

# **Pole Institute**

Intercultural Institute in the Great Lakes Region



## **Eastern DR Congo: beyond military victory**

Dossier

December 2013

## **POLE INSTITUTE**

### **Pole Institute is an Intercultural Institute in the African Great Lakes Region.**

The head office is based in Goma, Eastern DRC. The Institute was born of the necessity felt by a group of people from North and South Kivu, DRC, to compare views in a context of crisis studded by unfortunate events, and characterised by cycles of violence, poverty, poor governance, and insecurity.

Consequently, **Pole Institute** is intended as a space for:

- analysis and research around the major local challenges and their national, regional and international implications (exacerbated poverty, social violence, ethnic divisions, absence of reference points, culture of impunity, etc.)
- analysis and reinforcement of individual survival strategies in a context of war and prolonged crisis
- analysis of the economies of war to find avenues for reinforcing the local population and their economic activities
- action research and lobbying in partnership with local, regional and international organisations.

### **Purpose and goals:**

Foster the development of dignified, non-exclusive societies in which free individuals and peoples take action to contribute to:

- building a SOCIETY in which individuals find their place and rediscover others through the fostering of a culture of continuous negotiation and the identification of shared positive values;
- developing a new type of independently-minded PERSON deeply rooted in their identity, while simultaneously open to the world.

### **Policy:**

- Initiate, develop, boost and popularise avant-garde ideas in terms of peace, reconstruction and peaceful cohabitation of population groups in crisis zones.
- Foster the emergence of a culture of negotiation (as opposed to a culture of death) based on the interests of the various groups.

### **Dossier**

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Chief editor: Onesphore Sematumba

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## Introduction

Traditionally, December is a month for balance sheets and reports. A time to pause and cast a critical glance over the year that is coming to an end, before stepping forward into the new one that is already knocking at the door of our individual or collective fate. We should like to bow to the rule and draw up an inventory of 2013 for our country, DRC. The Addis-Ababa Framework Agreement signed in February, the National Dialogue (*Concertations Nationales*) for domestic cohesion held in October, the taking of Tshanzu in November, the announcement of the M23 ceasefire a few days later, the signing of the 3 Nairobi declarations in December... all of these events marked the turbulent political life of DRC this year and will certainly be seized upon by the press.

As the year draws to a close, Pole Institute has decided to cast a glance beyond these events, significant though they may be, particularly the recent military victory of the national army – the FARDC – over the rebellion of 23 March 2009, better known under the name of M23. The authors of the articles in this collection entitled “***Eastern DR Congo: beyond military victory***”, offer us precisely that opportunity to look beyond the events per se and gain a better understanding of what is actually at stake, now and in the future, for the various local, national and regional stakeholders in all their complexity, as well as the consequences for the Congolese population, expiatory victims of cyclical wars whose whys and wherefores they generally do not understand.

The authors of this collection of articles were invited to write about the prevailing situation in eastern DRC. Each one has chosen an angle and the result is a range of analyses and sometimes of emotions, always contained, which share a forward-looking gaze, the hallmark of Pole Institute's work.

In “*Preventing foreseeable disasters*”, philosopher Godefroid Kä Mana places the wars in eastern DRC in their regional context and appeals to memory and historical conscience in hopes that people will not be so quick to believe “that the victory of the armed forces would be a

victory of enduring peace in a thriving democratic State". In his opinion, it is imperative, *now*, for "the countries at the epicentre of the tragedy in eastern Congo-Kinshasa to re-orient their overall policies... to create a community of creative liberties, with a view to 'peaceful development'".

Historian Aloys Tegera, in "*FARDC victory - M23 defeat: how should we read this?*" offers up a chronology of the recent crisis in eastern DRC, from the solution negotiated in 2009 to the rout of M23 in November 2013, against the backdrop of the insecurity nightmare embodied by both local militias – who claim to serve as a rampart for their communities but "as they live off the backs of those they are supposed to be protecting, any benefits accruing to the ethnic communities are meagre indeed" – and foreign militias such as the FDLR. In passing, he invites the central government of Kinshasa to "take advantage of the current momentum of FARDC morale and self-confidence to secure North and South Kivu so that the Congolese refugees who fled to Uganda and Rwanda two decades ago can return. "This", he adds, "would be a way of addressing, once and for all, one of M23's fundamental demands, the most legitimate of all".

In "*The war in eastern DRC: victory or truce?*", Onesphore Sematumba analyses the political exploitation that the government could derive from the current euphoria over the latest exploits of the FARDC, while at the same time reminding us that "eastern DRC is a hub in which armed groups emerge, proliferate, die off and are reborn with the rise and fall of contexts and ideologies that are often simplistic or even caricatural". He believes the war is not over; on the contrary, it has just begun. The latest developments in Beni territory, with the attacks by the Ugandan ADF-NALU who massacred civilians and occupied the village of Kamango on Christmas day, are eloquent proof of this.

On a more optimistic note, for Jean-Pierre Lindiro Kabirigi feels that "*Building peace in eastern DRC is possible*", despite the cynicism and hypocrisy of the international community. He wonders whether the launching of several crossborder initiatives and the re-launching of the ECGLC with a view to integration projects are early signs of a return to peace or the death throes of the end of the war. He also warns the Congolese against a peace imposed from outside by

powers that “have no friends, only interests”. He calls for the advent of a culture of tolerance and justice, without which peace cannot exist.

The collection ends with a brilliant article by Christiane Kayser, “*If Madiba were still here to light the way...*”, in which she opposes the unifying force of the global icon who passed away on 5 December 2013 to the forces of evil at work in Africa for selfish interests. For Christiane, “we only have one option: we must learn from Madiba, each at our own level and in our own context, so that a responsible citizenship and leadership can develop that will be worthy of the Africa of tomorrow”.

With this recommendation we wish you a Merry Christmas and a year of peace in 2014. Of real peace.

*Onesphore Sematumba*

*Goma*

*26 December 2013*

## Preventing foreseeable disasters

*By Godefroid Kä Mana*

*President*

*Pole Institute*

Over a period of almost twenty years, three major phases of a terrible war have ravaged the eastern region of DRC. Each phase corresponds to dynamics that can be deciphered now to understand that, if nothing significant is done to promote enduring peace throughout the Great Lakes region, new deadly shocks are still to be feared, given the current state of what is strategically at stake between Tanzania, South Africa, DRC, Uganda, Rwanda and what is known as the international community in all the complexity of its interests and influences.

When the Special Representative of the General Secretary of the United Nations in DRC affirms that the Congo's victory over M23 opens the way for new peace negotiations, it may be understood that it is no longer M23's situation that is at stake, but broader risks whose signification Rwanda cannot fail to see, since it has been subjected for some time to the collective fire of the international organisations for its support of M23.

When the Congolese government refuses to sign an agreement with the defeated rebels, in a magnanimous gesture intended to show its high sense of the unity of its people and of the global interests of the nation, as Nelson Mandela did in years past when he was released from prison and after the ANC's massive electoral victory, one can imagine that its main concern is not M23, a movement it has always described as fictive or a puppet. Its real concern is total victory over Rwanda: a military, diplomatic and political victory. With Tanzania and South Africa by its side, and a degree of support from France which has never forgotten its humiliation by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) or President Paul Kagame's persistent arrogance towards it, the Congo has grounds for optimism. The government no doubt thinks that after a long period of weakness, humiliation and shame, they



finally have the strength to crush the enemy and eastern DRC can now savour the joy of a real, victorious war, furiously flexing the muscles of its ardent discourse and indomitable impulses.

### **The three wars in eastern DRC and their consequences**

After the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda, the first phase of the war in eastern DRC was the taking of Kinshasa by the AFDL, when Mobutu fled and his regime imploded. Rwanda was the victor of this phase, undoubtedly, but the victory was sad and short-lived. The victors had committed the error of viewing the Congo as a conquered land. Instead, it should have been taken as a starting point and anchorage for a major socio-politico-economic project, whose essential focus would have been the whole of the Great Lakes region. This failure to recognise what was at stake led to the withdrawal of the Rwandan army from DRC and the start of the second phase of the war.

