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The United Nations Mission in the Democratic  
Republic of Congo:  
**Searching for the  
missing peace**



Xavier Zeebroek

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July 2008

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# The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Searching for the missing peace

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July 2008

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## MONUC's slow rise

After Africa's first world war<sup>1</sup> tore apart the Congolese territory between August 1998 and July 1999, a number of agreements between the belligerents opened the door to the retreat of foreign troops and a slow transition to peace and reconstruction. At that point, a prolonged coexistence began between the Congolese authorities and the United Nations, with the latter responsible for seeing through the transition.

The United Nations Observation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) was not officially created by the Security Council until 30 November 1999 (UNSCR 1279), although 90 liaison officers as well as civilian personnel had been stationed in DRC since August of that year.<sup>2</sup> This UN presence had been requested by the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement in July 1999, in order to ensure its implementation. The ceasefire agreements between the belligerents (DRC, Uganda, Rwanda, Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe and rebel MLC and RCD groups) envisaged that the UN's role would initially be limited to monitoring the cessation of hostilities, disengagement and the retreat of foreign forces, as well as assisting in the transportation of humanitarian aid.<sup>3</sup>

On 24 February 2000, the Council expanded the size of the mission, increasing the number of troops to 5,537 (UNSCR 1291). Moreover, the Security Council

authorised the mission to act under Chapter VII<sup>4</sup> by mandating it 'to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence in the areas of deployment of its infantry battalion'. Although in theory this meant that MONUC could use force, five more years went by before the mission decided to employ that option. Frequently this was due to a lack of political commitment, though inadequate resources were also a factor on occasion.

The subsequent history of MONUC's mandate can be summarised in terms of a long list of Security Council resolutions that broadened the mission's competencies, increased its troops and adopted tougher stances regarding the prerogative of civilian protection. For example, in June 2001 it was charged with carrying out disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation and reintegration (DDRR - UNSCR 1355): processes that were complemented by that of reinstatement (DDRRR - UNSCR 1376) in November 2001.

In December 2002, the expansion to (up to) 8,700 military personnel (UNSCR 1445) was intended to enable MONUC to carry out its activities more effectively in dangerous situations (in particular DDRRR operations), by creating the more robust concept of military task-forces.

In March 2003, MONUC was specifically mandated in Ituri "to monitor developments on the ground (and) to provide further support and assistance to humanitarian efforts as well as to facilitate the formation of the Ituri Pacification Commission and assist the work of this commission" (UNSCR 1468). But no additional personnel were authorised to carry out this new task. The need for more troops led to the deployment of the MONUC reserve contingent, which was made up of 800 Uruguayan soldiers. On May 9, the MONUC mission in Bunia came under attack, and the Blue Helmets were forced to respond, in order to push back the aggressors.<sup>5</sup> The vast majority of UN personnel and

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the Congo's recent history, see Jean-Claude Willame, 'Les faiseurs de paix au Congo', Collection 'Les livres du GRIP' n° 288-289, GRIP/Complexe, Brussels, 2007 and also Olivier Lanotte, 'République démocratique du Congo: Guerres sans frontières', Collection 'Les livres du GRIP' n° 266-268, GRIP/Complexe, Brussels, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> According to UNSCR 1258 of 6<sup>th</sup> August 1999. This contingent became MONUC after UNSCR 1279.

<sup>3</sup> They also foresaw the formation of a joint military commission preliminary to the deployment of a 5,000 strong UN force, disarmament of all armed groups, protection for all ethnic groups, restoration of the State's authority in the whole country, opening of a 'national dialogue' between the government, opposition and ex-rebel groups, leading to elections. These agreements set the framework for future relations and negotiations.

<sup>4</sup> Entitled 'Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression', Chapter VII established that the Security Council can authorise coercive actions.

<sup>5</sup> See the Secretary General's Special report S/2003/566.

humanitarian organisations were evacuated. The Security Council was obliged to call for the deployment of an interim European force, which had the capacity to engage in the combat that was required 'to ensure the protection of the internally displaced persons in the camps in Bunia and, if the situation requires it, to contribute to the safety of the civilian population, United Nations personnel and the humanitarian presence in the town' (UNSCR 1484). This first European Union mission, Operation Artemis, of 1,800 troops, was operational from 12<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003.

In order to ensure that MONUC would be able to regain control of Ituri, the Security Council increased the number of troops to 10,800 and in July authorised 'MONUC to use all necessary means to fulfil its mandate in the Ituri district and, as it deems it within its capabilities, in North and South Kivu' (Resolution 1493). This was indeed a clear call to firmness in dealing with 'spoilers'.

Yet despite this intervention, the scenario was repeated between May and June 2004, when the dissident General Laurent Nkunda (FNDP) and Colonel Mutebutsi - both Tutsi leaders in DRC - attacked the town of Bukavu for over a week and subjected the population to the worst kind of abuses. The Blue Helmets never even left their barracks. This scandalous performance was noted by both the Congolese and the international community, and many MONUC officials have not forgotten it.

After sending a committee to investigate the events, significant and rapid changes took place. The first measure taken by the Security Council was to adopt UNSCR 1565<sup>6</sup> on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, which redefined the MONUC mandate and missions, and further strengthened both. A substantial increase in troops was thus approved, authorising a total of up to 16,700.

On the ground, several high-ranking military and civilian officials were replaced. The UN Special Representative, William Swing, remained in command and his power was even bolstered, thanks to the greater integration of the mission. From now on, the whole of the United Nations system in DRC was placed under his command. However, the greatest change made was to morale, and a clear signal was given to find the means to apply Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which MONUC had in fact been authorised to use since 2000, but had not had the courage to put into action.

From this point onwards, MONUC began to develop and use 'search and cordon' tactics, in order to enforce disarmament and prevent attacks against the civilian population. They were also used to support the FARDC<sup>7</sup> and to counter the illegal armed groups who continued to act in a violent manner in east Congo.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the years 2005 and (particularly) 2006 were marked by many confrontations between rebels and the FARDC, supported by MONUC, in Ituri and in North and South Kivu and even north of Katanga. Although the results of these robust operations were more evident in Ituri – where they included successful elections – than in Kivu, they certainly contributed to redressing MONUC's bad reputation.

Finally, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006, the Security Council decided to redeploy over 800 soldiers from UNOB (United Nations Operations in Burundi) to MONUC, in order to reinforce security during the electoral period in DRC, which lasted until 1<sup>st</sup> July (UNSCR 1669).

The table overleaf connects several major events that have marked the history of the DRC since 1999 to the steady increase in MONUC troops described above. At the time of most of said events, MONUC was bitterly criticised for its insufficient deployment (the clashes at Kisangani in May 2000 and in Ituri in May 2003) or for its inaction (the taking of Bukavu in June 2004). These bloody episodes were thus often followed by a

<sup>6</sup> See Security Council Resolution 1565, S/RES/1565 (2004), 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004, United Nations.

<sup>7</sup> DRC armed forces, made up of the former national army and former rebels who have participated in DDR.

<sup>8</sup> See section on robust operations.

strengthening of the Blue Helmets' mandate and an increase in troop numbers. Only the elections and the events in Sake in November 2006 seem to indicate a departure from this pattern.

