

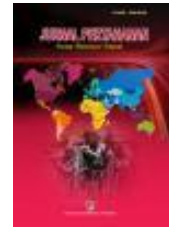


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AFRICA'S SEARCH FOR PEACE AND STABILITY: DEFENSE DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

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Abstract

Several conflict interventions have been taken place in the DRC, including political and diplomatic efforts. In 1998, the South African Development Cooperation (SADC) intervened through a combination of military and mediation activities. There was a military intervention from three SADC countries - Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, under the auspices of the SADC Allied Forces. Recovery from the conflict that occurred from 2003 up to 2019 has not been smooth. The main cause of the second war was politics. President Laurent Kabila was seeking to expel Rwanda from the government. Rwandan troops supporting the Tutsi invaded and social conflict with ethnic connotations increased. The conflict continued until a transitional government was created to share power among all vice presidents. At that time, it was perceived that a military outcome would not produce the lasting peace required for the reconstruction of the DRC.

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INTRODUCTION

In analyzing the SADC as a community to address collective security issues, Rodriguez argues that underdevelopment and institutional incapacity characterize Southern Africa (Rodriguez, 2011). The argument is that governments lack the resources and the technical and managerial skills to collectively perform the functions of the State in a satisfactory manner in the management of the and resolution of conflicts in the sub-region. The number of summits, heads of state meetings and missions involving representatives of African governments and special envoys have been a clear indication of the importance allocated to defense diplomacy and Track Two diplomacy for a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

However, Moore states that since 1994, the Africa sub-regional security and stability architecture has not improved. In the DRC particularly, under-development has been the order of the day (Moore, 2001). The rallying point for the whole of Africa has been the search for freedom and dignity. Due to the effects of colonization, most people continue to feel enslaved, oppressed, and humiliated. Even after independence from Western colonialism, instability and lack of peace are being experienced in Central Africa. People in the DRC continue to experience poor living conditions, hunger, and a cycle of violence together with political instability that was spearheaded by Rwanda and Uganda. DRC's Army is fighting an Islamist-inspired militia blamed for killing fourteen United Nations (UN) peacekeepers in November 2018. The Allied Democratic Force (ADF) an insurgent militia group has continued to

operate for more than two-decades-long after the official end of a 1993-2003 war, together with the Mai-Mai and the Nduma Defense of Congo- Remove (NDC-R). The security situation never gets better but continues to deteriorate and the government is still collapsing. Militia groups continue to compete for the rich natural resources at the expense of the vulnerable masses such as women and young children. The humanitarian situation needs very urgent attention particularly in the North and South of Kivu. Lack of security is leading to more hunger and death as the masses can no longer farm their lands and malnutrition has become extremely prevalent. This study aims to theoretically examine the framework of collective security and identify mechanisms that can be implemented to save the situation in the DRC. The second aim is to examine why there is an absence of an effective security mechanism in Southern Africa which makes it difficult to address the management and resolution of the conflict in the African sub-region.

The UN Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO), has in the past years maintained its two priorities which are: addressing the tense political situation and conflict resolution together with peacekeeping. Failure to urgently address the dire situation will be a challenge for the whole of Africa as there will be high cases of emigration of the Congo people as refugees in other neighboring African countries. The consequences of this will be the perpetuation of non-conventional or human security threats.

The situation in the DRC is very complex in that there will be

uncontrollable human security challenges such as the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS, sexual violence, illegal immigration, labor exploitation, human trafficking, unemployment, scarcity of resources, people smuggling, drug smuggling, and drug abuse to name but few. Such threats will be detrimental to the survival and development of humankind. Continued violence in the DRC might end up spilling over into Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. This article will describe how collective security and defense diplomacy can be implemented by African leaders as effective sub-regional security tools to bring stability and peace in Africa, particularly in the DRC. The question that this research seeks to answer is how does the defense diplomacy conducted by the SADC impact the conflict resolution in DRC? From previous research, it can be noted that the capture of Kinshasa by the Congolese rebels has led to more violence and this is an issue that must be addressed by Africa as a whole under the auspices of the SADC through defense diplomacy and collective security.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this article, a theoretical framework of defense diplomacy and collective security will be applied to understand the phenomena of conflict resolution. Principles of Track Two Diplomacy were identified and how they should be implemented in the DRC situation.