This phase was an imbroglio in which armies, militias, mafia groups and the forces of national and international organised crime turned the Congo into a land of deadly absurdities. Rwanda won this war of the East, after the Hotel Ihusi agreement signed in 2009 by the CNDP rebels and the Congolese government. In Kinshasa, it had a government that owed it everything, that had opened up the ranks of the Congolese army to it and joined it in hunting down the sworn enemies of Kigali: the Interhamwe (a Hutu paramilitary organization) of the FDLR. In this phase also, there was a failure to recognise what was at stake. Instead of building a major project together in the Great Lakes region, one with power and scope, the governments of Kigali and Kinshasa played at cat and mouse, in a strange dance of reciprocal suspicion and incomprehensible refusal to build a common order of mutual credibility. Kigali handled its strength badly, closing itself in without proposing a leadership capable of engaging the two countries and the two peoples in the logic of a common destiny based on community ethics and common interests, much as France and Germany did at the end of World War II. Kinshasa sought to escape the suffocating grasp of Rwanda by emptying the Ihusi agreement of its substance and blocking hopes of enduring peace. It did so either out of a concern for its inalienable sovereignty, or in clandestine support of the enemies of Rwanda, the FDLR, or in a quest for power

destined to open up a large place for the Congo in the concert of nations. Once more, Rwanda's triumph backfired, for lack of a clear vision of the higher and more ambitious aims of the war. In the absence of an ethic of mutual trust between Kinshasa and Kigali, everything drifted towards short-term interests.

The Congo has always accused its neighbour of being responsible for the third phase of the war: that of M23, which appears to have just come to an end. Believing this, the Congolese government lost sight of the fact that the real problem was not Rwanda, but the Congo itself: the lack of a stable State, the lack of responsible governance and mutual trust between the leaders of the country and a people scarred by the total lack of a political compass. Kinshasa began to internationalise the war by demonising Rwanda through numerous experts' reports on the Rwandan army's involvement in the Congolese crisis. This was a vein it milked for all it was worth. Rwanda did not come out of it unscathed: several donors withdrew their aid, with the evident risk of damaging its development model, the trump card of its global image. But as it continued to believe it was getting rid of the Rwandan threat, the Congo failed to see the real danger and the real threat it was facing: the international community giving full powers to the fat cat United Nations to put Kinshasa under guardianship and seize the reins of relations between Rwanda, Uganda and DRC. This guardianship community was the big winner of the third phase of the war. In the clutches of a United Nations determined to impose a new order in the Great Lakes region, neither Rwanda, DRC, nor any armed group can dictate the rules any more. The Great Lakes region and its wealth of resources now depend on the will of the masters of the world. The Congolese government cries victory, without seeing that underneath a victory attained thanks to a brigade of soldiers from Tanzania and South Africa, simmer multiple economic interests that Uganda and Rwanda will never be able to accept, in the short or long term. The Congolese people, whipped up by the propaganda of their leaders, jubilates over the newfound power of its army boosted by a foreign brigade and UN support. It has no memory of the previous victories of the international mercenaries and the United Nations over the rebellions of Mulele, Soumialot, Gbenye and Kabila in the 1960's: victories that led to the institution of

a dictatorship that lasted 32 years, with a Mobutu whose political, economic and social performances bled the country dry and reduced the state to nothing. If the Congolese people had a memory and a historical conscience, they would not be so quick to believe that the victory of the armed forces would be a victory of enduring peace in a thriving democratic state. They would devote themselves to seeking the global conditions for the development of the country, by rallying the moral, intellectual, spiritual, political and economic forces oriented towards a future of liberty, responsibility and creativity. All the forces of intelligence would rally to enlighten the people about the real issues at stake for the future, instead of diluting themselves in mock, blind joys ignited by the public authorities happy to have a victory they will not make their kairos for a new policy of dignity and prosperity. They can't even see that without the international community, whose troops, piled up in DRC, are at the service of a certain order of power, the Congo would no longer exist. But what are the vital interests of this international community today and where do they intersect with the deepest interests of the Congolese people? No-one is seriously asking this question, among the Congolese elites or the people, when in fact it is a question that is crucial for the future.

In the eyes of all, the guns have fallen silent and the outlook is good for peace guaranteed by the United Nations. It is from this point of view, in fact, that we can affirm that the war of the Congo is over. But, knowing that it ended by confronting the interests of Tanzania and South Africa in the Congo, with the vital interests of Rwanda and Uganda in this same country, it is impossible not to see yet another war on the horizon. A war whose epicentre will no doubt be in Rwanda, since it is now in the cross-hairs of the FDLR, in the furies of Congolese vengeance and in loss of confidence with respect to its leaders by a new regional order which is being put in place with Tanzania and South Africa as the armed wing of the masters of the world.

Attention should be turned to this potential new war to find a solution before it moves from its current state of media intoxication to a phase of military confrontation whose consequences would be

more disastrous than the 1994 genocide or the Congolese holocaust of the past two decades.

**What can be done?** We must decide to pose the question of the crisis in the Great Lakes region as a global question, and consider the economic, political, ethical, cultural, identity and geostrategic challenges in global terms in an approach engaging all the forces striving to achieve peace through development. The real question is precisely this: how can we achieve global peace through global development?

To consolidate such a perspective, education on the ethics of a new community identity in the Great Lakes region is a decisive, indispensable task. If we want peace in this region, we must turn to educating minds, consciences, hearts and imaginations. That is where the deadly mechanisms lie, crouching in people's imaginations: they cultivate hatred and sow the seeds of murders, assassinations, massacres and mass destruction. It is the responsibility of the States and international organisations to radically change policy and devise their strategies not on the basis of the concept and reality of war, but on the basis of the concept and reality of peace. Then they could place their colossal means at the service of education instead of letting them being swallowed up in stupid wars and senseless interests.

If I am highlighting the fundamental role of education and development as requirements in conclusion to this analysis, it is because I am convinced that the real war to be won in a positive and fruitful way in the Great Lakes region will not be a purely negative battle fought with Kalashnikovs and bombs. It will be a purely positive battle of minds, consciences and hearts, for another way of living together. It will also be a purely positive and creative battle to set up new regional institutions and socio-political bodies capable of effectively governing and regulating this coexistence.

*It will be a fight to change the fundamental structures of the imaginations of the people in the region.* By this, we should understand a cultural and normative renewal, to take up the words of Bruce Russel. The aim is to break with all the conditioning of the

culture of hatred, violence, scorn and death that murderous war has created as much as it has been created in the minds, passions and hearts of the people. Against a culture grown murderous and a context of inurement to destruction as a way of life, the solution can only be found in a global project of alternative education for an ethical and spiritual renewal oriented towards mutually supportive development. A renewal whose substance would be a change in the representations, ideas, visions and images that individuals and groups have of the relations they maintain with one another. This requires a new kind of revolution: an ethical revolution that only a renewal of the human mindset at the deepest levels of the psyche can make possible, in terms of values of living together. The mindset and principles of murderous war have led to disaster. It is time to build a new common destiny for the countries and the peoples of the Great Lakes, under the influence of a mindset of shared peace and well-being. This is what is at stake for the future.