UN resolutions have thus prolonged the deployment of MONUC, or at times confirmed or expanded its mandate (particularly with regard to supporting the electoral process). So today, almost ten years on, its mission still essentially has to do with security, as in UNSCR 1756:

- Protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel and facilities;
- Territorial security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Disarmament and demobilisation of foreign and Congolese armed groups. Deterring any attempted use of force to threaten the political process, supporting operations led by the FARDC-integrated brigades, disarming the recalcitrant local and

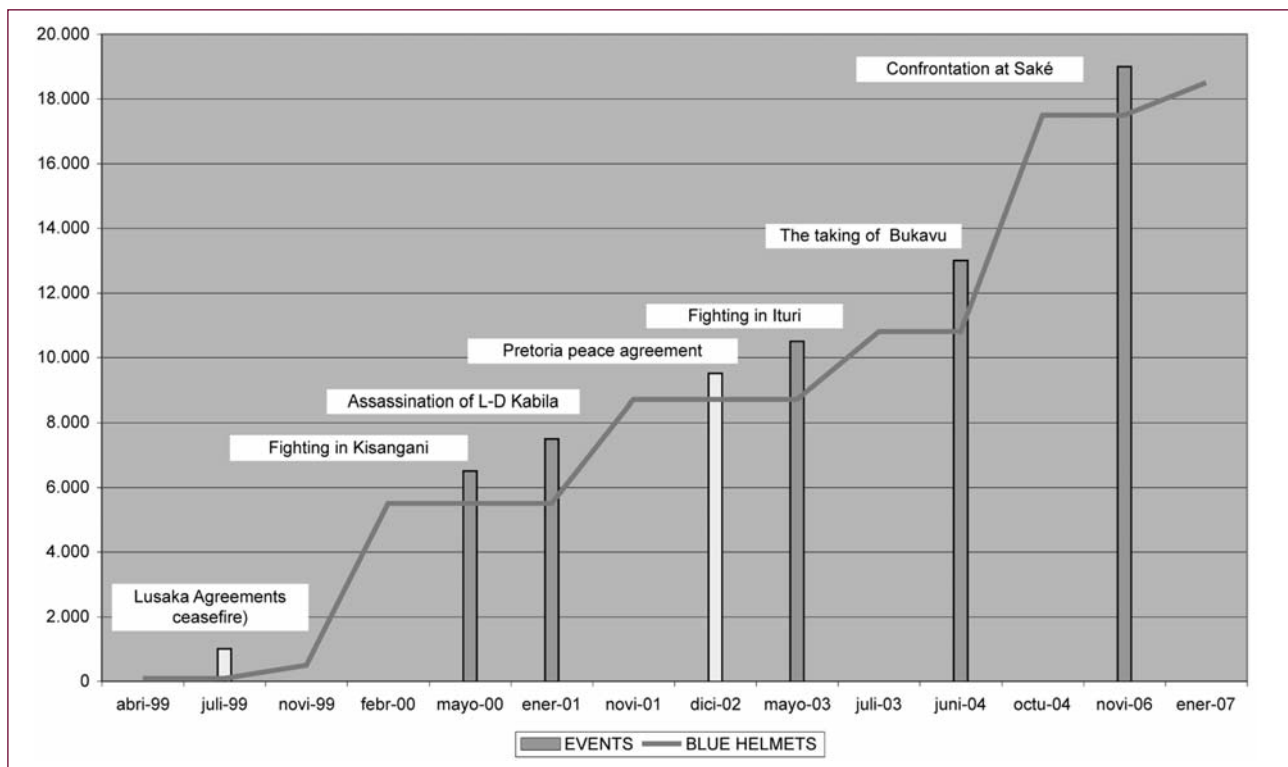
- foreign armed groups in order to ensure their participation in the DDR process;
- Security sector reform (providing basic training to the FARDC in the area of human rights and developing the capacities of the Congolese national police).

It should be noted that this resolution also encourages the Congolese government and its international partners to establish new arrangements in order to continue the political dialogue established under the CIAT.<sup>9</sup>

The resolution also requests that a report be submitted to the Council by the Secretary General by 15th November containing 'benchmarks and an indicative timetable for the gradual drawdown of MONUC'. This could take place in late 2009, but it inevitably remains contingent on circumstances.

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008, the UN Security Council authorised MONUC to provide assistance to the

**Increase in MONUC troops between 1999 and 2006 in relation to the major events the mission has experienced:**



<sup>9</sup> Created by the global government agreement signed on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2002 in Pretoria, the CIAT is the International Committee Accompanying the Transition (see below).

Congolese authorities in organising, preparing and carrying out local elections, planned for the second half of 2008 (UNSCR 1797).

From its beginnings as a limited observation mission, then, MONUC has finally become - after eight years on the ground - a multidimensional mission acting under Chapter VII. It undertakes wide-ranging tasks, ranging from ensuring the security of the population to supporting the electoral process, through the disarmament of local and foreign armed groups and supporting security sector reform. It also has 'robust' engagement rules enabling it, when necessary, to undertake tactical offensive action in order to ensure the implementation of its mandate.

## Uneven results

MONUC is the longest-running United Nations peace mission operating in sub-Saharan Africa, but it has not always had the same structure. As noted above, when it started in 1999 it was just a small mission comprising a hundred or so military observers. Over the years, and after many Security Council resolutions, its organisation developed significantly and between late 2004 and early 2005, with the arrival of a new contingents of troops, an integrated structure was put in place (see organigrams, pages 11-12). Currently, MONUC deploys 18,407 Blue Helmets<sup>10</sup> drawn from 48 countries, about 1,000 police officers of 20 different nationalities and 3,578 civilians, most of whom are Congolese.

MONUC troops are distributed over the whole DRC territory, albeit rather unequally. Most of the troops are in the four provinces in the East, where the Eastern division (15,000) has its operational headquarters (in Kisangani, although more recently in Goma) and many civilians are also stationed there. The centre and the west are occupied by one brigade (of fewer than 3,000 troops) and there is a civilian and military headquarters

in Kinshasa. This uneven distribution is logical, given that the most severe problems usually arise in the East, although on the occasion of the elections, security in the capital had to be strengthened.

As can be seen in the organigrams (on pages 11-12), MONUC today is headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), who is assisted by two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General - one of whom is responsible for coordinating humanitarian affairs and UN agencies. The command structure of the MONUC Blue Helmets and of the United Nations police force also answers to the SRSG. After 2004, the special representative became the highest UN official in DRC, commanding authority not only over the mission itself but also - through the humanitarian/resident coordinator - over the local offices of UN agencies. A number of coordination offices within the mission and with external operators complete the integrated effort. Only the will to ensure that OCHA has a certain degree of independence ensures that MONUC is a semi-integrated mission.

The mission also comprises civilian units, which are responsible for different aspects of the mandate, including: human rights, electoral assistance, rule of law, DDR (disarmament, demobilisation, reinsertion) and public relations. Regarding the latter, - in February 2002, MONUC set up the one radio station that broadcasts nationally, called Radio Okapi.

In addition, the International Committee Accompanying the Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo (CIAT) - which is a separate organisation to the United Nations although it is not Congolese - has played an important role in monitoring implementation of the agreements. Made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council along with Belgium, Canada, South Africa, Angola, Gabon and Zambia, the European Union, the African Union and MONUC, CIAT, whose goal is to support the transition programme, draws its legal basis from the global and inclusive agreement of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2002. Its goal is to maintain a coordinated and coherent political dialogue between the transitional institutions.

<sup>10</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007. UN website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/monuc/facts.html>. consulted on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Moreover, it was the United Nations Special Representative in DRC - William Swing - who held the CIAT presidency, thereby lending political credibility to the dialogue with the Congolese government. This influence declined notably, however, when the CIAT ceased functions after the election and investiture of President Kabila.