The research method utilized in the collection of data for this paper is the qualitative research method which includes interviews, focus groups, book sources questionnaires, published journals, and newspapers. Cresswell defines the approach to data collection, analysis, and

report writing. The qualitative approach used in this research is the Case Study design which involves a deeper understanding of data sources and it usually seeks to explain an event, an entity, or an organization (Cresswell & McCoy, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of defense diplomacy in conflict resolution and how it can be applied in the case of DRC to achieve peace and stability. Previous research, Chinyanganya, demonstrates how the absence of a cohesive military instrument in the DRC and Africa as a whole will continue to be a shameful let down for decades to come (Chinyanganya, 2005). Joseph Nye defines 'defense diplomacy' as the pursuit of foreign policy objectives through the peaceful employment of defense resources and capabilities (Nye, 2004). Neighboring African nations have played a defense diplomacy role to pursue their foreign policies by sending their military troops on a fact-finding mission in the DRC. The response by the UN of sending peacekeeping troops consisting mainly of African troops to restore order has indeed been acts of diplomacy that should still be maintained until the conflict is resolved. Conflict resolution using defense diplomacy in the DRC is one way to get a solution to the crisis. Peter Wallensteen defines 'conflict resolution' as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and provides that as another way to solve the DRC situation (Wallensteen, 2002).

Under a collective security arrangement, one aggressor against one

state is considered an aggressor against all states. Throughout history, states have attempted to prevent or stop wars. One defining characteristic of collective security is that it is global. The League of Nations and the United Nations were founded on the principles of collective security. Montville defines Track Two Diplomacy as the unofficial efforts made outside governments that bring about a diplomatic resolution of conflicts. In other words, instead of only having favorable discussions based on strategic interests with just heads of states, Track Two diplomacy seeks to include all parties to the conflict (Montville, 1981).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The exploitation of key natural resources, diamonds, in particular, has contributed to prolonging the war in the DRC (Moor, 2001). The motivation and feasibility of resource exploitation largely explain why external military contingents have remained active in the country since 1998 up to date. DRC resources have proven decisive to sustain power positions and the driving forces of war can be identified among the elites of Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Although most exploitation has been carried out at a gunpoint, the use of existing networks suggests that the withdrawal of forces will not necessarily stop the massive resource diversion. The UNSC, through defense diplomacy apparatus of the SADC and the African Union (AU), is seeking new ways to stabilize the DRC by striking a new security agreement with neighboring countries to suppress armed groups in the countries east. This is highly significant because the persistence of over 100armed

groups in the Eastern DRC is a threat to both Congolese civilians and regional stability. The countries' neighbors have also often used militias as proxies to attack one another and control economic resources. A lasting resolution needs to be ensured so that the local population benefits from its resources. It is required that also the leaders and the stakeholders see peace as a more attractive option than continued war. De Witte (2001) and Harvey (Harvey, 2004) argue that the engagement of armed groups creates opportunities, alternative livelihoods, and governance structures, as well as new forms of conflict and these processes will have an effect of prolonging the war instead of bringing it to an end.

The crisis in the DRC can be addressed through collective security by implementing defense diplomacy. Collective security can be demonstrated by relying on pan- Africanism which is opposed to relying only on foreign security mechanisms. Defense diplomacy can be applied to manage the crisis by decentralizing Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops and delegating responsibilities to manage, resolve, and maintain peace and stability.

Collective Security

In the 1930s, collective security failed to prevent the aggression between Italy and Ethiopia, however, the end of the Cold War gave new hope and the rebirth of collective security under the New World Order. This was witnessed from 1990 to 1991 during the First Gulf War. One hindering factor, however, in the execution of the collective security norm has been the absence of a holistic definition of what

constitutes an act of aggression. A definition of aggression has to be developed so that it can act as a yardstick when a conflict situation arises. The other alternative is to identify the basis of the aggression through an independent body by voting to determine whether a State is guilty of aggression or not (Jackson, 2009). As much as a formula for defining aggression cannot be comprehensive, it can still, however, give proper weight to provocation in various complex situations. The manner of resolving conflicts has always faced challenges. When the African region intervened in the DRC conflict, this came as a new development in the international system. In history, it was solely the United Nations that handled all aggression when neighboring states had a dispute. In San Francisco in 1945, the UN made efforts to define aggression, and the question was received by the International Law Commission and thereafter was assigned to the General Assembly. In 1974, there was finally an agreement on the general definition of the use of armed force. The General Assembly has always made efforts and attempts to fill the breach in the collective system but it has always encountered challenges as well. As a result, there have been calls for innovations that can contribute to the international peace and security situations that have not been responded to effectively and with peaceful settlements, such one case is the DRC dispute (Fisher, R., Ury & Patton, 1991).