*The battle to achieve this mindset will also be a war for institutional and structural renewal.* The aim is to imagine new structures and new politico-social institutions, on the ashes of the old structures and institutions that have proven ineffective and fragile. The deadly war in eastern DRC was fought and fanned by countries sharing the common denominator of authoritarian political regimes. These countries cannot call upon a democratic spirit that enlists the deep aspirations of their peoples in the analysis of problems concerning relations between neighbours. Hence the gulf separating the policies of war policies conducted by the States and the dynamics of cross-border trade experienced by the populations. Hence the clear disparity between the discourse of the political authorities, dictated by politicking strategies, and the people's will to live in true harmony, freeing their common creative genius in the spheres of trade, education, culture and the arts. The revolution to be made in terms of structures and institutions, is one of democratic renewal in all the countries of the Great Lakes region, to allow the emergence of international relations of peace and prosperity shared by all. This is the challenge we face today for the future. The DRC is well aware of this, as a country the war stripped of its powers of liberty, responsibility and autonomous creativity. It will only recover them in

a system of faith, credibility and confidence between the people and the legitimate authorities, with legitimate counter-powers to run a legitimate democracy. Rwanda knows it too. Rwanda, whose development model was hampered by a certain drying up of financial aid decreed by certain democratic countries as a measure of retaliation, based on international experts' reports with multiple, contradictory intentions, concerning the situation in DRC. The critique of authoritarianism, even enlightened, as developed by the international reports, means the distinction is now clear between the political regime and its own interests on the one hand, and on the other hand, the Rwandan people in their deepest aspirations, which cannot be those of a warlike, destructive mindset. If the country becomes more democratic and in opens up to all the aspirations of its various population groups, beyond the volcanoes of identity-based hatred and short-sighted hegemonic instincts, the regime in power will radiate perspectives whose power of political, economic, social and cultural development will be the catalyst of an enduring peace, an absolute force for the promotion of human values among peoples. As for Uganda, it now knows that, in the long term, wars started solely for the personal and socio-strategic interests of the leaders of a state do not pay, especially in a global context where the wealth of the Great Lakes region can be just as easily a reason for war as a reason for peace. War pays in the short term, in an economy of mafia chaos. But it ceases to be profitable in the long term, when states eventually realise that peace is more profitable than war in international relations, especially when the financial interests are considerable, as in DRC today.

This is to say that now, there is no doubt about one reality: whether they like it or not, it would be in the best interests of the countries at the epicentre of the tragedy in eastern Congo-Kinshasa to re-orient their overall policies by developing and running real peace institutions and organisations, to create a community of creative liberties, with a view to “peaceful development”, to borrow a concept that has been brought back into fashion by the new Chinese authorities and which would be extremely useful for Africa today. This is not moralistic lip service nor a sermon on the volcanoes, but pure political realism to break the vice-like grip of a world order that is

increasingly tempted to impose guardianship regimes when the “Negroes” show themselves incapable of governing a modern state. To escape such a fate, educational renewal throughout the whole Great Lakes region is a fundamental imperative, with a spirit of liberty radiating at the heart of the institutions for development. The future will be at this cost. It will be ethical or it will not be.

*Goma*

*December 2013*

# **FARDC victory - M23 defeat: how should we read this?**

*By Aloys Tegera  
Director of Research  
Pole Institute*

It has been a long time. Such a long time. The Congolese people are ecstatic. They are celebrating the military victory of government forces over the M23 rebels who had taken refuge for close on 20 months in six of the eight strongholds in Rutshuru territory, on the Rwandan-Ugandan border. Some commentators are even calling this the Congo's first military victory since independence. This is not strictly accurate, for the Congo has had other military successes in the past. These include the victory over the mercenary Jean Schrame in South Kivu in 1967, over the Katangan *gendarmes* in Kolwezi in 1977 and over the incursions of Laurent Désiré Kabila's rebels in the Marungu Mountains at Moba in the 1980s.

Such an inaccuracy, which wipes out the former successes of the national armed forces, should be placed in the context of these past twenty years during which the Congolese people have seen the myth of a giant Congo crumble like a house of cards, with the old dictator Mobutu at its head. The vertiginous advance of Laurent Kabila's AFDL<sup>1</sup> soldiers from Uvira to Kinshasa in just eight months was experienced by many Congolese as relief at finally seeing the end of Mobutu's reign. However, watching the fall of the valiant Mbanza-Ngungu infantrymen in South-Kivu in October 1996, several former FAZ divisions in the rest of the country and lastly the men of the formidable Special Presidential Division (DSP) in Kenge on the edge of Kinshasa in May 1997, gave the Congolese the feeling that their national army was being gutted like a fish, that their country was defenceless and had no army and lastly, that Mobutu's security system was only a paper tiger. Rwanda, a small country located to the

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<sup>1</sup> Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre –  
Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre



east of the larger Congo, played a crucial role in supporting Laurent Kabila, in collaboration with Uganda. Getting rid of dictator Mobutu, an exploit the Congolese had not managed to achieve on their own, was one thing. But the idea that it had been made possible by tiny Rwanda was, for many Congolese, an aberration and quite simply humiliating. This humiliation syndrome was to weigh heavily on subsequent relations between the Congo and Rwanda, which were punctuated by a cycle of successive rebellions in which Rwanda's role and support were confirmed, as in the case of the ADFLC and the RCD<sup>2</sup> Goma, or unspoken and denied, as in the case of the CNDP<sup>3</sup> and M23<sup>4</sup>.

It was against this backdrop that many Congolese welcomed the FARDC's military victory over M23 at the beginning of November 2013 as revenge for their humiliation. The decisive role of the MONUSCO International Brigade in this victory and the fact that there was an entire army of M23 rebels in Uganda and Rwanda were, for the moment, incidental. The priority was to savour the long-awaited military victory that comforted a people who were long humiliated.

However, this military victory has been marred by incomprehension. The day after the FARDC took possession of Chanzu and Runyoni, the last M23 strongholds in Rutshuru territory, UN representative Martin Kobler, special representative of the UN Secretary General Mary Robinson, and US special envoy Russel Feingold stated unanimously that a military solution to the problems in eastern Congo was not enough, that a negotiated political solution was also necessary and the talks between Kabila's government and the M23 rebels in Kampala should be concluded with the signing of both parties. How do you explain to a people who believe they have won a military victory that the end needs to be negotiated with the defeated enemy? Beyond the incomprehension and explanations difficult to formulate in a way that can be accepted by people still reeling from the shock, the hard reality of the crisis in the eastern Congo is that

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<sup>2</sup> Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie or Rally for Congolese Democracy

<sup>3</sup> Congrès national pour la défense du peuple – *National congress for the defence of the people*

<sup>4</sup> Movement of 23 March 2009

the root causes of the cyclical violence are still there despite M23's defeat. And until an appropriate political solution has been found, more than forty armed groups and community militias will scour Kivu, with a high risk of armed conflict flaring up again.

This is not the first time a political solution to the crisis in eastern Congo has been stressed. An unsuccessful attempt was made to defuse the crisis at the Goma conference in January 2008. In January 2009, a *rapprochement* between Kigali and Kinshasa ended in the arrest of CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda, while his armed forces were integrated into the Congolese army and the FDLR was hunted down by the Congolese and Rwandan armies. A relative peace followed for three years until April 2013, when the Congolese authorities tried to get their hands on General Bosco Ntaganda, hitherto protected by the Congolese government in the name of the “peace first, then justice” principle.

Negotiated peace certainly had its weaknesses in January 2009, shortcomings that could not be ignored in November 2013.

### **The negotiated solution of January 2009.**

The *rapprochement* between Kinshasa and Kigali in January 2009 was an event which surprised more than one observer of the Congo crisis. Negotiated discreetly, this coming together of “sworn enemies” was first of all denounced by the President of the national parliament, Vital Kamerhe, who would subsequently fall victim to it. Laurent Nkunda was pushed aside, allowing a thaw in diplomatic relations between Rwanda and the DR Congo, joint military operations by these two countries against the FDLR, the integration of the former CNDP troops and their deployment in South and North Kivu. This “local solution” to the crisis in eastern Congo was ill-received in many Western quarters, where there was little enthusiasm for a political solution reached by Kinshasa and Kigali, without their involvement or approval. It was criticised for its lack of transparency, for having granted the national army impunity in the name of peace, and for having given the ex-CNDP a space for military deployment across the whole of Kivu, which they could not have won through the use of force. These harsh criticisms precipitated the abandoning of joint operations between the two countries, but an agreement was

nonetheless signed by the Congolese government and the ex-CNDP forces on 23 March 2009. Under the terms of this agreement, the FDLR were to be hunted down to secure Kivu<sup>5</sup> to enable the return of the refugees who had settled in the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Uganda, as well as internally displaced persons. The agreement also provided for the transformation of the political wing of the CNDP into a political party and for ex-CNDP soldiers to be deployed elsewhere in the other provinces, once their families were settled and secured in their respective villages.