In recent years, a number of successful actions have been taken, thanks in part to MONUC. Other operators are in fact bogged down, due to lack of political will or agreement on the ground. Overall, then, the mission's reputation – which was very poor at the start – has improved considerably, although it does remain fragile.

## Elections: proof of integration's success

Despite an unfavourable political environment, the independent electoral commission (CEI, a fully Congolese body) carried out its mission effectively - to organise elections in a country as big as Western Europe which lacks essential infrastructure. The smooth running of the constitutional referendum on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005, the first round of the presidential and legislative elections on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and the second round of the presidential and provincial elections on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006, all testify to this. Yet the success of the electoral process can also be attributed to the international community, in particular the United Nations, the European Union<sup>11</sup> and bilateral partners such as Belgium and South Africa.

However, although funding and political support were essential preconditions for the smooth running of the elections, they were not enough to ensure their success. A huge logistical effort<sup>12</sup> was needed, accompanied by a mobilisation of the provincial and local authorities as well as a training programme for voters that was

<sup>11</sup> The EU was the main donor for the elections, with a contribution of 376 million euros, and it was responsible for the EUFOR-DRC mission. The electoral process totalled almost 500 million euros.

<sup>12</sup> By way of example, 10,000 computers were distributed throughout the country and 64,000 data entry agents were recruited for the operation.

implemented by civil society organisations. This is where MONUC's coordination role came to the fore, as it drew on the characteristic elements of integration.

- The DSRSG responsible for supporting the electoral process commanded an electoral division of MONUC personnel totalling 168 officials (2006 figures).
- The same DSRSG was also the Resident representative of UNDP - the main UN agency responsible for supporting elections -, which meant that conflicts of authority between the agency and the mission were avoided.
- Geographical proximity and institutional coexistence between high-ranking civilian and military officials within MONUC greatly facilitated the logistical support provided by the Blue Helmets.
- The coordination of support for the elections also involved the civilian branches of MONUC, even where this was not their primary function (such as, for example, the sections dealing with civilian affairs and human rights, the police and the Quick Impact Projects section).

Finally, the holding of elections without violence, the high participation rate, and the fact that they were democratic and fair - as was recognised both by national actors and the international community - was a positive boost for MONUC and its image improved considerably in 2006. This achievement was certainly to the credit of the integrated mission in which a concentration of powers, access to both funding and logistical resources and a more effective circulation of information all contributed to optimal functioning.

## A new army with no resources

### *Disappointing security sector reform*

In May 2005, the Congolese government planned a strategic reform of the army and the police. Three stages were envisaged in the creation of a new national army made up of nine different groups:<sup>13</sup> the formation

<sup>13</sup> See Pamphile Sebahara, 'La réforme du secteur de la sécurité en RD Congo', Analysis document, GRIP, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006, <http://www.grip.org/bdg/g4600.html#sdfootnote7sym#sdfootnote7sym>.

of eighteen infantry brigades to maintain security during the elections; the creation of a rapid reaction unit; and, lastly, the establishment of a strong defence force by 2010.<sup>14</sup>

Two and a half years later, the record of reform in the Congolese army is very disappointing. The strategic plan envisaged the completion of training and *brassage* (mixing)<sup>15</sup> by January 2006. Yet by late 2005, only six integrated brigades had been deployed in Kinshasa and in the areas where the tensions and violence were most acute, for example Ituri and North and South Kivu. Moreover, only three of these brigades had enough equipment to participate in operations against armed groups, who were still regularly attacking the population in the east of the country. During the first six months of 2006, six new brigades were formed but they stayed in the *brassage* centres - lacking equipment and the logistical resources to be deployed.

Faced with these security failings, it quickly became evident that neither FARDC nor MONUC were in a position to protect Kinshasa in the event of pre-electoral violence. For this reason, the EU was obliged to urgently set up a force of 1,600 troops (Eufor-DRC), one part of which was sent to the Congolese capital for four months. Today, fifteen brigades have been 'mixed', but their operational level is still so low that most of them are not able to carry out operations independently.

In May 2007, the Security Council assigned MONUC a significantly more important mandate in the area of security sector reform and in July 2007, a new two-year cycle of training was begun involving 11 brigades.<sup>16</sup>

The strategic training plan for the police contemplated the training of 74,631 police officers.

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<sup>14</sup> From the start the EU supported this plan, through a combination of security sector advice and assistance. Launched on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005, the EUSEC – DRC mission was made up of eight experts who were assigned to the cabinet of the Defence Minister, the general staff within the Integrated Military Structure (SMI), the chief of staff of the land forces, CONADER and the Joint Operational Committee.

<sup>15</sup> Expression used by the DRC government to describe the process of integrating diverse troops of former combatants from the wars in Congo, with the aim of creating a new national army.

<sup>16</sup> SCR 1756 15 May 2007

The emphasis was also placed on strengthening the capacities of the police to ensure security during the electoral period. With the same intention, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2005 the EU launched a European police mission - Eupol Kinshasa -, whose aim was to supervise and advise the Integrated Police Unit (UPI). In setting up the police training programme, the government received substantial support from MONUC, since it already had a team of over 700 police officers. Thus by 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005, 17,800 territorial police had received basic training in the static security measures to be enforced at registration and polling centres. Furthermore, in the country's larger cities, 5,300 police officers had received anti-riot training, which was delivered by MONUC. Nevertheless, the 500 police officers assigned to contain the demonstration by supporters of Jean-Pierre Bemba in July 2006 (which ended in the annex of the Constitutional Court in Kinshasa being set on fire) fled at the first sign of confrontation.

### *DDR suspended*

Under the supervision of the Superior Defence Council, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion (CONADER) was mandated to carry out the National DDR (PNDDR) programme, which was estimated to cost 252 million dollars (mainly financed by the World Bank and UNDP). MONUC initially played a secondary role, as its mandate essentially involved the disarmament, demobilisation, and repatriation, reinstallation and reintegration (DDRRR) of foreign combatants in their respective countries (see below).

In the end, over 100,000 combatants attended the orientation centres, of which 31,459 opted to join the army. However, living conditions and hygiene were often deplorable in the selection and orientation centres, and reinsertion was often impossible. Accused of bad management, even embezzlement, CONADER stopped running the eighteen orientation centres on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006, having exhausted its funding. Since then, its mandate has not been renewed, even though the need for DDR remains real.

The disarmament schedule has certainly suffered delays, but without MONUC's support, progress would have been even slower and weaker. Indeed, to mitigate the delay in carrying out the DDR programme, the government and its international partners piloted two interim measures, which were executed by MONUC. The first of these actions – which were known as 'Spontaneous, Voluntary Disarmament (DSV)' – took place in Maniema province. The second, which had substantial support from UNDP, occurred in Ituri, where 24,462 combatants were disarmed.<sup>17</sup> A high-ranking UNDP official described this result as the 'first credible disarmament and demobilisation operation in DRC'.<sup>18</sup> On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2007, Peter Karim, Mathieu Ngudjolo and Cobra Matata, three former militia leaders from Ituri, arrived in Kinshasa after 18 months of intense negotiations and joined the FARDC. They were given the rank of colonel. Yet whilst MONUC can now claim to have dismantled most of the Ituri militias, nothing has been done regarding reinsertion.

In early 2008, the National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion (PNDRR) announced that 'a little over 30,000 child soldiers' had been demobilised in DRC since 2003 but that thousands of children continue to be recruited by various armed groups.

