often seek a culprit and rarely a solution.

Séverine Autesserre is therefore right to stress the necessity of seeing, understanding and promoting local resilience, points of view and initiatives. It is also a question of working on local prejudices, perceptions and blockages.

But there is also obviously a place in the analysis, research and action for understanding and untangling the threads that are intertwined with the players on a national level and beyond. We have to find the right levers to apply pressure and to influence non-local actors and factors.

For this to be achieved, it is not enough to focus on the elections that failed to change the playing field in 2006 and 2011. We can’t just content ourselves with dreams of institutional reforms which would turn a predatory State into a foundation for democratisation. For an idea of the complexity of the task, we need only look to the work of Ousmane Sy, Antoine Sawadogo⁶ and other experienced West-African colleagues on the necessity of refounding States that were a legacy from colonisation and grafted onto a totally different reality.

To be able to function in the long term, any democratic State requires a critical mass of citizens who demand accountability from the government, which English speakers call a system of “checks and balances”. If this critical mass cannot emerge (notably through

⁶ Ousmane Sy, *Reconstruire l’Afrique, Vers une nouvelle gouvernance fondée sur les dynamiques locales*, Paris 2009; Antoine Raogo Sawadogo, *L’Etat africain face à la décentralisation*, Paris Karthala 2001; and also publications of the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa (ARGA), <http://www.afrique-gouvernance.net/rubrique10.html>

citizen education, concrete role models and joint action), even the most enlightened leaders surrounded by informed advisors and experienced international experts will sooner or later mutate into a club of dictators. The young citizen movements emerging in DRC and elsewhere on the African continent represent a glimmer of hope in this respect.

The wealth of analyses and contributions from Congolese authors in this book, their comparative perspectives, are an essential basis for any work on stabilisation and confirm our idea that, starting from the level of conflict analysis, it is indispensable to take local knowledge and experience as a basis and create bridges between the local and the implications on the national scale and beyond.

Translation by Linda Herbertson