This arrangement was perceived as a blank cheque made out to the Congolese Tutsi community and was not only criticised but fought. Several ethnic militia groups in North Kivu, such as APCLS (Hunde), PARECO FORT (Hutu), Nyatura (Hutu), PARECO Lafontaine (Nande), May May Shetani (Nande), emerged then and are still active today. Their common denominator was defending the country against "foreign invaders"<sup>6</sup> that is to say, the ex-CNDP integrated into the national army or M23 when it was formed in April 2012.

### **The routing of M23 or the end of a crisis?**

M23 was formed in April 2012 following what was initially a simple military operation to arrest General Bosco Ntaganda, an arrest radically opposed by his followers and lieutenants through a series of defections from the ranks of the FARDC. The mutiny quickly turned into a movement of the ex-CNDP combatants to denounce the failure to enforce the 23 March 2009 agreements, before escalating into a war that was neither local nor national but had strong international implications. When M23 took the city of Goma in November 2012, it was experienced as a humiliation of the international community which watched, powerless, as the unthinkable became a reality. By daring to cross the red line imagined by MONUSCO and the other

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the stoppage of the joint military operations conducted by the Congolese and Rwandan armies forced the Congolese authorities to find forces able and willing to hunt down the FDLR and, at the time, the only takers were the ex-CNDP. This is why they were deployed in South and North Kivu.

<sup>6</sup> The idea of "foreign invaders" in the African Great Lakes Region mainly means the Tutsi and is a result of the identity clichés of native and immigrant according to which the Bantu peoples migrated before the Hamitic or Nilotic peoples.

Western organisations working in Goma, M23 had become a personal problem for this international community. The significant deeds accomplished subsequently, particularly the February 2013 Addis-Ababa agreement, UN resolution 2098 and the positioning of an international intervention force, are a clear response to the challenge of the presence of M23 around Goma in Nyiragongo and Rutshuru territories. MONUSCO's involvement in the war against M23 between August and November 2013 with its international intervention force has just ended in M23's military defeat and exile to Uganda and Rwanda.

In the meantime, the Kampala talks facilitated by the CIRGL and acting President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni had initially served to persuade the M23 rebels to leave Goma and withdraw to the hills overlooking the city with the hope of a negotiated political solution. These Kampala negotiations also gave the Congolese government time, not only to convince the international community that it had been a victim of aggression – as documented by various reports by United Nations experts – but also to elicit support from other African States, in particular South Africa and Tanzania, which volunteered to provide the majority of the troops combating within the MONUSCO international intervention force. Since M23 had been defeated and its remaining troops were in exile, despite the pressure of the international community the Congolese government no longer found the idea of signing an agreement with a defeated rebel group appropriate. For beyond the African countries that supported DR Congo, such as South Africa and Tanzania, there was also the clear involvement of France, which drafted UN Security Council resolution 2098, and the position of Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Didier Reynders, who was against a general amnesty of the ex-M23; all of which bolstered Kinshasa's position. On the strength of this support, the government in Kinshasa could snub the Kampala talks, as it in fact did on 11 November 2013, the scheduled date of signing, despite the risk that all President Yoweri Museveni's efforts over a period of 12 months could fizzle out. Politically, such an ending would signify that Kinshasa has chosen to move forward with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), whose South African, Tanzanian and Malawian troops patrol its eastern border with Uganda and

Rwanda, and ignore the latter two countries, which are accused of being responsible for the repeated attacks. Such a political choice would mean that we are witnessing the end of a political cycle inaugurated by Laurent Kabila's AFDL, ending with M23's defeat by Joseph Kabila's troops, with the massive support of the international community. Such a political choice would allow Kinshasa the possibility of imposing State authority on the whole of its territory, putting an end to the parallel powers of several armed groups, but would not necessarily signify the end of the crisis in eastern Congo or stability in the sub-region, for a number of reasons.

### **The lack of security and the armed groups in eastern Congo.**

In the absence of a national army capable of providing security for all citizens and their property, the reflex of the ethnic communities in Kivu has been to promote ethnic militias as ramparts of security. Each ethnic community in Kivu has its own militia: M23 perceived as Tutsi despite the fact that it includes other ethnic groups, APCLS (Hunde), PARECO FORT (Hutu), Nyatura (Hutu), May May Tcheka (Nyanga), PARECO Lafontaine (Nande), May May Shetani (Nande), May May Hilaire Kombi (Nande), Raia Mutomboki (Lega), May Mai Kifuafua (Tembo), May Mai Yakutumba (Bembe), May Mai Kirikitcho (Fulero), Mudundu 40 (Shi), etc. In other words, there are over forty armed groups in eastern Congo.

This battery of armed groups exercise power in the territorial areas they control to the extent that State authority is an illusion. Each armed group purports to defend its community. However, as they live off the backs of those they are supposed to be protecting, any benefits accruing to the ethnic communities are meagre indeed. Each community is nonetheless convinced that it is better protected by its own. President Joseph Kabila's statement in January 2009 that there could be no soldiers whose vocation was to protect their own families is logically true from a national perspective. But the ethnic fracture is such that ethnicity has obliterated any societal or national perspective. The ethnic communities of Kivu have taken note and prefer to continue to withdraw behind the protection of their children.

The logic according to which the defeat of the armed group reputed to be the strongest of them all, M23, will cause a snowball effect inciting the other rebel groups to lay down their weapons and head for the different training centres, has yet to be proven. One of the common denominators among these groups is that most of them prefer to blend in with the civilians of their respective communities rather than heading for the triage centres of Kitona, Kamina or Kota-Koli. This choice is justified by their conviction that they can better defend their community in the absence of a national army and the example of the Lega militia, Raia Mutomboki, which expelled the FDLR from its territory, is held up as indisputable proof.

### **The FDLR: a security nightmare in eastern Congo.**

These Rwandan warriors, some of whom took part in the 1994 genocide, are so deeply rooted in Congolese reality that it has become impossible to imagine how DR Congo could get rid of them. In the areas they occupy, they are so intermingled into social, matrimonial, familial, commercial, and political relations that they are part of the local scenery. Some of them had been additional troops in the national army during the different rebellions since 1998. When the international community represented by MONUSCO asserts loudly that now that M23 has been defeated, the international brigade will take care of the FDLR, the intention is laudable, but it is legitimate to wonder how it can be done. First of all because the FARDC forces, supposed to receive the support of the international brigade to hunt the FDLR, have been infiltrated by these same FDLR since 1998 when they fought alongside the forces loyal to Laurent Kabila against the RCD Goma and subsequent rebellions. Next, because contrary to the M23 rebels who controlled a territory with conventional, well-known defence positions, the troops of the FDLR are so diffuse and sparsely scattered that it is difficult to fight them effectively in the Kivu forests. Lastly, the FDLR poses a real threat in Rwanda, which had based its national security, for more than twenty years, on a buffer zone in Kivu controlled by the different rebellions enjoying its overt or clandestine support. As things stand, the FDLR could enter Rwanda if it feels capable of conquering a territory and defending it; the time has also come for them to set up an international lobby to demand dialogue among Rwandans, which

they have never been able to obtain from the outside. They could also be tempted to ally themselves with the external opposition generated by dissensions within the regime in power in Kigali, in particular Kayumba Nyamwasa and Karegeya, who live in South Africa, a marriage of convenience or circumstance whose life expectancy is minimal due to the ideological past that separates them. The fact remains that South Africa's economic, political and diplomatic ties with the DR Congo, and the presence of the FDLR on Congolese soil and the external opposition on South African soil fuel all sorts of speculation. However, seeing how Tanzania has joined this Pretoria – Kinshasa line, the worry is no doubt not only Rwandan but also concerns the future of the East African Economic Community (EAC).