### *Delays in DDRRR*

One of MONUC's longstanding mandates has been to 'proceed with disarmament and voluntary repatriation of foreign armed groups'.<sup>19</sup> To this end, the department of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reinstallation and Reintegration (DDRRR) was established in November 2001, within the framework of Phase 3 of the Mission's deployment. By 2006 it had 45 officials.

In 2002, MONUC voluntarily repatriated over 750 people to Rwanda who had been in the Kamina military base. The process of repatriation was continued and even expanded in 2003. But the non-application of the resolutions and ultimatums against armed Rwandan and Ugandan groups, and the oft-declared intention to resort to force, have over time given the impression that the international community does not have the political will or the means to put an end to the actions of the armed groups which are the main cause of instability in the Great Lakes area. In addition, the accumulated delays in reforming the security sector in DRC have had a negative impact on the DDRRR programme. Indeed, the ill-equipped brigades of the FARDC, often living in impoverished conditions, were not in a position to confront armed groups that had been hardened after ten years of guerrilla warfare in the Congolese forests.

Again, the total was less than could have been expected, as only 8,426 foreign combatants were repatriated by 21<sup>st</sup> March 2006.<sup>20</sup> According to most sources, the number of foreign combatants in DRC still numbers between 11,000 and 15,000. Most are Rwandan FDLR rebels, but the troops of the dissident general Laurent Nkunda should also be mentioned, as it is very difficult to differentiate the Congolese troops from the Rwandans.<sup>21</sup>

In the initial stages, MONUC did not play a decisive role in disarmament and the creation of the new army, since the DDR and SSR programmes were run by the national authorities and funded by specific donors. The results were mixed, if not disappointing. Yet the only area in which MONUC had received a specific mandate (DDRRR) did not fare any better, largely owing to political interference and the inadequacies of the FARDC. Only recently has MONUC played a more significant role in DDR and progress has begun to be noted. To assess the integrated mission's effectiveness

<sup>17</sup> This figure is hypothetical as an internal investigation revealed that in 2005, Pakistani Blue Helmets exchanged their weapons with Ituri insurgents for gold. See Marie-France Cros, 'Les Casques bleus aidaient les FDLR', *La Libre Belgique*, 18th July 2007, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> Oscar Mercado, 'UNDP: the DDR phase III in Ituri proved to be one of the most credible disarmament operation in DRC', MONUC, 9/11/2007.

<sup>19</sup> Security Council Resolutions 1355 and 1376.

<sup>20</sup> 4,415 Rwandans, 3,605 Burundis and 406 Ugandans. In total 13,029 people were repatriated if one counts the civilians (essentially Rwandans) who accompanied them.

<sup>21</sup> There are also probably some elements of the LRA and the ADF/NALU (Uganda) and hundreds of militia members from the National Liberation Forces (FNL) of Burundi.

in this very complex area, two important factors should be taken into account, since they put the weak results into perspective:

- Many rebel groups have done everything possible to hinder their disarmament and *brassage* and some of them (Nkundwa, FDLR, Mai-Mai) still resist today;
- One of the greatest obstacles to security sector reform in DRC lies in the difficulties involved in mobilising funds, especially taking into account the fact that military reform does not form part of public development assistance.

## Human rights: actions valued by the people

The human rights division of MONUC, which has 110 officials,<sup>22</sup> is one of the most important civilian units in the mission. As in other countries where the UN is present, it devotes a great deal of effort to recording cases of violations and publishing regular reports on the human rights situation in each region. However, its activity does not stop there, since it works on three levels:

- It questions the government and armed groups about persons or groups who are considered to be guilty of committing violations;
- If necessary, it takes measures to protect specific victims when they are threatened with abuses;
- It promotes the fight against impunity by urging Congolese justice to arrest and try those who have committed violations.

This section of MONUC has the most direct contact with the population, sometimes even visiting remote villages, and thanks to this simple fact its presence is greatly appreciated by the Congolese. In reality, its work – despite being carried out with determination – has probably not had a significant impact on the number of human rights violations in the country. It is, rather, through the accumulation of individually

recorded cases that it has gained an indisputable reputation, particularly in the east of the country.

In addition, several warlords have been captured – especially in the Ituri region – and transferred to the International Criminal Court. This was the case with Thomas Lubanga, head of the Congolese Patriotic Union (UPC), Uzele Ubeme and Mathieu Ngudjolo – both former commanders of the Nationalist and Integrationist Front militias (FNI) – and Germain Katanga (head of the Patriotic Resistance Forces in Ituri, FRPI, known as Simba). These indictments are positive signs, but they remain isolated cases.

According to the mission's commanders, adherence to the concept of an 'integrated mission' has contributed to improving the mission's performance, mainly due to four factors:

- Easy and regular access to the mission's logistical resources, including the military component, which provides transport for civilian officials when carrying out assessment missions;
- Cross-referencing of information given by victims and witnesses with information gathered by other branches of MONUC,<sup>23</sup> such as military observers, UN police officers, JMAC<sup>24</sup> or even OCHA;
- Direct assistance from the Blue Helmets in securing an area where abuses are committed (for example using MOBs), in order to remove and protect a person or a group of people who are threatened with abuses;
- The use of political pressure at the highest level by the Special Representative or his deputies, which can have significant repercussions on the ground.

As with humanitarian action, the population find it easier to associate the civilian with the military components of MONUC when they see them together

<sup>23</sup> In each region of the East of DRC, a general coordination meeting – the Joint Operation Cell (JOC) – is held each morning, bringing together the main commanders of the Blue Helmets and all the civilian units of MONUC in addition to external operators if necessary.

<sup>24</sup> Joint Mission Analysis Centre: a multidisciplinary unit attached to the SRSG and responsible for evaluating the risks on the ground for all the mission's personnel.

<sup>22</sup> 2006 figures.

on missions far from the big cities or in dangerous areas. There is a great risk however that a hostile reaction against the Blue Helmets could adversely affect the human rights officials.

Furthermore, MONUC's actions in the area of human rights are highly unsatisfactory from the perspective of the Congolese, who suffer both physically and financially from the daily abuses committed by rebels and also, with increasing frequency, by the soldiers of the new national army. Indeed, this has become a cruel paradox in the Congo - according to the UN's latest reports, in 60 percent of cases of human rights violations, the FARDC represents the greatest threat to the civilian population. Thus, for all the Congolese - and especially the women who are raped and mutilated - the need for protection goes beyond occasional MONUC interventions. Each criminal, each perpetrator should be pursued and punished relentlessly. It should also be noted that the task is immense since this country is as large as Western Europe. Programmes for delivering justice are tentatively being put in place, but the path is long and strewn with pitfalls.

Lastly, MONUC members have themselves been found guilty of human rights violations and of not respecting their code regarding sexual conduct or illegal activities. Of the investigations led by the UN Office of Internal control (BSCI-OIOS), not less than 296 cases of the sexual abuse of minors were opened during the period 2004-2006 and 140 confirmed cases were documented, mainly among the Blue Helmets.<sup>25</sup> About 169 people were suspended or sent back to their countries. However, only a few dozen have been tried by their national authorities. After this scandal, a policy of zero tolerance was adopted by the MONUC command, and the UN code of conduct was strengthened. As yet, however, it is not clear whether the situation has improved.

Other accusations have been made against the Blue Helmets, mainly those of weapons trafficking in

exchange for raw materials (gold and diamonds) or intelligence concerning rebel movements. Internal investigations have been conducted but the fact that the events occurred some time ago appears to have prevented the inquiries from being concluded.<sup>26</sup>

## Robust operations: peace enforcement *à la carte*

After the twofold shock of the massacres in Ituri (2003) and the taking of Bukavu (2004), a doctrine of limited recourse to force was gradually drawn up and implemented in the field.

