



SC: Security Council

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Issue: The Question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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I. Introduction

People of each nation have faced their problems throughout history. Whether it was economic shortcomings, disputes across borders, healthcare availability, or many other issues people could face, most of the time, there were at least some things that were going right, which managed to keep the people and the nation stable. However, when the discussion turns to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), both its current state and historical phases, it is a challenge to find a time when the nation was not facing all the aforementioned problems simultaneously.



Image 1: The location of DR Congo on the map (Wiese)

DR Congo has been through periods where the country was a colony, ruled by a dictator that stole from the people; in a war with neighbouring nations that saw approximately 3.8 million casualties; being named as “Africa’s World War”; and run by a leader that faced allegations of election fraud (“Second Congo War 1998-2003”). After all this, the nation is still distressed by the activities of certain militias like Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) in the Eastern part of the country. Starvation is at an all-time high, disappearances and crime are always present, diseases are widespread with little to no access to vaccines.

As the goal of the United Nations (UN) is to establish peace, stability, and prosperity across the world, the DR Congo is a crisis that needs constant global attention. There are already many UN agencies supplying the country with basic humanitarian resources, and also UN peacekeeping forces deployed in the region. Without a stable government that aims to mend the country’s long-standing wounds and establish goodwill between neighboring countries, however, all this support is trying to row against the current, always ending up right at the point where it all started.

The question of the DRC is a question that requires a deep understanding of the nation’s history, geopolitical location, relations with other nations located on its borders and outside Africa, and what has already been tried and has not succeeded. Being the second-largest country in Africa and the fifteenth most



populous nation across the globe, the fate of the DRC may be a deciding factor in the fate of the entirety of Africa (“Countries in the world by population (2025)”).

II. Key Vocabulary

Colony: A region or territory governed wholly or partly by a foreign nation, often far away, and inhabited by settlers from that nation (“Colony”).

Resource Curse: The resource curse, or the paradox of plenty, describes how many nations with abundant natural resources often fail to fully benefit from their wealth, with their governments struggling to address public welfare effectively (“The Resource Curse”).

Kleptocracy: A type of government where rulers exploit their authority to seize the nation’s wealth and resources for personal wealth (“Kleptocracy”).

Coup d’état: A coup is a swift and forceful takeover of a government by a small group, which requires control over some or all of the military, police, and security forces. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica).

Insurgency: An insurgency is an organized movement within a nation that aims to throw the ruling government - a form of rebellion (“Insurgency”).

Mobutism: The formal political name of the Popular Movement of the Revolution, derived from the ideas, principles, and policies of President Mobutu Sese Seko (“Mobutism Definition”).

III. Involved Countries and Organizations

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The center of the issue, DRC, is currently led by President Tshisekedi, who has been focused on addressing the M23 and other armed groups in the eastern part of the nation. The country deems the actions of the said militia as terrorism, which is being funded by the neighbouring country of Rwanda. The President stated in one of his speeches, “Rwanda has repeatedly provoked such situations for many years, and there have not been any countermeasures taken” (Özkan). There is currently armed action taking place in the regions of Ituri, North and South Kivu, and Tanganyika between the military and UN peacekeeping troops against the militias, which account for over 120 (“Democratic Republic of the Congo”). The major issue is, however, the escalating humanitarian condition in the nation where millions of people are starving and are concerned for their safety. Although the nation is getting aid from several organizations and countries, the safe delivery of the aid is still under attack. The DRC is seeking to resolve the conflict with the



militias diplomatically, with Rwanda taking responsibility for their actions and further humanitarian aid being delivered to the country.

Rwanda

The nation is seen as the main aggressor in the situation by the international community. The M23 militia has been found to consist of Rwandan experts, being supplied weapons by Rwanda, and consisting of members from the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF). Many experts of the United Nations have noted that the motivation behind Rwanda's actions was gaining access to the natural resources of the DRC (Blanshe). Many organizations have already condemned the actions of the Rwandan government, including the Human Rights Council ("UN rights body..."). There are countless human rights abuse cases identified by the Human Rights Watch (HRW), including killings, forced labour, and threats against journalists. The Rwandan government itself, however, does not accept the media's story of being an aggressor and claims that they are indeed on the defensive and are taking defensive measures. The president of the nation, Paul Kagame, has stated, "The expertise they provide, the reports they write actually do not have anything to do with the situation itself. These reports were written long ago - when they were given the mission" ("UN experts say Rwanda..."). For the time being, Rwanda does not accept any of the allegations and is continuing to fight the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which they claim are being funded by the DRC, as found by the HRW.