### **The East African Economic Community (EAC) in the hot seat.**

The two meetings of East African Community (EAC) Heads of State in Kampala, September 2013 and Kigali, in November 2013 brought together the members who said they were “*Willing*”, that is to say who showed the will to move ahead with the goals set by the union. These were Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda, who have been joined by South Sudan and Ethiopia. The major countries absent from the two meetings were Tanzania and Burundi. Burundi led people to believe it would attend the Kigali meeting right up till the last minute, but in the end withdrew, no doubt due to pressure from neighbouring Tanzania. Tanzania not only sponsored the Arusha negotiations, which enabled the long-sidelined Hutu power to emerge – but it also represented the only route to access the maritime port of Dar es Salaam for its exports and imports. Tanzania's choice of seeking to reinforce its interests in the SADC bloc rather than with its neighbours in the EAC and pulling Burundi along in its wake is a regression, or even a sabotage of the EAC dynamics. Some people analyse the construction of the EAC as an opportunity for an economic and political space and an exchange designed by and for Africans and a school of inspiration for the West African CFA zone, which still reeks of neo-colonialism<sup>7</sup>. It is too early to say whether this crisis between

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that, even today, all the currencies of the countries in the CFA zone go through the *Banque de France*, France's central bank.

EAC countries is irreversible and a harmonisation of their divergences would no doubt have been possible were it not for the crisis in eastern DR Congo. South Africa and Tanzania play a decisive role in the intervention force of the MONUSCO international brigade and are increasingly close politically to the government of DR Congo for, among other things, clear economic interests, the hydroelectric potential of the river Congo in particular<sup>8</sup> but also the oil resources in the Albertine Graben<sup>9</sup>. This *rapprochement* with South Africa and Tanzania reinforces the DR Congo's determination to isolate Uganda and Rwanda as countries deemed aggressive. Thus, a new regional reconfiguration is emerging, enclosing DR Congo in the SADC bloc where it feels supported by its eastern neighbours, Uganda and Rwanda. This reconfiguration evidently generates regional conflicts and it is imperative to defuse them straight away if we are to have a chance to really stabilise the eastern DR Congo. The hand held out by the “*willing member states*” of the EAC to South Sudan and Ethiopia no doubt reflects the realisation that Tanzania is escaping their reach and that a new balance and a new dynamics of the EAC are possible.

### **Avenues for constructive progress**

M23's defeat marks an important turning point after nearly two decades of atrocious violence during which the fate of the Congo seemed to be inextricably linked to that of its eastern neighbours, Uganda and Rwanda, who had carried Laurent Désiré Kabila on their shoulders to Kinshasa in May 1997. Various attempts to adjust this contentious relationship through successive rebellions have today ended in a failure in which DR Congo comes out on top. However, once again, the victory of DR Congo was made possible by the massive involvement of the international community to which the country remains largely tributary. But for how long? Current

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<sup>8</sup> During South African President Jacob Zuma's visit in November 2013, an agreement was signed with DR Congo to resume work on the Inga III dam and South Africa is expecting to receive 40% of the energy produced.

<sup>9</sup> In 2008, Tanzania and DR Congo signed an agreement for the joint exploration of Lake Tanganyika. And in 2011, the Tanzanian Petroleum Development Corporation asked the Congolese government for permission for the Australian company Beach Energy to operate on the Congolese side (where the largest reserves are supposedly to be found), to facilitate prospecting in Tanzanian waters.



MONUSCO funding is estimated at more than 1.5 billion dollars a year, an enormous sum that Western tax payers have to fork out in the midst of a global economic and financial crisis. MONUSCO'S military and peace-keeping operations depend on the United States who pay most of the amount and could decide to stop at any moment. The logic according to which DR Congo could isolate its eastern neighbours, Uganda and Rwanda, is completely wrong. It is imperative for DR Congo to outdo itself and find a *modus vivendi* with its eastern neighbours without which sustainable peace is impossible. Given this context, setting up mechanisms to repatriate the defeated M23 soldiers and allow them to re-integrate into the life of the country should be a national priority.

DR Congo is at a decisive crossroads, where it is imperatively forced to address the demands behind the cycle of violence in eastern Congo. It is important for DR Congo to take advantage of the current momentum of FARDC morale and self-confidence to secure North and South Kivu so that the Congolese refugees who fled to Uganda and Rwanda two decades ago can return. This would be a way of addressing, once and for all, one of M23's most fundamental demands, the most legitimate of all and whose legitimacy is self-evident. President Joseph Kabila's reproach of the ex-CNDP and M23 stating there can be no soldiers whose vocation is to protect their families is comprehensible given his status as guarantor of the nation. But he would have to prove to them that they are wrong by providing security for all citizens in eastern DR Congo, because the different armed gangs draw their militarist reflexes from the need to build a security rampart for their respective communities.

National tensions on the morrow of the 2011 presidential and legislative elections went almost unnoticed amidst the war against M23 from April 2012 and President Joseph Kabila's popularity ratings largely improved as a result. However, the xenophobic discourse that was expounded during these military confrontations focused on the Congolese Tutsi who were deemed to be collaborating with the so-called aggressor countries, Uganda and Rwanda, and the defeat of M23 reinforces their exclusion. In 2009, President Joseph Kabila put a clear stop to this discourse of exclusion through his rapprochement with Kigali. In 2013, other gateways of inclusivity are required, in

particular the inclusion of external refugees and displaced persons in preparing for and running local elections, in order to build sustainable peace in eastern Congo. All the communities without exception must actively contribute to this peace building.

The international community was a necessary player in the military outcome of the war in eastern Congo and the establishing of State authority in certain militia-controlled territories. In return, this same international community should push to turn peace-building framework tools, such as the Addis-Ababa agreement or the empty shell that has become the ECGLC, into real driving forces for peace in eastern Congo. The future of the whole of the African Great Lakes Region depends on it.

*Goma*

*December 2013*

# The war in eastern DRC: victory or truce?

*By Onesphore Sematumba*

*Information and Advocacy Director*

## **1. Victory, cha cha cha! Let's all sing together now!**

Early in the morning of Tuesday 5 November 2013, Runyoni and Chanzu, two hills in Rutshuru territory, on the edge of the Rwanda-Uganda border, fell completely under the control of the FARDC, the government forces. The offensive was efficiently led by a massive deployment of Congolese soldiers on the front line, with support from MONUSCO, the UN mission which, for the occasion, donned full battledress and put its intervention Brigade into action with combat helicopters, artillery and, most importantly, an infantry of nearly 3 thousand men generously provided by South Africa, Tanzania, which was in command, and Malawi. The latter two countries even succeeded in temporarily burying the hatchet of their own animosity to come to the rescue of the DRC, the sleeping giant nestled in the heart of Africa, whose own army was having the greatest difficulty in the world in getting rid of a rebellion lodged in its eastern border, on a strip of land a hundred kilometres long, between the Virunga volcanoes and the National Park of the same name.

Up to the eve of 5 November 2013, Chanzu and Runyoni constituted the last positions occupied by the last fringe of the rebels belonging to the movement of 23 March, M23, who had been taunting the Kinshasa authorities for 20 long months and whose greatest battle exploit was no doubt the taking of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, in November 2012, under the noses of the Indian and Pakistani and other Blue Berets deployed in the city.

The fall of Chanzu and Runyoni, following that of the other communities formerly under M23 rebel occupation which fell successively in less than 20 days, and the fleeing of its officers and troops marked the military end of a movement that only survived its internal conflicts for a few months.

For DRC, the fall of M23 above all meant the recovery of all the communities that were under the control of a rebellion accused of being in the pay of Rwanda seeking to satisfy its hegemonic appetites over the greater Congo. It also meant a "historic" victory of the FARDC over the rebels who, symbolically, represented all those easterners who have always forced the loyalist forces into inglorious retreats and repeated humiliations, as was notably the case in 1996-1997 with the conquest of Marshal Mobutu's Zaïre by the AFDL – Alliance of democratic forces for the liberation of the Congo-Zaire led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila (the father of the current President) and in November 2012, when the FARDC were routed on the front line to the north of Goma, leading to a campaign of systematic rape of women and girls in Minova, South Kivu province. At that time, the international community had been moved by the sheer barbarousness of the government forces and had threatened to suspend all cooperation with the FARDC units involved in crimes. After the FARDC's victory over the M23, the trial of 40 FARDC soldiers accused of the rapes began in Goma, which is far from mere coincidence.