In 2005, MONUC successfully launched what were discreetly known as 'robust' operations, that is to say peace enforcement actions when peacekeeping is considered to be insufficient. Some did not hesitate to call these operations acts of war, but this would not be a fair assessment of the restrictive context, which limits the implementation of this new concept by the operations commanders. Without revealing the exact details of the new rules of engagement, General Patrick Cammaert, former commander of the Eastern division, explained that an offensive action could be undertaken in, for example, the event that one or several armed groups 'choose not to disarm or regularly commit acts of violence against civilians in breach of the peace, and law and order'.<sup>27</sup>

Since then, many actions have been carried out, with varying results: in Ituri against UPC, FNI, FRPI, MRC<sup>28</sup> and the group Cobra Matata; in Kivu against FDLR, FNDP and the Mai-Mai.

This new type of action has enabled MONUC to turn the situation around, particularly thanks to two robust operations that have been implemented in the East: 'search and cordon' operations in Ituri and the recent 'Saké battle'

<sup>26</sup> Marie-France Cros, 'Les Casques bleus aidaient les FDLR, La Libre Belgique, 18th July 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Patrick C. Cammaert, 'Contemporary UN Peace Operations: Problems and Opportunities', MONUC Force Review 1, January 2007, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Congolese Revolutionary Movement.

<sup>25</sup> 'Problem of sexual abuse by peacekeepers now openly recognized', DPI, Security Council SC/8649, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006.

in North Kivu. The former specifically targeted rebel groups who had not signed peace agreements and who regularly committed abuses against the local population. After attempts to mediate and the issuing of ultimatums, MONUC threatened to resort to forced disarmament, which obliged many war lords, sometimes after violent skirmishes, to negotiate a surrender.

In November 2006 - this time in North Kivu, on the pretext of anti-Tutsi violence - the troops of the dissident general Laurent Nkunda surrounded the town of Saké and then moved on Goma. Faced with the inability of the FARDC to stop the renegade general, the Indian contingent at North Kivu defended Saké with all its firepower, including combat helicopters, which bombarded the neighbouring hills. In the end, Nkunda's troops were halted on the way to Goma and were forced to turn back to the other side of Saké. It was estimated that 100 to 150 insurgents were killed, although it was not possible to confirm this figure.

On the other hand, in late 2007, FARDC operations against Laurent Nkunda – with logistical support from MONUC – were a complete failure, which would appear to reveal the limits of robust operations that are confronted with rebels that are numerous, motivated and battle-hardened.

Faced with a Congolese army that is sorely lacking in training and whose tactics had proved to be disastrous, MONUC had to work against its better judgement. Supporting an offensive that was not wanted by the international community, the mission found itself in the position of not being able to intervene militarily to prevent the debacle, because none of the criteria that MONUC had established had been met. For once, it was the rebels who had been attacked with disproportionate means, the inappropriate use of force and, above all, without prior negotiation or preventative measures. The result was a complete operational impasse that allowed the Congolese authorities to shift part of the blame for their failure onto the Blue Helmets. In the event, the latter could only save their honour by threatening to broadcast their exploits in Goma and Saké in 2006.

However, new concepts of deployment that enable more effective and agile interventions have also been devised. This is MONUC's specific contribution, after having found that it could not offer protection owing to lack of presence or insufficient troop numbers. Instead of carrying out interventions from fixed camps, for example, the concept of mobile operating bases (MOB)<sup>29</sup> has been employed. This aims to pre-position - as is required by the situation - a small, temporary camp, in areas that are sensitive and/or difficult to access. These bases can also accommodate civilian MONUC units, responsible for DDR or human rights. The increased security offered by the presence of the MOB thus enables UN agencies and humanitarian organisations to carry out their activities in the area in better conditions.

However, despite such advances, which were inconceivable less than ten years ago, commanding officers are quick to point out that there are other sectors that do not perform well and which need attention, even at the risk of clashing with UN culture. The weakest area is intelligence, which is essential to identifying the rebels without uniforms who hide in the forest. Another obstacle is the countless administrative barriers that are present in such a complex environment.

The robust operations led by MONUC have thus certainly become more effective since the mission became integrated. However, they have also presented difficult tests. Thanks to the improved circulation of information across departments, the Blue Helmet commanders are better placed to understand the political, humanitarian and human rights situations on the ground in the places where they would intervene. They can more easily warn all the actors of the dangers involved and they can take advantage (in theory at least) of a political and diplomatic communication system – employable during action and immediately afterwards - that is able to bring rebels or insurgents to the negotiating table. Nevertheless, and as was noted

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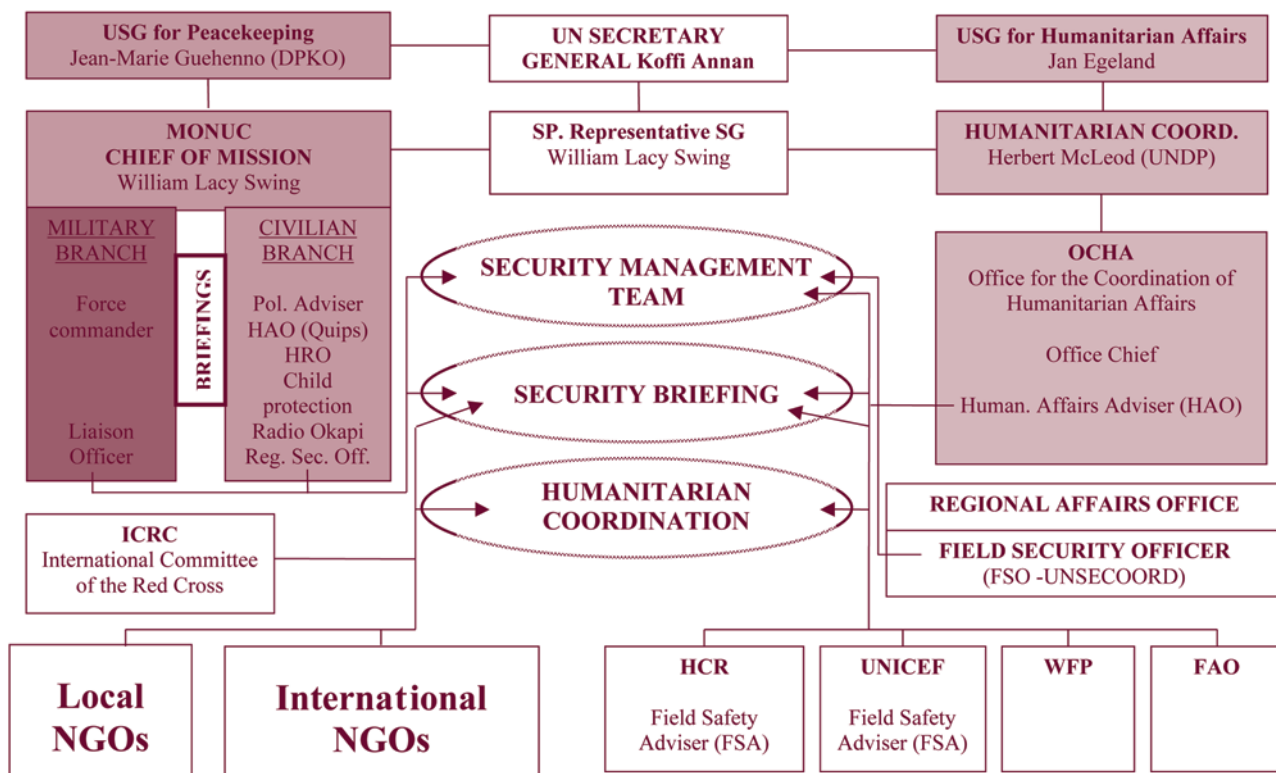
<sup>29</sup> Ahmed Maqsood (General, commander of the Sud Kivu brigade), 'Concept of mobile operating bases (MOBs) in UN peacekeeping operations', MONUC Force Review n° 1, January 2007, Kinshasa, p. 12-15.

above, robust operations frequently cause serious disruption in terms of population displacement.