Collective security is important to secure peace and stability against the war in a part of the world. The United Nations has been making efforts to maintain world peace through the framework of

peacekeeping operations. In the DRC situation, military interventions by African states in 1998 was based on the ideology of collective security. The objective was to achieve one goal by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) members. Even the under-developed and poor countries such as Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe came forth and played roles in the crisis. This article argues that these were attempts to show collective security in the region as one nation had been provoked and that means aggression to all. As much as most countries showed concern and willingness to fight for one cause, some state leaders in the African region were not willing to participate in the war. One such country is South Africa where its former leader Nelson Mandela did not show any interest in the DRC crisis. In 1996 nonetheless, SADC had already formed the Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security (OPDS) for managing political, security, and defense. The attempt was for collective security purposes.

Underdevelopment and incapacity due to lack of resources characterize Southern Africa and this often leads to collective security failing to address disputes and management of conflict resolution. For this reason, Africa on its own has failed to apply the concept of collective security in the DRC thus the reason why instability and lack of peace have continued in that country. Analysts in the region have advocated for the need to establish formal institutions that can help fight instability in the sub-region. It will also be important to find a balance between diplomatic solutions to conflicts. Most neighboring states have continued to assist especially in

the historic liberation movements but Patel argues that these states were also aggressive on the diplomatic front (Patel, 2006).

Defense Diplomacy for Conflict Resolution

Defense diplomacy has also been used through the promotion of civil-military relations. Civil-military relations are described as the relationship between civil society and the military organizations established to protect it (Gaynor, 2016). Both local, that is African and external (Western) defense diplomacy can provide support concerning peace and stability through offering advice, providing training for military and civilian personnel, and promoting democracy and socialization.

Africa, through the SADC, played a defense diplomacy role twice in the conflict-stricken Congo. The actions of the SADC came as regional diplomacy first in 1998 when it called for collective security by authorizing the intervention of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The second time was in 2003 when the SADC left a military force to guarantee the country's defense and security after the war. In 2013, troops from Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania were deployed to fight the rebels.

The United States was lured into the DRC issue by uranium, a very precious natural resource, and by the assassination of Patrice Lumumba who was believed to be an ally of the Soviet Union. The US decided to also play a role in conflict resolution. The US Embassy in DRC for example, hosted civil-military operation training courses in 2017 in Kinshasa DRC which were taught by a team of US senior military officers. The integration of the

armed forces is an important element of post-conflict peace processes.

Conflict Analysis

The processes are crucial for international peacebuilding strategies. Defense diplomacy applied in this way helps with military training and education, joint exercises, arms sale, and transfer, civilian control over defense policy, human rights and justice, civil society engagement, and incorporating the legislature. Cottey and Foster (Cottey & Foster, 2004) state that external defense diplomacy helps in supporting conflict prevention and also in shaping strategic partnerships. Conflicts are dynamic systems. Conflict analysis can give an understanding or prediction of the future. All interventions will become part of the system and they should support the objectives of the actions. For this research, the Conflict Transformation approach will be used as a tool of analysis. This approach sees conflict as an interaction of energies. Different perceptions, social and cultural are identified. Ross and Lederach state that constructive conflict transformation seeks to empower actors and support recognition between them (Lederach, 2005; Ross, 1993). In most cases, conflicts are subsystems of larger systems. Whenever analyzing conflicts, boundaries must be set (Bjorkdahl, 2016).

The Glasl Conflict Escalation Model

Fredrich Glasl came up with the Glasl Conflict Escalation Model. This tool of analysis describes escalation as an increase in tension in a conflict. After escalation, the fighter does not only want satisfaction but also hurts the opponent. The final level of escalation is mutual destruction. As