To avoid adding the slightest shadow of a cloud to the clear blue sky of the celebrating DRC, MONUSCO and its Brigade kept a low profile, stating, like Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in DRC, that the victory was the FARDC's and the UN had only provided backup. Backup without which this victory could not have occurred so easily or so fast. Faced with the combined forces of the FARDC and the MONUSCO Brigade, M23 put up practically no resistance after the fierce resistance displayed in late August on the Kibati front, to the north of Goma. By refusing a conventional confrontation with a force clearly superior in terms of numbers and logistics, M23 limited losses in its own ranks and collateral damage to the civilians living in the combat zones.

This reversal of the situation was undoubtedly a political boon for the authorities in Kinshasa and more particularly for President Joseph Kabila, who did not fail to make the most of it. When the rebellion was triggered in April 2012, power was in the balance in the capital where the presidential election of November 2011 was hotly contested by a good proportion of the opposition. Voices were also

raised in the chambers of power condemning the conditions surrounding Joseph Kabila's re-election. The war against M23 and its foreign accomplices sounded the rallying of the troops and mobilisation to combat the balkanising-aggressor threatening the country and its integrity.

The discourse hit the mark, and the Congolese trumpeted the alarm of a war of aggression in unison, rightly relegating electoral concerns to the background. Throughout the war, there was unanimity on the analysis, the stakes and even the means of bringing the conflict to an end, according to the editorial line put forward by government representatives' press conferences. The war's end, twenty months later, in a government victory over the M23 troops, could reinforce this unanimity, which would be extremely objectionable for a democratic process which is having trouble getting back up off the ground, since the legislatives that coincided with the second round of the presidential ballot. In the euphoria of victory, it has become more or less improper, including within the political opposition and civil society, to evoke electoral deadlines or promises. Thus, during his victory celebration tour in eastern DRC at the end of November 2013, Joseph Kabila declared that those who called for the roads, water and electricity he promised in 2006 and 2011 were "forgetting that his main promise was peace, that is to say, the end of the war". But the war that has just ended, the one against M23, began long after those electoral promises were made, as part of the "Head of State's five major projects"!

## **2. Foreigners and wizards: a curse on the vanquished!**

So the war against M23 ended, or, more precisely, the weapons fell silent and the defeated party was thrown out of the country and is now wandering aimlessly around Uganda and Rwanda. The representatives of the international community, those same people who made the current celebration possible, exhort the powers of Kinshasa and the former rebellion to come back to Kampala, with a view to completing talks which, for more than a year, dragged on and on, without leading to anything really important. Joseph Kabila, boosted by his recent victory over the routed rebels, is in no hurry to sit at the same table as "something that has ceased to exist",

according to the expression of government spokesman Lambert Mende. He may magnanimously agree to sign a “statement” or some sort of paper, but not an “agreement”! Meanwhile, Martin Kobler and his colleagues keep repeating that a political solution must be found for the political problems posed by M23, the most urgent of which was now their return to DRC and their reintegration into community life. This question annoys Kinshasa and also a large part of public opinion in the Congo, which feels that the rebels are now in their natural homelands and all's well that ends well. A self-evident fact that does not appear to be shared by Ugandan President Museveni, who, having hosted the talks for more than 12 months, finds himself the butt of an enormous joke, with the question of what to do with a small rebel army of some 1,700 in his country as the icing on the cake.

In the areas formerly under M23's control, the situation is no longer one of serenity, despite appeals launched by the provincial authorities and even by President Joseph Kabila himself during his recent visit to Rutshuru to avoid triumphalism or witch-hunts against M23's presumed collaborators. According to our sources, however, the people arrested by the intelligence services in the wake of the liberation of these zones are still being held in Goma; others have purportedly been transferred to Kinshasa. Efforts will have to be made to ensure the liberation of these people, some of whom are customary chiefs guilty of having stayed in their customary territories instead of fleeing the rebels who had taken over their communities; on the other hand, those suspected of crimes and other offences should be summonsed before a judge instead of being held in secret in appalling conditions.

### **3. Authority of the State: clearing the horizons**

Now that M23 has been defeated militarily, whose turn is it next? It should be noted that eastern DRC is a hub in which armed groups emerge, proliferate, die off and are reborn with the rise and fall of contexts and ideologies that are often simplistic or even caricatural. One of the unique features of M23 was the fact that it was organised on clearly marked territory, had set up a system of administration and had a more or less conventional army at its disposal. This allowed another conventional force to attack it and neutralise it,

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compensating for the rebels' control of the ground with the superior air power of the UN and government forces.

What will happen to the Ugandans in ADF-Nalu roaming around Beni territory, in the northern part of North Kivu, kidnapping for ransom, making some people say they are in cahoots with the Somalis of Al Shabaab? What of the Rwandans in the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) whose zone of influence extends from certain parts of Maniema, in the centre of the country, to the Rwandan border at the foot of the Nyiragongo volcano, via the dense Walikale forests? And what of the original National Liberation Forces (FNL) who have taken over whole communities in South Kivu as their training grounds pending the hypothetical invasion of their native Burundi? Then there are also a whole host of local Maï Maï militias, created by opportunists on ethnic criteria for local self defence or to combat outside aggression. These militias position themselves de facto as operational auxiliaries compensating for the ineffectiveness or absence of FARDC troops, as “subcontractors” of legal violence, over which the State nonetheless theoretically has the sole monopoly. Following such logic, they would not understand that they could be targeted by the FARDC since, on the contrary, they would expect bonuses for services rendered. Since the defeat of M23, certain militia have given themselves up to the FARDC in Bweremana (North Kivu) and others are apparently preparing to do so elsewhere, while the government has no plans to supervise their transit camps or social reintegration and still less to recruit them into the national army. In the meantime, the ex-militia are living off whatever they can gather from farmers' fields and could, if the situation were to last, resort once more to the only economic system they really know: that of the Kalashnikov.

The war in eastern DRC is therefore far from over; on the contrary, it has only just begun and will probably be fought on several fronts.

The first front would consist in evacuating the Kampala talks, on the one hand, to prevent them from turning into a regional dispute and, secondly, to find long-lasting solutions to the problems posed by the successive rebellions which, from Kabila senior's AFDL to Makenga's M23, always start in the east.

The second front is that of building internal cohesion, by abstaining from stigmatisation, denunciation and witch-hunts, without instituting impunity and by breaking with Manichean logic in which one side is completely white and the other totally black.

The third front is that of clear perspectives and the mapping out of national life in this country. It is very unfortunate that the current political outlook is limited to the appointment of a new government, which whets the appetites of a political elite ever-hungry for a power it does not know how to use once it has been attained. The current challenges and issues at stake require better than a reshuffling of the cards; this country needs an agenda, a programme and indicators for success that would allow the Congolese people to know where they are being led. This would require an end to the ambient unanimous discourse and for the Congolese to recover their freedom to analyse, judge and question. To this end, we must lift the veil of modesty over the outlook for 2016 – the end of the Head of State's current and last term of office – and demand from the CENI a clear calendar for the next local, municipal and provincial elections that would make it possible to initiate local governance and accountability.