United States of America

One of the key actors in the region, diplomatically, the United States has been primarily backing the DRC in its fight against the militias, both diplomatically and in humanitarian aid. The USA has been engaging in dialogue with both parties to de-escalate the tension in the region. They have also placed several sanctions on a couple of M23 personnel in an attempt to stop or slow down their actions. However, the USA has also been criticised by DRC officials for playing both sides of the table, as there is massive monetary and military aid going to Rwanda each year as well, which the USA claims is to battle terrorism in Africa. An aid of 110 million dollars has been promised to Rwanda in 2025, and although the main issue to tackle is the humanitarian crises in the nation, the true motives behind the money is unknown ("How much foreign aid..."). The DRC is expecting further support from the states, but the USA is primarily backing the DRC in the region for the time being.

African Union

One of the key organizations for diplomatic talks and seizing the hold for the conflict between the parties, the African Union played a key role in the Doha Agreement, which saw the DRC and M23 rebels getting "a step closer to peace" ("Doha agreement brings..."). The organization's key stance on the issue is



to solve the issue internally with dialogue between the African nations and not to involve any kind of foreign military intervention. The goal of the organization is to ensure the territorial integrity of the DRC.

United Nations

The United Nations has been involved in the issue since the emergence of conflict within the region, and peacekeeping forces have been deployed since 1999, following the Second Congo War. The peacekeeping organisation MONUSCO keeps providing military support to the DRC troops in the nation, acting as buffers at times to prevent conflict and to protect civilians as well. Its mandate has been extended for a long time, and its presence is set to continue for a while as the conflict is not dying down, although a slow downsizing is in place as the UN is slowly leaving the issue to FLDR. The main stance of the United Nations is best summarized by the words of Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations: “Silence the guns. Stop the escalation. Respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law” (“Guterres appeals for...”).

IV. Focused Overview of the Issue

As stated in the introduction, to understand the question of the DRC in a wider perspective, an adequate understanding of the nation's history and the build-up to the current crisis is necessary. For the benefit of keeping this section concise and more relevant to the current issues, the starting point in history is 1960, when Congo gained its independence from Belgium after decades of being a colony. The story did not continue in a matter of “happier than ever”, however, as independence had its costs to pay for Congo.

1. The Congo Crisis (1960-1965)

Even though Congo had declared independence on June 30, Belgian troops remained in the nation, which set the first motion for the crisis. After years of rule under the Belgian officials, the native Congolese army officials mutinied against their superiors, and this action eventually led to violence across the nation. “Atrocities against whites” took place everywhere, and the Europeans were forced to flee the lands of Congo (“The Congo, Decolonization...”). Belgium would not remain unresponsive to the situation against its people and soon deployed troops. The Congo government of Kasavubu (President) and Lumumba (Prime Minister) applied to the UN for a solution, and soon an intervention force was formed, and Belgian troops were requested to leave the nation. During this period, as chaos slowly took control of the country, the provinces of Katanga and South Kasai separated themselves from the government as independent states (“The Congo, Decolonization...”).



The country saw its first coup take place on September 14, when Colonel Joseph Mobutu, to restore order to the nation, as earlier on September 5, both Kasavabu and Lumumba had dismissed each other from their duties, and a period of two officials claiming to be the primary government persisted. Just four days after the successful coup, Mobutu got intelligence from the United States of an assassination attempt targeting him and managed to avoid it, later blaming leftist Lumumba for the plot. After Lumumba tried to escape his house arrest, he was killed on January 17, 1961, by the new government without a proper trial.

During the next four years of the crisis, the UN peacekeeping operation continued its efforts to end all conflict within the nation. Several elections took place, and many governments were formed and changed, unable to form a government that lasted. Socialist uprisings in the country rose, which prompted the United States to intervene in the situation more, and as Mobutu appeared as a powerful ally, the United States put its support behind Mobutu to restore order. After another government failed to form effectively in 1965, Mobutu decided this was the time to end the crisis with full effect and orchestrated another coup, once again successful, and this time placing himself as the head of government ("The Congo, Decolonization..."). He would go on to rule the nation for 32 years.