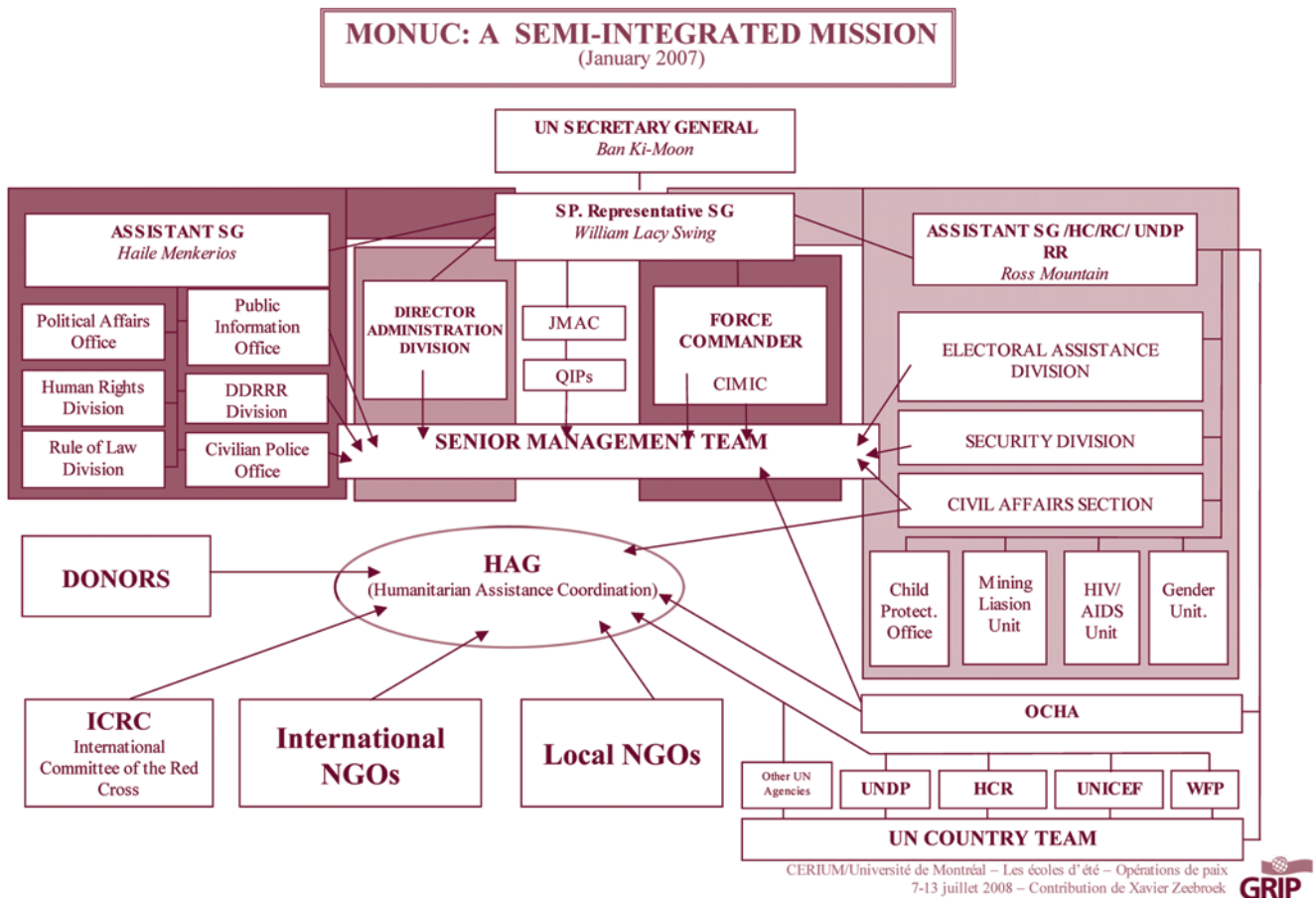
Owing to both its chronic inadequacies and ephemeral victories, MONUC has – more than any other mission – explored the narrow and entangled path of using force. It has contributed immeasurably, sometimes even in spite of itself, to the accumulation of politico-military experience that relates to the slow breakdown

of miscellaneous rebel movements hostile to peace agreements. Although its tasks are far from being finished, it has already inspired top-ranking UN officials to draft a doctrinal document that will, by 2010, serve as a frame of reference for all peace missions. Known as the 'Capstone doctrine',<sup>30</sup> this document lays down the fundamental principles of peace missions, as well as their structure and the best practice to be followed in order to ensure success.

**MONUC : A NON-INTEGRATED MISSION**  
(October 2003)



<sup>30</sup> For further information, see Xavier Zeebroek, 'RDC: un premier pas vers une doctrine des opérations robustes?', *Studia Diplomatica*, vol LX n°3, 2007, Egmont/RIIR, Bruxelles.



## The protracted humanitarian crisis

The humanitarian situation in DRC has been of serious concern for so long that providing an overview seems impossible, not least because of the huge number of dramatic episodes and the human consequences relative to the province and time period. Since the Rwandan genocide (1994), humanitarian organisations have intervened massively in the Kivu region, assisting the hundreds of thousands of refugees that are crowded into temporary camps. Since then, such actions have continued to multiply, not only in the east, but also in other areas of the country, due to war and state failure. Perhaps the best way to grasp the tragedy over time, then, is in terms of the high number of deaths. This excessive mortality rate is, in fact, due not so much to the duration of the conflict as to the hidden consequences

of human rights violations, the collapse of basic infrastructures and extreme poverty.

Since 2000, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has carried out at least five studies,<sup>31</sup> which have served as a benchmark for other humanitarian organisations and donors. 2004 surveys suggest a figure of 3.9 million excessive deaths since 1998, of which only 10 percent were due to violence. The findings of the latest IRC study,<sup>32</sup> published in January 2008, point to the fact that despite the advances made

<sup>31</sup> L. Roberts, 'Mortality in eastern DRC: results from five mortality surveys', International Rescue Committee: New York, 2000. L. Roberts, F. Belyadoui, L. Cobey et al., 'Mortality in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: results from 11 mortality Surveys', International Rescue Committee: New York, 2001. L. Roberts, P. Ngoy, C. Mone et al. 'Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo : results from a nationwide survey', International Rescue Committee: New York, 2002. L. Roberts, M. Zantop, 'Elevated mortality associated with armed conflict—Democratic Republic of Congo', 2002. *MMWR Morb Mort Wkly Report* 2003; 52: 469-71. B. Coghlan, R.J. Brennan, P. Ngoy et al., 'Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: a nationwide survey', *Lancet* 2006, 367: 44-51.