*Goma*

*December 2013*



## **Building peace in eastern DRC is possible!**

*Jean-Pierre Lindiro Kabirigi*

*Pole Institute Coordinator*

The days went fast, very fast! Events unfolded very quickly! The deadly war, which began in April 2012 much to the surprise of North Kivu, lasted for months. The politico-military movement M23 had decided to challenge the Congolese government. The moment of respite the province had enjoyed since March 2009 was over! Once again, members of the national armed forces mutinied, and, heavily armed, they occupied several communities in North Kivu. The population had its eyes trained on the United Nations troops, present in every nook and cranny of the country, with a strong concentration in North Kivu. But the experience of the recent past cast doubts on their effectiveness. The UN soldiers in their thousands had grown used to standing by and watching scenes of civilian massacres, pillaging, violence against women, and combats between the regular army and every stripe of rebels. On some occasions, they counted the dead on the battlefield.

The doubts mentioned above reached their peak in November 2012 when, one morning, the M23 rebels entered the city of Goma, which has a population of almost a million people! And yet the United Nations had sworn repeatedly that Goma would never fall! The exasperation was total among the inhabitants of the city. They felt utterly abandoned. Help finally arrived, however, via the active diplomacy of the ICGLR, which demanded the withdrawal of the rebels as soon as possible. In fact, they would leave without really leaving, as they chose to position themselves in the city surroundings, where they occupied several strategic positions allowing them to control large parts of certain neighbourhoods. Thus began a curious stand-off between heavily armed forces, the outcome of which was not easy to predict, even for the best political analysts.

Then came the moment when "the international community", or, more plainly put, the world's most powerful countries, the ones with

the right of veto on the United Nations Security Council, seemed to awake from its lethargy. In December 2012, talks, which some people called negotiations, began in Kampala, Uganda, between the Kinshasa government and M23 under the aegis of the ICGLR, which was chaired by the Head of State. At the same time, the DRC was adamant that the war was the work of its neighbours in Rwanda and Uganda, whose governments refuted the accusation until the end of the war in November 2013. However, it has to be admitted that the Congolese government was eventually heard by the international community, which imposed the signing of the famous “Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for DRC and the Region” by all eleven ICGLR countries under the supervision of the African Union, in Addis Ababa in February 2013. This agreement came to the rescue by taking the Congo out of a humiliating situation which was very unpleasant for both the people and the government.

Another consequence was the setting up of the United Nations Intervention Brigade comprising three thousand well-equipped troops from African countries determined to come to the aid of the Congolese nation: Tanzania, South Africa and Malawi. And the United Nations mission, which was previously an observation mission, received a clear mandate to combat all the armed groups proliferating in eastern DRC. In their line of sight, M23 topped the list.

In the end, it was this war machine, coming to the rescue of the national forces, placing all of its weight on the scales, that determined the end of the hostilities in early November 2013. Weakened, the rebels had no choice but to seek exile in Uganda.

### **Deciphering Saturday 30 November 2013 in Goma.**

Several weeks had passed since victory celebrations were organised here and there following the announcement that the Head of State, President Joseph Kabila, was to visit Goma. He had just travelled 1,500 km on a National Highway System which, according to the BBC, could hardly be called any of those three words.

Oddly enough, this was not the only event in the city! On the same day, in the space of a few hours, the following were noted:

- 1) The launch of the Campaign for Peace in the Great Lakes Region by Anglican and Catholic bishops from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda. The guest of honour in Goma for this occasion was the former President of the Republic of Burundi (currently Senator) Sylvestre Ntibantunganya. This campaign launch followed three days of ecumenical prayers conducted by the bishops.
- 2) A campaign by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), an international organisation well known for its work on the conservation of nature, addressing the provincial Parliament of North Kivu, for the protection of Virunga Park, a natural treasure in the province and a UNESCO world heritage site. This natural area is rich in oil reserves, which the Congolese government has decided to exploit with the support of Western multinationals.

In the meantime, the East African Community (Burundi-Kenya-Uganda-Rwanda-Tanzania) decided to meet in Kampala for a last pitch session after the shocks suffered in particular because of the war in the DRC.

On the ground, observing what was happening in the twin cities of Goma (in DRC) and Gisenyi (in Rwanda), the reigning ambiance in late November was an end-of-war atmosphere. Long a matter of lip service, cross-border development projects initiated using European Union funds seemed to come off the back burners. For the construction of “cross-border routes”, a project of the ECLC (Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries-Burundi, DRC, Rwanda) a Congolese company in partnership with a Rwandan company brought in heavy machinery for roadworks on both sides of the border. There was also talk again of the new bridge over the River Ruzizi that would connect Bukavu in the Congo to Cyangugu in Rwanda. Phase 3 of the Ruzizi dam to boost the electrification of these three countries is also scheduled. Are these indications of a return to peace or just the death throes of the end of the war? In any case, President Kabila was far from calling for the Congolese to rest on their laurels!

## **From egg carrier to Supreme Commander!**

During his electoral campaign of 2011, partisans of candidate Kabila presented him as an “egg carrier” who skilfully avoids quarrels and squabbles to protect his fragile cargo! It was a way of placing him above the fray of a whole host of other candidates.

It must be said that the description visibly fit the man! A rather taciturn, private personality who avoided controversy, he was the opposite of former dictator Mobutu, an inveterate manipulator of the popular masses. Some Congolese people, accustomed to the tempo of bellowing President Mobutu, did not hesitate to call Kabila weak!

Nonetheless, during this visit at the end of November 2013, the man seemed to have outgrown his egg carrying role! Wherever he went, the tone of his speeches seemed to contrast with the tone adopted in the recent past. He said he had come to raise the awareness of the Congolese people and urge them to be vigilant. Regarding the neighbouring countries that, in his opinion, were preparing a new rebellion, he announced that the DRC had experienced its last war and that it would no longer accept invasion. Speaking in the tone of a Supreme Commander of Armed Forces, he went further, using a local saying that “our mothers also brought brave boys into the world”, wishing to praise the Armed Forces of the DRC for its military victory.

Does all this signal the advent of a new era of State authority? Will the profound changes expected after the National Dialogue materialise or should we expect another shot in the dark?

To answer these questions, we should first courageously address the following points.

**“Nations have no friends, only interests”** (*Charles de Gaulle*).

To overcome the problems caused by armed groups, the DRC has largely benefitted from substantial support by many countries in Africa and elsewhere. Among them, we could mention Tanzania, South Africa and Malawi but also France and Belgium. Other powerful countries have not hesitated to cut off aid to Rwanda, accused by the United Nations of supporting the M23 rebels.

It is legitimate to wonder what these countries expect in return. They did the DRC authorities a favour at an opportune time and expect it to be returned! The content has no doubt not been totally negotiated. That is how States operate! Behind so-called solidarity or humanitarian action carried out by someone calling themselves a friend today, there are often hidden, unstated interests that end up being expressed – sometimes violently. You only have to look at the coalition that drove Mobutu from power in 1997. There was a brutal and violent breaking off with Uganda and Rwanda, which at the time were called “uninvited countries”, while the heavy price paid to one of the “invited countries” continues to humiliate anyone still proud to be Congolese. The country in question is Angola, which is shamelessly pumping Congolese oil in territorial waters in the Atlantic Ocean and occupies several Congolese villages.

It is common knowledge that South Africa has its eyes on the Congolese Inga dam for its exploitation and the transmission of electricity towards South African industries. The signing of agreements is currently underway. Information has also got around about the South African President's special interest in the gold in Ituri. What about the other countries? It is important and crucial that the Congolese people get their due, for they are the primary owners of the resources coveted by foreigners. This is a necessary condition for future peace. Unfortunately, the experience of past years has shown that the dividends extracted from these riches only benefit a tiny fraction of the Congo's insatiable elite. We need only remember the tens of millions of dollars paid to the Congolese government in Kinshasa by Congo Brazzaville, for the purchase of electricity, during the transition period at the beginning of the millennium. The money was embezzled by well-known and highly reputed members of the government of the time. Most of them are still in power today and have never been charged with such a reprehensible act!

**“And now, we can see”!**

These words were spoken by Hervé Ladsous, the French Under-Secretary General of the United Nations in charge of peace keeping operations, during a visit to North Kivu in early December. He was referring to the flying aircraft, known as “drones”, newly acquired by

the United Nations forces to, he said, protect civilians and patrol the borders with neighbouring countries.