2. The Mobutu Regime (1965-1997)

"Upon his ascension to power, Mobutu moved quickly to consolidate his control and suppress any opposition" (Bailey). Mobutu set the building blocks for his dictatorship in his first five years by eliminating political opponents and any voice that rose against him, executing four government officials in front of the people for suspicions of a plot against him. He started the propaganda campaign for crowning himself as the saviour of the Congolese people and started efforts to push nationalism in the nation, changing city names and even the name of the nation in 1971 to Zaire. Elections would continue to take place in the nation with a twist: there was only one person who could receive the vote.



Image 2: Mobutu's Palace ("Mobutu's Lingering Legacy in Gbadolite")



Mobutu would not only remain in control of the politics of the nation, but he would also go on to take control of the economy to his joy. He would reign a government that practiced kleptocracy, which is defined as the practice of stealing from the people and government money to pleasure oneself as the leader. Mobutu did exactly that. He would accumulate a wealth of 5 billion dollars, build three grandiose palaces, construct many buildings such as hospitals, schools, markets, and malls around his palaces to establish a neighbourhood of his own, practice nepotism and assign his relatives and close ones to important roles within the government and in important companies... (Bailey). This lavish lifestyle of Mobutu had devastating effects on the people as they suffered from hunger, unemployment, and high mortality rates.

It may be surprising that Mobutu continued his empire this long with no intervention from the international community, looking at the issue from today. There was one critical factor that Mobutu was doing correctly to sustain his way of living without the government being taken away from him, the same thing that brought him to the nation's rule: his siding with the United States in the Cold War. Mobutu was tough on communists in Africa, and he operated under a beneficial relationship with the states during his years. He was invited to the White House a couple of times by US presidents, and good relations lasted until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Once the war against communism was won by the US, the tables quickly turned against Zaire, and the states started putting pressure on the nation to improve humanitarian conditions (Bailey). However, the first international blow to Mobutu was when students protested against him in 1990, and one operation resulted in the murder of 150 students. After this, the international community could not stay silent and immediately condemned the actions, and pressure mounted; Mobutu succumbed to holding elections.

It was not elections that saw his end, however. In 1994, after the genocide in Rwanda took place, the perpetrators escaped into Zaire and took refuge. They did not remain in hiding, however, and attacked Rwanda, some marking this as the beginning of the tensions between the two nations. Rwanda and its ally, Uganda, were not content that Mobutu wasn't doing much to address the perpetrators and decided to overthrow him. The offensive began in 1996 and only lasted six months. Mobutu was sent into exile, where he died on 7 September 1997 of prostate cancer. Zaire's new leader was the leader of the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL), Laurent Désiré-Kabila (Bailey). This was marked as the First Congo War, and the nation was renamed as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mobutu was overthrown, and it appeared better days were ahead for the people of Congo. What they did not know was that even worse days awaited.

3. Second Congo War (1998-2003)

Kabila came to his position with the support of Rwanda and Uganda. As his position was now to lead the DRC and look out for the nation's benefits, the presence of foreign military forces inside the borders



was a concern. Furthermore, the country's eastern regions consisted mostly of Tutsis (Rwandans) who faced a sort of discrimination even before Kabila; they now expected more recognition with the role their nation played in removing Mobutu ("Second Congo War 1998-2003"). Adding to his problems, soldiers inside Kabila's army were mostly untrained and unprofessional, which resulted in them causing problems with the civilian population. All of these problems were bound to explode with time, and it wasn't long.

"On July 27, 1998, Kabila ordered all foreign armies to leave the country." ("Second Congo War 1998-2003") His order did not receive much consideration from Rwandan authorities and troops; furthermore, since Kabila's army consisted of Rwandans, they mutinied, and conflict began. Once again, Rwanda formed an army named Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) to seize control of DRC and establish a new regime. This time round would prove a challenge to Rwanda, however, as the cry for help of Kabila met with many responses. Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Chad answered the call and all of a sudden the scale of the war escalated. This war would result in the casualties of more than three million Africans and would be named as "Africa's World War".

The war went on for five years and saw one ceasefire agreement, which did not end the conflict, more rebel groups rising to the occasion to take control, Kabila being assassinated, his son Joseph Kabila taking his place, and finally a transitional government being established, with some rebel groups continuing to disturb the nation in the east. The war left countless people internally displaced or seeking refuge in other African countries.

