

The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Key Terms and People



People

DOSS, ALAN: Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the highest-ranking UN official in the country.

KAGAME, PAUL: President of Rwanda. Former leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a rebel movement which took power in Rwanda following the 1994 genocide, despite 800,000 of their fellow Tutsis being killed.

KABILA, JOSEPH: President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In December 2006, Kabila became Congo's first democratically elected president since independence.

KABILA, LAURENT-DÉSIRÉ (DECEASED): Former Congolese president. He was assassinated in January 2001 and replaced by his son, Joseph.

KING LEOPOLD II (DECEASED): King of Belgium. In the 1880s, King Leopold turned Congo into his own private colony and began exploiting its natural resources. His brutal rule resulted in the deaths of some 10 million Congolese.

MALU MALU, APOLLINAIRE: Coordinator of the Amani program, the peace plan for eastern Congo.

NKUNDA, LAURENT: Congolese general leading a rebellion in eastern Congo.

SESE SEKO, MOBUTU: Deceased dictator who ruled Congo from 1965 to 1997. While the United States supported Mobutu as a Cold War ally, he plundered Congo's natural resources and amassed vast personal wealth.

Armed Groups

A wide and confusing array of armed groups operate in eastern Congo, a region where government as we know it has largely collapsed. Several armed groups with different motivations and interests have turned the eastern Congo into a battlefield where everyday citizens, especially women, are at risk.

NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE PEOPLE—CNDP: The Congolese rebel group led by Laurent Nkunda. Approximately 3,000 CNDP fighters are based in North Kivu province. Nkunda justifies his rebellion as necessary to protect his ethnic Tutsi community, but his forces are responsible for crimes against humanity against civilians.

ARMED FORCES OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO—FARDC: The Congolese army. The FARDC is rarely paid, poorly equipped, ill-trained, and is one of the worst human rights abusers in the Congo. Nearly 20,000 FARDC troops are based in North Kivu.

DEMOCRATIC LIBERATION FORCES OF RWANDA—FDLR: Hutu rebels with links to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Approximately 7,000 FDLR rebels are based in North and South Kivu provinces. The FDLR are responsible for shocking acts of sexual violence and other crimes against humanity in eastern Congo.

MAYI-MAYI: Community-based defense forces formed by President Laurent Kabila. Mayi-Mayi militias are responsible for widespread atrocities in eastern Congo.

In addition to these major groups, a number of smaller militias and rebel factions presently operate in eastern Congo. These include:

COALITION OF CONGOLESE PATRIOTIC RESISTANCE—PARECO: Recently formed armed group that consists principally of ex-Congolese Mayi-Mayi militia but also includes some ex-FDLR combatants.

RASTAS: Armed group composed of ex-FDLR combatants and Congolese Hutus that operate mainly in South Kivu. The Rastas are one of the most violent groups in the East, known to gang-rape girls and then keep them as sex slaves.

RALLY FOR UNITY AND DEMOCRACY—RUD: A breakaway faction of the FDLR of roughly 400 combatants.

Other Key Actors

REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS—IDPS: An IDP is a person who has been forced to leave his or her home for reasons such as religious or political persecution, war, or natural disaster, but has *not* crossed an international border; a refugee is someone who has crossed an international border. While this is a technical distinction, it can often have considerable meaning in international law and in an individual's ability to receive humanitarian assistance. There are roughly 1.4 million IDPs in the Congo.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT—ICC: A permanent court with headquarters in The Hague and with jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed since its inception in 2002. The court is investigating crimes committed in the Ituri region of eastern Congo.

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN THE CONGO—MONUC: MONUC deployed in 1999 to support a peace agreement, and since 2004 has had a mandate to protect civilians. Approximately 17,000 military personnel

and 3,000 civilians work for MONUC. This is the largest UN peacekeeping force currently in operation.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS—NGOS: Humanitarian NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee and Doctors Without Borders provide emergency assistance and other vital services, including health care and food aid, to vulnerable populations.

Recent Agreements

GOMA AGREEMENT: Ceasefire agreement signed January 23, 2008 between the Congolese government, 10 armed groups from North Kivu (including Laurent Nkunda's CNDP), and 13 armed groups from South Kivu. The Goma agreement established a peace plan called the Amani program, but implementation is lagging and violence continues.

NAIROBI COMMUNIQUÉ: An agreement signed November 9, 2007 between the Congolese and Rwandan governments. The communiqué establish a common strategy for addressing the threat posed by the FDLR to the security and stability of both countries.

Other Useful Terms

CASSITERITE: Cassiterite is the most important source of the metallic element tin. It is crucial for the production of tin cans and electronic equipment. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to about one-third of the world's cassiterite, making it a major source of wealth for armed groups.

COLTAN: Short for columbite-tantalite, coltan is a metallic ore used to make tantalum capacitors, which control the electrical current flow in cell phone circuit boards. Some 80 percent of the world's known coltan supply is in eastern Congo, and armed groups reap profits from illegal coltan mining.

DEMOBILIZATION, DISARMAMENT, REPATRIATION, RESETTLEMENT, AND REINTEGRATION—DDRRR: A process by which armed groups are disarmed and dismantled and former combatants rejoin society. In Congo, this critical process has been inadequate and incomplete.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT—R2P: Principle which states that a government has a responsibility to protect its citizens from genocide and crimes against humanity. If a government is unwilling or unable to fulfill this responsibility, it shifts to the international community.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM—SSR: A process to restructure and train a nation's military and police to more effectively secure the country.

Visit www.raisehopeforcongo.org to learn more and join the movement!

Questions? Email congocampaign@enoughproject.org.