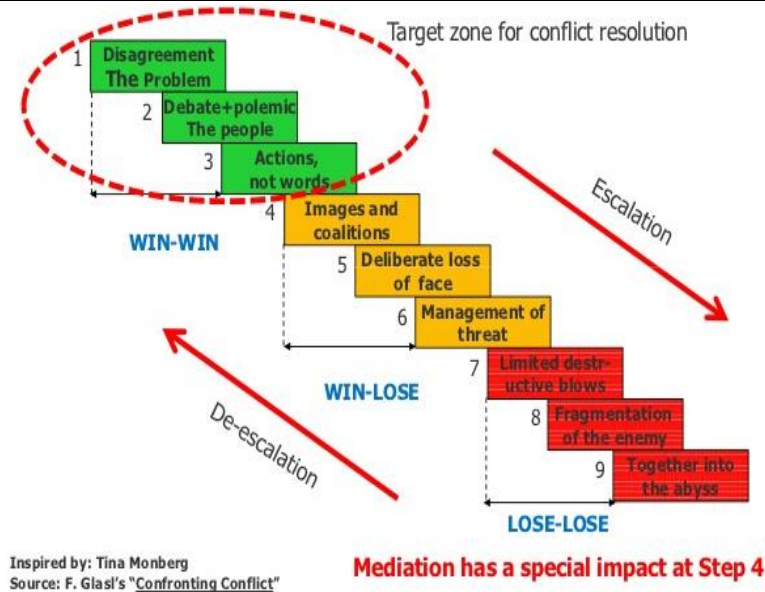


Figure 1. Glasl Conflict Escalation Model

Source: Glasl, 2002

escalation increases, the intervening party has to be more forceful and powerful in its intervention. Glasl states that the process goes through nine levels. In one of the levels, the perpetrator of the conflicts gets to a stage where they believe that negotiation will not give them the desired results and they will use the strategy of 'fait accompli' which is presenting the opponent with facts on the ground or physical action. There will be a danger of false interpretation on the other side. The following stage is a direct attack on the moral integrity of the opponent which is a major escalation step. The conflict escalates through ultimatums. Values are shifted and loss is seen as an achievement. Destruction and fragmentation is the aim and in the end, the ultimate prize is the destruction of the opponent. Fisher (Fisher, R., Ury & Patton, 1991) goes on to say the involvement of third parties in inter-group or international situations through

mediation-arbitration, negotiation and diplomacy should be able to identify who is the loser or who is the winner as long as the conflict is resolved.

The Escalation Model sensitizes people to the mechanisms of conflict escalation. Sensitizing leads people to greater awareness of the steps that should be taken to avoid conflict from escalating out of control. Failure of handling peoples' interests is usually the standpoint of contradictions (Glasl, 2002). Awareness and efforts are needed to resist escalation. In the DRC case, the conflict has escalated after the end of the war because a certain group of people feels that their needs, interests, and access to natural resources is being ignored.

Glasl stated that third parties are necessary for conflict resolution because they offer neutral assistance whilst creating peace and stability in the process. Policies have to be put in place that will

prevent the conflict from continuing to spiral out of control. Governments should exercise substantive powers over natural resources, their exploitation, and ethnic differences. SADC and the African Union should be able to curb resistance of militia groups. Mediation, negotiation, arbitration, law enforcement should be used extensively in the case of DRC to create the peace and stability that the whole African region is searching for. In many instances international actors adopt a third party role to execute their foreign policy objective. Zimbabwe, in particular, played a "Third Party" role by intervening in the DRC dispute with the objective of conflict resolution, and in the same vein, Zimbabwe was exerting her foreign policy on the DRC. Based on the instruments of foreign policy regarding "Third Party" roles, AU exercised 'Structural Intervention' whereby the actor intervenes as a third party and carries out activities designed to change the structure of the disputing parties with an expectation that they can lead the parties to change their conflict behavior.

A Concept of Track Two Diplomacy

Zezeza asserts that Track Two diplomacy is more effective than Track One diplomacy which can be interpreted as meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state (Zezeza, 2008). Track One is characterized by a rigid nature of formal diplomatic engagements that can not be easily sustained or can easily breakdown (Burrowes, 1996). Thus, unofficial strategies can be more effective for interactions in situations of conflict resolution. The parties may include academics, religious leaders, retired senior

officials, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) officials among others.