The United Nations mission in DRC was the first in the world to benefit from this privilege just as it was the first to count within its ranks more than twenty thousand civilians and soldiers combined. Some perceived the hypocritical language typical of the UN between the lines of the Under-Secretary's speech. In the 14 years this mission has existed in DRC, hundreds of people have perished, thousands of Congolese women have suffered abject sexual violence, millions of people are today still displaced or refugees from their villages, public and private infrastructure amenities have been destroyed, etc. In the meantime, every year some 1.5 billion American dollars are spent to keep up this costly mission.

Peace shall first of all be the work and the determination of the Congolese people themselves or there shall be no peace! Each Congolese contributing their stone to build the edifice. In my humble opinion, it will be built as follows.

### **Create coercive institutional means to combat hatred and impunity.**

Without justice, there is no hope of a return to peace. The example of the trial against the soldiers who raped numerous women and pillaged property in Minova in November 2012 is an important test for the future of peace and harmony. In the past, the outcome of such trials, when they took place, was a foregone conclusion. The rule of the strongest pre-empted the rule of law. Consequently, there are still highway robbers in the halls of government and the military. Their victims have perished or live with the wounds of a humiliation whose perpetrators they have actually identified.

Is there more hope today than yesterday that the torturers of Minova will at least pay for what they have done and that justice will decide?

Let us look towards Mali, a country that has recently suffered like ours. Is not Captain Sanogo, a circumstantial Head of State by *coup d'état*, who later became a General, currently under arrest and soon to appear before the judiciary of his country? The new Malian authorities have thereby sent out a strong message against impunity.

Similarly, we must extirpate, by any possible means, the roots of hatred that have taken hold in our societies, especially in North Kivu. Behind the armed groups purporting to protect their communities hides an exacerbated expression of hatred of the other, of a community that may be different, but has nonetheless often been a neighbour since time immemorial. In Kitchanga, the Hunde and the Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi) killed each other; the same Hunde were pitilessly driven out of Pinga by the Nyanga after civilian massacres on both sides. In Kiwanja, the young Nande and Hutu are only awaiting a minor incident to take the first step towards exterminating the other.

Outside of North Kivu, it is no longer a secret to anyone that deadly clashes occur regularly between the Barundi and Bafulero Communities on the plains of the River Ruzizi in South Kivu. This social violence can also be observed in other provinces; for example: the Ngbandi against the Ngbaka in Equateur Province. And what can be said of the old, violent conflicts between those who call themselves Katangan and the Kasaiens in Katanga or the Lendu and the Hema in Ituri? And even within the same tribe, the Lobala, members from two different villages – Enyele and Monzaya – have killed each other. The ashes of these violent clashes are still warm and it would not take much to re-ignite the flames. The instigators are known. To rally their voters, politicians on both sides use incendiary, identity-based speeches and cultivate the reciprocal fear and resentment of population groups pauperised by years of deprivation and poverty. Each group feels threatened by the other and seeks to act first, it claims, out of self defence. Two factors are always brought up: natural resources and identity.

Another phenomenon is the excessive stigmatisation of an ethnic group, by making it the scapegoat for everything negative that happens in a society. Over the past few years, the Congolese Tutsi have been in the hot seat. In the Congolese media, malicious remarks are made about them with impunity. In edition number 1178 of 30 May 2013, *Le Potentiel*, a daily newspaper published in Kinshasa, did not hesitate to print an article entitled: “Tutsi, go home”! According to the writer, David Mende Onakaya, the Tutsi refuse to be assimilated in DRC and the proposed solution is for them to return to

what he calls their native land: Rwanda. Such an article incites hatred and the author should be punished to the full extent of the applicable law. The same goes for a Congolese politician who, in the prepared remarks that he read in the United Nations Security Council in New York, on 25 July 2013, said that "rebellions in the Great Lakes region all bear a similar genetic signature".

To continue in this thread is not only to go against the recommendations of the National Dialogues, but also to refuse the application of the very spirit of the Framework Agreement signed by our government in Addis Ababa last year. This Agreement requested that the government "Promote the objectives of national reconciliation, tolerance and democratisation".

But reconciliation is not possible without changing the relations of resentment and hostility into a language of harmony.

To achieve this, the State should place itself in the centre of the village and call upon all its children to bury the hatchet together while shouting in unison: "never again"! This can only be done by awakening all the vital forces of openness and forward thinking.

An icon, a monument of the history of Humanity, who has just left us, showed us that it was humanly possible. Let us follow his example. Rest in peace, Tata Mandela!

*December 2013*



## **If Madiba were still here to light the way...**

*Christiane Kayser*

*Member of the Consultative Committee*

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Today, we mourn the loss and celebrate the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela. One of history's giants, he taught the world what could be achieved, even in an apparently hopeless situation, through traditional African leadership coupled with a revolt against injustice and a dream of a multi-cultural society. His is a brilliant example of leadership based on a grassroots movement. The struggle against apartheid, which he symbolised, mobilised activists all over the world.

The great world leaders travelled to Soweto in South Africa to pay tribute to him, but they were mere onlookers in an emotional celebration, where the South African people and many of the "just" from all over the world said goodbye to a man who had changed the lives of a great many people. Madiba's grandchildren spoke with emotion and pride in their native Xhosa. Obama greeted Raoul Castro and Dilma Rousseff warmly, Graça Machel embraced Winnie Mandela. Certain figures who had supported apartheid and called Mandela a terrorist, recasted themselves as eulogists of the canonised saint. And Madiba must have been looking down with a wry smile.

The heavens joined in: warm rain fell, a sign of hope and fertility. The current South African leader Jacob Zuma was booed by the crowd, aware of the gulf separating him from Tata Madiba.

And we can't help but dream: if Mandela were still at the helm, what would he have made of the situation in the African Great Lakes region? Would he have stood by and let South Africa create division among African countries, seeking exclusively, and not very strategically, its own economic and financial advantage, pushing – under the diplomatic leadership of France, which has rekindled its Franco-African zeal in Mali and CAR – a military combat against a sort of rebel (M23), while neglecting to build enduring regional peace and

favouring the International Community's guardianship of a huge country in the heart of Africa (DRC)? Yes, sometimes it is necessary to take up arms to fight for a just peace, but this is always accompanied by a negotiation strategy and the integration of the different populations concerned.

Mandela himself insisted that he was not a saint, that he made mistakes like everyone else. However, it cannot be denied that he was a skilled strategist and had a vision for his country, South Africa, and for the entire African continent. His dream was not built on dependency on the major Western countries or the Communist bloc. His dream was not based on exclusion and hatred, but on inclusion, respect for others, tolerance and solidarity. His dream was not fuelled by feelings of humiliation, triumphalism or arrogance but by deep reflection and individual accountability.

Where is the politician, the decision-maker who could stir the passions of African Youth today to build a better future together? The initiatives of young Congolese and Rwandans – such as “Tujenge Amani” – who courageously try to build a common future, have recently been attacked with a triumphalism fraught with hatred against any kind of cooperation between the two countries. The conflicts of interests that oppose the East African Community (EAC) and the South African Development Community (SADC) could lead to bloody wars and even if they can be avoided, these rivalries primarily benefit those who exploit the riches of Africa and fuel chaos, terror and bad governance.

We only have one option: we must learn from Madiba, each at our own level and in our own context, so that a responsible citizenship and leadership can develop that will be worthy of the Africa of tomorrow. Madiba taught us how to think and act. The concept of Ubuntu was rightly underlined by Barack Obama in his Soweto speech: we are all part of the same humanity, invisible bonds unite us, we should have the same objectives of solidarity and justice, which alone can guarantee sustainable peace. If the Congolese, the Rwandans, the Ugandans and the Tanzanians can find this spirit within themselves and gradually force their leaders to act in consequence, if we Europeans can keep a check on the arrogance,

racism, criminal lack of interest or even neo-colonialist fervour of our leaders towards Africa, then we will have taken a great step forward in honour of the memory of Madiba and his work.

*December 2013*