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Benjamin Coghlan *et al*, 'Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: an ongoing crisis', IRC and Burnet Institute, January 2008, 26 pages.

in achieving peace, the excessive death rate has not gone down and has even increased in the central regions of the country. With 45,000 deaths a month caused by armed conflicts, illness and malnutrition, 5.4 million deaths have been estimated since 1998. Almost half the victims are children under five. Compared with the average death rates in sub-Saharan Africa, the DRC rate is 57 percent higher. Most of the deaths are caused by malaria, dysentery, pneumonia and malnutrition. It should be noted that the methodological rigour of the findings has been questioned by some researchers,<sup>33</sup> although an alternative method of calculation has not been proposed.

At present, the living conditions of millions of inhabitants are still critical in the DRC and the medical situation is serious. According to MSF, excess mortality is over double the emergency threshold as it is normally understood. In large segments of the population, this is due to lack of medical care and, in general, to the lack of access to medicine. In fact, fighting in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Katanga, as well as in Ituri, has forced tens of thousands of people to flee. Many live in the bush with no shelter or water and no medical or food supplies, a situation that is compounded by a climate of permanent insecurity. Other people have taken refuge in villages - sheltered by the local population. Otherwise they may simply live in the fields.

## DRC statistics

Population	58,741,000 inhabitants
Under-five mortality rate	205 out of 1.000
Life expectancy	45,8 years
Undernourished population	74%
Gross national income per capita	90 USD
Percentage of population living on less than one dollar a day	75%
Percentage of population not using an improved water source	54%
Displaced persons (absolute figure and percentage of population)	1,075,297 (1,8 %)
Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in DRC 208,371</li> <li>• abroad -</li> </ul>
ECHO crisis and vulnerability indexes	3/3 (the highest level)
UNDP Human Development Index (IDH, 2006)	0,411 (168 out of 177)

Sources: UNDP Human development report 2007, UNHCR 2006.

Humanitarian action comprises the greatest number of different actors in DRC. The United Nations system intervenes directly through several of its major agencies (PAM, UNICEF, and in particular HCR). However, dozens of NGOs work in the field. They are either self-funded or are supported by various public and private donors. Traditionally, these organisations were coordinated through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which is created specifically for this purpose within the United Nations Secretariat and is, at the same time, independent of the mission. The appearance of integrated missions has sometimes entailed the disappearance of OCHA in countries such as Afghanistan and Liberia. A humanitarian coordination section is then created within the mission, but generally speaking, NGOs do not view it with the same degree of trust.

The situation in DRC is especially complex vis-à-vis humanitarian coordination. Between 1999 and 2004, a rather small but very active OCHA office existed

<sup>33</sup> See in particular Olivier Degomme and Debarati Guha-Sapir (CRED/UCL), 'Mortality and nutrition surveys by Non-Governmental organisations. Perspectives from the CE-DAT database', in *Emerging Themes in Epidemiology*, June 2007. Article available at: <http://www.ete-online.com/content/4/1/11>

within MONUC. It distinguished itself at the time of the massacres in Ituri in May 2003, by setting up an emergency humanitarian operation in Bunia, which was staffed entirely by volunteers, at a moment when the buildings of the main international organisations had been temporarily evacuated.<sup>34</sup> In 2002, MONUC set up a Humanitarian Affairs Section (HAS). Like the Special Representative, HAS acts mainly as an interface between OCHA and the mission itself, in particular when it comes to logistical support by the Blue Helmets or administrative support from MONUC.<sup>35</sup> Later, when MONUC was transformed into an integrated mission in February 2004, a two-way movement took place under the leadership of the new humanitarian coordinator (who now became an SRSG): OCHA personnel increased considerably (to 110), which caused rivalry with HAS. The latter was renamed the Civilian Affairs Section in February 2006. It had new goals related to the decentralisation of the country. Today, OCHA-DRC is independent and, at the request of successive directors, its offices are generally separate from the mission's. It always organises humanitarian coordination meetings in a 'neutral' location and, in this way, it has kept the trust of the many international NGOs who are active in Congo.

These NGOs have learnt to distrust the potentially harmful combination, as perceived by the local population, of humanitarian organisations and MONUC - particularly the Blue Helmets. A shocking incident in June 2004 illustrated the tension, when the offices and warehouses of humanitarian organisations were looted in Bukavu and in the rest of the Kivu region - in Maniema and North Katanga. The looting came in the wake of student demonstrations that were mainly opposed to MONUC because it was considered to have been too passive when the city of Bukavu was

taken by two insurgent officers of the Congolese army.<sup>36</sup> In an OCHA report, it was observed that 'the attacks by the population against humanitarian installations do not seem therefore to have been the result of animosity towards the humanitarian community'.<sup>37</sup> In the meantime, almost 200 humanitarian workers belonging to 30 international organisations had to be evacuated to Goma, thus leaving 3.3 million vulnerable people with no assistance. The damages were estimated to have cost more than 1.5 million dollars<sup>38</sup> and the event was a bitter blow for the humanitarian community, some of whom did not hesitate to denounce the concept of an integrated mission as being detrimental to their work.

The question raised by many can be summed up as follows: what degree of autonomy should the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) have in an integrated mission? In other words, how much room for manoeuvre should he have, compared to the SRSG who pursues declared politico-military goals (maintaining security, organisation of elections, etc.)? The answer to these questions can be found principally in a note of guidance issued by the Secretary General, which describes the type of relationship that should be established between high-ranking civilian officials during a mission: 'The principal hierarchical commander of the Humanitarian Coordinator is the Special Representative (SRSG)'. And further still: 'The SRSG can request any United Nations agency to reorient the interventions it had planned'.<sup>39</sup> The SRSG is thus described as a supreme leader and, according to some, therefore acts as a new proconsul - the true head of state, at least during the transitional period before elections. This new power relationship does not bode well in that it may put pressure on the Humanitarian Coordinator to adapt his interventions to the mission's political priorities.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For further information, see Michel Kassa, 'Ituri, la révolte des humanitaires' in Xavier Zeebroek et al 'Les humanitaires en guerre: sécurité des travailleurs humanitaires en mission en RDC et au Burundi', Les livres du GRIP n°276-277, Ed GRIP/Complexe, Brussels, 2004, p. 47 à 70.

<sup>35</sup> For further information, see Nancee Oku Bright, 'La MONUC a aussi un agenda humanitaire', in Xavier Zeebroek et al, *op. cit.*, p. 95-99.

<sup>36</sup> They were General Laurent Nkundabamware and Colonel Mutebusi, who attacked and occupied Bukavu from 26 May to 9 June 2004.

<sup>37</sup> 'RDC: la communauté humanitaire se réorganise à l'est', Communiqué OCHA DRC, 16th June 2004.

<sup>38</sup> IRIN, 'DRC: UN agency leads humanitarian assessment missions to the east', 28<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

<sup>39</sup> 'Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions', from the UN Secretary General, 9 December 2005.

<sup>40</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Xavier Zeebroek, 'La difficile mise en oeuvre de l'intégration au sein des missions de paix', in Jocelyn Coulon et al, 'Guide du maintien de la paix 2006', CEPES, Montréal, 2005.

However, the HC's power has been strengthened at the same time. Since 2006, he has directly managed several humanitarian intervention funds (notably the Pool Fund). This considerably increases his influence on the actions of many NGOs and by certain UN agencies. Indirectly, this also undoubtedly gives him more influence over the SRSG. This does not mean that, in the last instance, the respective powers of the SRSG and the HC will be equally balanced. Personality and charisma are what will ultimately enable each director to defend more effectively his respective share of the mandate. However, in the context of DRC, there could be deep conflicts of priority, as the same commander – as is the case of the HC/the Deputy SRSG – coordinates humanitarian action and elections at the same time.