Track Two diplomacy believes that war can be avoided if contacts between people are initiated to build friendship and understanding. Different methods are used to bring people together to produce changes in the way they view themselves, the conflict, and possible solutions to the conflict. In this way, Track Two diplomacy can contribute to conflict transformation by encouraging those involved in disputes to engage in constructive dialogue. Such an approach requires the techniques of bargaining and negotiation that are usually used at the track one level to be adapted for the engagements between citizens of different political positions (Montville, 1981). Track two diplomacy, therefore, entails processes such as problem-solving workshops, dialogues, cultural exchanges, and any other contacts established between people that are engaged in conflict. Track Two diplomacy is still a new concept that needs to be formalized as a process. If this is not done, Track Two diplomacy will soon become inadequate (Lederach, 2005)

Application of Track Two Diplomacy in the DRC Conflict

In the case of DRC, Track Two efforts provided the Congolese civil society and unarmed opposition with a platform to articulate a presence and negotiate an inclusion into the peace process. Track Two diplomatic efforts led to constructive negotiations between the different civil society groups that sought to harmonize relations among the belligerents between 2003 and 1998.

In recent years, the role of non-state actors (NGOs) have been greatly witnessed in promoting peace and security. Many NGOs such as World Vision, Green Peace and Save the Children have been involved in humanitarian aid programs, disaster relief, and assistance to people affected by wars. In the contemporary world that is ever dynamic, Track Two Diplomacy is applicable and acceptable because of the changing nature of conflicts. However, Track Two diplomacy should not be seen as a replacement for Track One diplomacy but as a process that compliments the other.

Track One Diplomacy failed to achieve lasting peace in the DRC hence the continued instability. Track Two came in to play a role when academics, researchers, and community leaders held seminars and presented papers and dialogues which exposed information about the conflict. In 1999, Congolese civil society organizations participated in open dialogue with the DRC government, and the rebels were asked to attend the gatherings and the conferences. A campaign for peace was launched in 1999 by the National Council Development-NGO. The campaign aimed to gain international support for peacekeeping. Similar activities of Track Two Diplomacy included the two-day conference entitled “Crisis in The Great Lakes” which was held by the Centre for Policy Studies based in Johannesburg, South Africa. A continued application of Track Two Diplomacy in the DRC will create awareness of the complexity of the crisis that the nation is faced with (Kolf & Lenfant, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Johan Galtung states that a conflict has its own life cycle-almost like something organic (Galtung, 2000). The conflict appears, then reaches an emotional level, then proceeds to a stage of climax where it then can disappear and re-appear (Rodriguez, 2011). Individuals and groups, such as nations and states have goals. Goals may be incompatible, such as two states wanting the same land, or two nations wanting the same state. When goals are incompatible, an issue arises. Any actor or party with unrealized goals feels frustrated. Frustration may lead to aggression, turning inwards as physical violence. The violence may be directed towards the holders of the goals standing

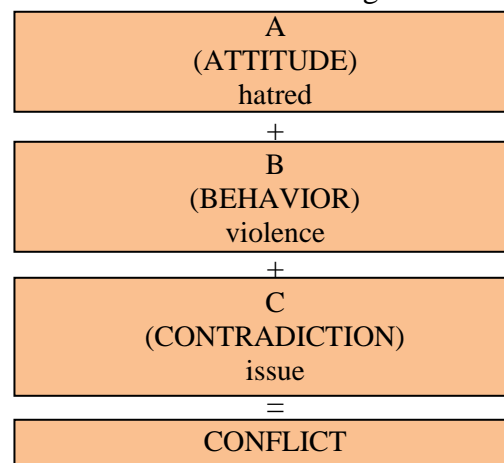


Figure 2. The Conflict Life Cycle

Source: Galtung, 2000

in the way but it is not always rational. Violence may breed a spiral of counter-violence as defense or as revenge. That spiral of violence becomes a meta-conflict (Burrowes, 1996). Conflicts may combine complex formations with many parties and many goals because the same parties or the same goals are involved. Figure 2 gives a

description of the conflict life cycle model.

The life cycle of conflict is divided into three phases, that is, before the violence, during the violence, and after the violence. This does not mean that violence or conflict is unavoidable or that conflict always results in destruction. The lifecycle is complimented by the Transcend Model which is described in Figure 3.

Conflict Transformation By Peaceful Means

The Transcend Model

This article uses defense diplomacy as the tool that can be applied in the DRC context, thus defense diplomacy is a peaceful means of engaging military apparatus in conflicts. The Transcend Method of Conflict analysis best describes defense diplomacy. The Transcend Model has four stages which entail that there was conflict before the violence broke out. At

this stage, there will be more sustainable peace initiatives.