4. Joseph Kabila's Presidency (2001-2019)

Rising to the occasion after his father's assassination, Joseph Kabila was a key player in the events that finally put an end to the Second Congo War. Even though the end of the war did not see an end to all hostilities in the nation (especially on the eastern part), Kabila focused on "reforming the economy and began the work of rebuilding the country" (Wiese). Kabila managed to hold multiparty elections in the nation just a couple of years later and was reelected. Fast forwarding to 2008, Kabila's government was able to reach a ceasefire with the majority of the rebel groups. The truce would prove not to be respected by the rebels, however, as conflict would arise in less than a year. Later, an organized attack consisting of Congolese, Rwandan, and UN forces ensured the peace agreement with one of the larger rebel groups on March 23: the CNDP.

The political seat curse also fell on Joseph Kabila, as voices rose against him for delaying elections that were scheduled to take place in 2016. Through a couple of methods, such as changing electoral states and increasing them, requesting time from the Supreme Court, and similar methods, pushed the election all the way to December 2018. Not only were political concerns present, but the government faced a new rebel threat named the Mouvement du March 23 (M23), a group not content with the peace signed on March 23,



2009. Combined forces once again ended the insurgency caused by the said group, though this would not be their last appearance.

The elections did take place in December of 2018, and Kabila was not a candidate. The opposition party candidate Felix Tshisekedi won the majority of the vote and was elected president. The leading candidate in the polls Fayulu, expected victory and, after losing, would suspect “that Tshisekedi and Kabila had made a deal: an election victory for Tshisekedi in exchange for protecting the interests of Kabila and his associates” (Wiese). These allegations were denied, and Tshisekedi was sworn in.

5. Felix Tshisekedi's Presidency and Current Issues (2019-2025)

Tshisekedi promised to address the country's many problems, and he has deployed some projects to improve certain areas such as education and healthcare. He declared two of the eastern regions under conflict and replaced civilian officers with military ones to take care of the conflict (Wiese). His presidency witnessed the resurgence of the M23 group in 2021, and it is still the nation's largest security unrest in the east. There have been two negotiations attempted between the DRC, M23, and Rwanda (allegations of support for M23). The first negotiation attempt did not take place as the M23 rebels viewed the sanctions of the European Union on themselves and Rwanda as a constraining factor in facilitating the talks. The second attempt was comparatively successful between the DRC and Rwanda, as meetings did take place in Doha, Qatar. Ceasefire agreements were made, and disregarded immediately the same day. The current government of Tshisekedi has also recently blamed Kabila for having ties with the M23 rebels, raising tension in the country. Currently, the USA is acting as a mediator between the parties. The greatest issue the country is facing in terms of security and sovereignty is the rebel groups acting in the eastern part for years now, and without this issue being resolved, it is tough to imagine a prosperous future for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The second most important issue is the humanitarian situation. “Across the DRC, the demand for emergency aid is growing exponentially, with 27 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025.” (“DR Congo emergency) This is the result of 60 years of conflict and corruption in the nation, and this number sets aside the people who have taken refuge in another nation and been internally displaced. Access to food and water, basic healthcare is a privilege for some who live in the DRC. The nation is in dire need of further aid, but also increased pressure on the government is necessary to prioritise the crises as much as the eastern conflict. It should also be kept in mind that if the aid reaches a sufficient level, there is still the problem of insufficient infrastructure and safe delivery of goods..

The third issue is one that is imminent and related to the security of the nation. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO) has been active in the country since 1999 but is abandoning the country step by step in 2025 and leaving the control to the DRC government.



Although this may look like a step in the right direction to end armed conflict, the consequence of UN peacekeeping forces withdrawing may be dire. Whether it will create a huge security vacuum or not is still yet to be determined but a large force that has been present for a long time leaving the nation will certainly create opportunities for those seeking to seize power.

V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
30 June 1960	The DR Congo gains independence after long decades of colonial rule from Belgium. Patrice Lumumba is the president.
17 January 1961	Patrice Lumumba is assassinated and turmoil arises in the rest of the nation.
24 November 1965	Mobutu executes a coup d'état seizing power and putting an end to the Congo Crisis.
24 October 1996	Rwanda and Uganda back Kabila to overthrow Mobutu and the First Congo War starts.
16 May 1997	End of the First Congo War. Mobutu is overthrown and the country is named as the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2 August 1998	The Second Congo War starts, including multiple nations.
10 July 1999	Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is signed. The countries do not respect it and fighting ongoes.
16 January 2001	Laurent Kabila is assassinated and his son Joseph Kabila takes leadership.
18 July 2003	Official end of the Second Congo War, transitional government is formed.
6 May 2012	First rise of the M23 rebels, defeated within a couple months.
30 December 2018	Felix Tshisekedi is elected as the president.
November 2021	The M23 rebels resurge and increase conflict in the eastern regions.
2025	UN peacekeeping mission of MONUSCO is slowly withdrawing from the nation.



VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

- [S/RES/2773](#)

The most recent resolution on the issue. Encompasses the issues of M23 rebel conflict, Rwandan support for RDF, and unconditional ceasefire.

- [S/RES/2765](#)

The resolution which extends the mandate of MONUSCO until 20 December 2025 due to continuing hostile actions from M23.

- [Luanda Agreement](#)

The 2002 agreement between the DRC and Uganda regarding withdrawal of forces from the nation. Although the agreement did not effectively end the Second Congo War, it still serves as an important step towards dialogue in Congo and may be effective in drafting an agreement for peace today.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

UN and Neighbouring Countries' Intervention

No military intervention has managed to cease the conflict in the region, whether it was the UN or countries like Rwanda. The UN intervention may be considered successful in parts, as it helped the DR Congo government avoid ruin; however, since its deployment in 1999, there have only been more rebel groups emerging on the horizon in the eastern section of the nation. On the other hand, more often than not, Rwanda's intentions in the DR Congo region can be questioned as an intervention, their military presence in the area also did not end the conflict in Congo and establish a government they pleased. Due to the sheer number of people joining the militias and rebelling against the national government, it is very difficult to end all hostilities through armed conflict. There will always be new groups.

Ceasefire Agreements

Throughout the nation's history, probably countless ceasefires have been reached. Nearly none of them were respected for more than a couple of days. As there is no border, there can not be an established buffer zone to ensure no conflict will take place between the parties; a conflict in one part of the nation can spark up armed battle all around. Signing more ceasefire agreements between the government and rebel



groups or other governments has not been working for the region, and probably won't for the foreseeable future.

VIII. Possible Solutions

Sitdowns with Rebel Groups

Since military intervention and armed battle against the rebel groups are not working, negotiations with the rebel groups seem necessary at this point. This has been achieved before and yes it did lead to the birth of the M23 group, however, it did provide a time of peace with the rebels and the conflict dropped down. This may prove an impossible task since there are currently many groups, but sitting to the table with the largest of them like M23 will definitely set the example for other rebel groups to consider doing the same. Without the need of stating, compromises will have to be made from both sides since the government can not accept the ongoing presence of rebels in the state, but their requests must be heard at a diplomatic level.

Improved Prisons and Extreme Punishments

An alternative to a very diplomatic solution, crime is sometimes best dealt with harsh punishments in countries as troubled as the DR Congo. One perfect example of this is the nation of El Salvador and how they plummeted the crime rate. By incorporating CECOT, a very high security prison where all prisoners are bound for life, the crime rate in the nation dropped from 17 homicides per 100,000 people to 2.3 homicides per 100,000 people in just two years (Langmaid). It is not only the prison that accomplished this, but the harsh truth of the government arresting each person who was highly suspected, not confirmed, of committing gang violence and crimes. The humanitarian aspect of this prison can be debated, but its effectiveness is proven. If the delegates see that an extreme problem needs an extreme solution, as in DR Congo, a prison might just do the trick. The prison would also need a high level of funding and infrastructure to function well, so delegates must keep in mind the capacity of the government to operate such a prison.

Increased Humanitarian Funding and Aid

The direness of the situation can not be overstated; the people of DR Congo are suffering terribly. Access to basic humanitarian needs is limited, conflict plagues all over the nation, millions are running away to different places and nations, and many are being lost to the endless armed conflict between the government and rebels. Aid being delivered to them is necessary, and organizations are trying to do so, but it needs further help today. Better roads and more accessibility are necessary for the aid to be delivered to the people who need it. Among the conflicts of Palestine and Ukraine, the international media and people all around should be informed of this other mega crisis in the DR Congo. Delegates may consider creating



separate funding for different purposes of the nation and ask for further assistance from organizations worldwide and national governments.

IX. Useful Links

[Britannica](#)

The Britannica page for the DR Congo pretty much explains everything that went on through here and more. It is a great source to get more information and specifics on the issue.

[El Salvador Crime](#)

If you want to explore deeper into the crime situation going on in El Salvador and how they managed to bring down the crime rate.

[Humanitarian Situation](#)

Sums up the humanitarian situation going on in the DR Congo. Contains nice graphs and explanations.

[UN Documents on DR Congo](#)

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