In the second phase, the violence happens because all parties involved intend to impose their own goals and interests. Usually, one party tends to prevail than the other;

In the third stage, both parties are seeking to win the conflict. Military skills are exercised and the UN Charter tends to play a role in trying to bring peace. Non-violent and mediation skills are brought to the forefront; Conflict comes to an end through withdrawal and compromise. In the stage, there is resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation. This is the stage of Transcend.

The Transcend Model is based on the thought that to prevent conflict, there has to be a transformation. The main understanding is that goals and interests control the evolution of the conflict.

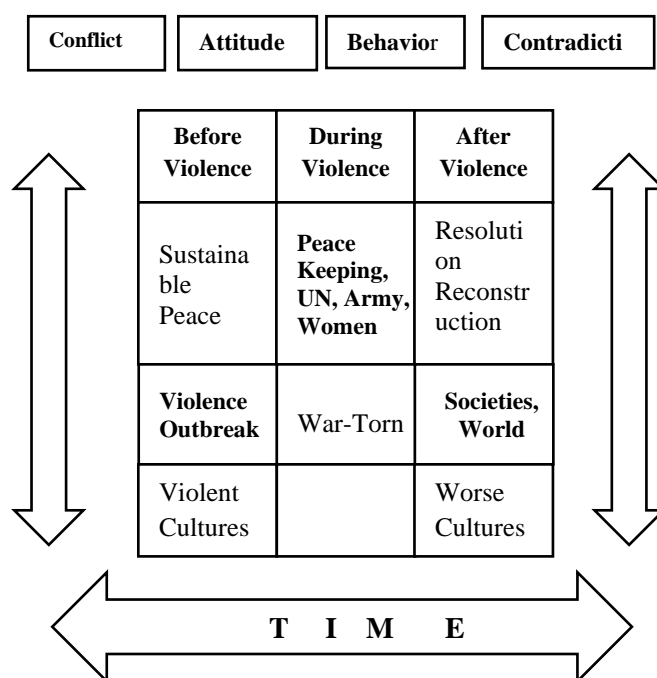


Figure 2. The Transcend Model of Conflict Resolution
Source: Galtung, 2000

Transforming a conflict means transcending the goals of the conflicting parties. It is usually achieved through dialogue based on empathy, non-violence, and joint creativity. Failure to transform conflict leads to violence (Lenfant, 2006).

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Defense diplomacy activities should be increased towards the DRC situation for Africa to be saved from a conflict that can go on for many years. With the predictable results of a military "solution", African and most countries in the world urged all parties engaged in the war to enter into negotiations and find a solution to the conflict. The writers of this article believed that collective security by the African states will help the situation more swiftly. The idea and hope of the people in Africa that The humanitarian situation in the DRC is so bad that most people are wondering whether the international community and the United Nations are watching and making any efforts to bring peace and stability. The masses have become extremely hopeless and the situation is prompting the young children and the youth to join armed military groups. Political participation is very weak and women are not involved in the conflict resolution processes. Women of the DRC also want to be considered and be heard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

About 12.8 million people in the DRC need humanitarian assistance in terms of food, medication, shelter, clothing, and protection. Life-saving assistance should be boosted in that country so that not so many lives continue to be lost. Without

reliable sources of food, the situation will continue to be dire. The United Nations, SADC and the AU should take treat the matter with the urgency that it deserves. To solve the issue of food shortages, organizations like the World Vision should be mobilized and supported by the UN to assist the people who are vulnerable to hunger in the affected regions.

Income-generating activities should be boosted to support all the families to have access to medical care, education, shelter, and clothing. All these efforts must receive international backing by the IMF and the World Bank.

More health care centers have to be established so that the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS is curbed before it kills more people. There must also be the free provision of antiretroviral drugs to the affected people. On a greater note, defense diplomacy activities have to be extensively exercised by all nations concerned to bring peace and stability in the sub-region of Africa. The deterioration in instability since 2017 has to be responded too as early as possible so that the disaster is curbed and does not spill out to other neighboring countries. Despite the need to unite and build up its capabilities, the DRC has to disarm and demobilize over 150,000 excess military personnel. The aggressive militia groups that are the perpetrators of the horrid living conditions must be handled as top priority issues in international peace and conflict resolution forums. There must extensive repatriation of foreign armed groups/rebels who must be demobilized, disarm, reintegrated, rehabilitated, and resettled in their home countries.

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