The impact of integration on the humanitarian situation is also not limited to institutional aspects. Paradoxically, the implementation of the mandate to protect the civilian population may temporarily endanger this same population without ensuring an end to their suffering. In January 2007, some robust operations led by MONUC led to disturbances in the field. At a security briefing in Bunia - the administrative centre of Ituri -, the local UN security commander announced that a large-scale operation was going to commence in the Fataki region, an area controlled by one of the youngest rebel leaders in Eastern DRC, Peter Karim. All the roads would be controlled around the clock to prevent his men from moving around. Humanitarian organisations were therefore advised to reduce their activities: this meant that expatriates had to be evacuated and a number of activities had to be cancelled. It was feared there might be looting and local personnel had to be protected as far as possible, whilst the duration of the operation was unknown. Of course Peter Karim did cause problems on a daily basis for the local population. However, was it really necessary to have such a large show of force simply to bring him to the negotiating table? Disrupting humanitarian work in the field costs lives with no guarantee of success. Fortunately the circling operation rapidly brought results and the FNI chief finally accepted the progressive disarmament of his men.

Another significant inconvenience is that each time an operation of this type takes place, the population flee for fear of fighting or reprisals and they add to the ranks of the displaced persons needing urgent humanitarian aid. In the first six months of 2006, more displaced persons were registered in Ituri than in the whole of the previous year. At the same time there is no guarantee that the rebel leaders, who will probably be incorporated into the new national army, will not return to the forest if the situation does not suit them.

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## The love-hate relationship with MONUC

Generally speaking there are few reliable sources of information on how the local African population perceives United Nations missions and, more broadly, their opinion of international aid. The DRC has been an exception in this respect, since the UN commissioned a national opinion poll on MONUC in 2005.<sup>41</sup>

The main findings of this survey revealed a marked discrepancy in the east of the country – which was largely in favour of the UN presence – and the west, where many people thought that MONUC had not had any impact at best, and a negative influence at worst. In response to the question: 'Do you feel safer thanks to the MONUC presence?', 43 percent of the responses were negative and 37 percent were positive. However, the ratio is reversed in most of the eastern provinces, in which the majority of responses were positive - for example in Maniema (74 percent), North Kivu (50 percent), Katanga (48 percent), West Kasai (45 percent) and South Kivu (41 percent). Two provinces

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<sup>41</sup> BERIC International, 'Peacekeeping Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Perception of the Population', an external survey carried out at the request of the UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Section (PBPS), November 2005, 20 pages. The survey interviewed 2,810 people spread over 11 provincial capitals of the country. It included a three percent margin of error. [http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/MONUC%20perception%20of%20population%20\(final-final\).pdf](http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/MONUC%20perception%20of%20population%20(final-final).pdf)

seemed to be undecided: Equateur and Province Orientale. Bandundu, the Lower Congo, East Kasai and Kinshasa were openly hostile. The authors of the report highlighted the fact that the satisfaction rate was higher in the areas where there was a greater deployment of Blue Helmets.

Curiously enough, a large majority of the people interviewed (60 percent) – at least, in all the provinces except Katanga –, opined that MONUC should leave the country. Nevertheless, in answer to the question as to what would happen when the Blue Helmets left, 50% feared an increase in insecurity, in other words war, especially in the east of the country. These contradictory responses represent the ambiguous feelings that many Congolese have towards the UN mission. It protects but it aggravates. It stabilises but at the price of a great deal of interference in daily life. It ensures some return to democracy but without improving living conditions.

## The Congolese 'Long March'

For better or worse, the history of the Congolese conflict has, since 1999, been intertwined with that of the United Nations mission in Congo. The continued strengthening of the mandate of the UN mission has resulted in the slow rise to power of the international community in this country. It is also true, however, that the long political transition (2003-2006) has not been able to put an end to the rebellion in all areas of the country. North and South Kivu are still very insecure (although the situation in Ituri has greatly improved over the last two years, even if it has still to normalise completely).

Throughout its history, MONUC has been a peace experiment and, as such, a diligent supplier of 'lessons learned' for the United Nations secretariat. Owing to the extremely complex situation in the country, it has become an all-purpose mission: it seeks to consolidate

peace by organising elections and participating in security sector reform and the DDR, and it also participates in state-building, through its endeavours to support a return to the rule of law. Simultaneously, the mission continues with its traditional peacekeeping tasks, even acting as a buffer force - as is the case at present between the FARDC and CNDP in North Kivu -, or enforcing the peace by means of robust operations. The risk of confusion and the danger of errors are therefore always present. Ultimately, the UN openly considers its possible drawing down, or at least the need to reflect on the benchmarks for such an action.

On the positive side, attention must be drawn to the fact that presidential, legislative and regional elections have been carried out, even though local elections have not yet been held. In addition, security has improved in most of the territory - even in the large cities in the Kivu region -, thanks to the strengthened presence of the Blue Helmets and their more robust mandate. However, this has not prevented a number of military disappointments from occurring.

Indeed, the list of such setbacks is discouraging: DDR has failed for want of money and political commitment; security sector reform has given rise to a new army which has no cohesion, is badly trained and poorly paid and which has commanders who are often corrupt and untrustworthy. Police and soldiers have in fact become the most frequent source of human rights violations, together with the FDLR and CNDP militias. Despite their praiseworthy efforts, the MONUC human rights section has not succeeded in making a noticeable impact on this trend, even though it has contributed significantly to raising awareness about the magnitude of the phenomenon. However, impunity is the order of the day for the majority of crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, with the exception of a few individuals who have been tried in DRC or handed over to the International Criminal Court.

Has the integration of MONUC made it more effective? Has it enabled the mission to carry out peacekeeping missions and consolidate its gains more

effectively? The answer needs to be qualified. By organising democratic elections, the integrated MONUC mission has undeniably chalked up its most resounding success. On the other hand, in all the other areas dealt with here, it is more difficult to get a perspective. Humanitarian coordination has posed institutional problems between OCHA and the mission. It is also more exposed to the risk of being used for politico-military purposes, which inevitably creates a confused image of the mission among the population. Robust operations have indeed become more effective thanks to integration, but they have damaging effects that anger the humanitarian community and upset the smooth running of the mission. Volunteer action in the area of human rights has also benefited substantially from integration, although the results have ultimately been modest, since any solution will be linked to the military-political context and is very much dependent on the long-term project of delivering justice. Security sector reform is harder to evaluate objectively, in the first place because of the complex situation in DRC and secondly because MONUC did not play a prominent role initially. In any case, neither SSR nor DDR have produced outstanding results and more time is needed to assess the potential impact of integration in these areas.

MONUC's exceptionally lengthy mandate does, however, enable the mission's evolution to be assessed with regard to its public image. Since its unsure beginnings in 1999, when the Blue Helmets were the butt of jibes, its reputation has clearly improved, especially after 2005. If one had to describe the impression of many observers only four years ago, it

could be summed up as follows: MONUC does nothing and its commanders do not know Congo. And the disheartened Congolese would add, they watch us die and then they go away to write their reports! Knowledge of the terrain has unquestionably improved and robust operations have forced some rebel leaders to negotiate. But these actions are far too inadequate to make all the Congolese feel safe. Additionally, scandals relating to sexual abuses and all sorts of trafficking have tarnished the image of the soldiers of peace, just as a certain improvement in the opinion of the Congolese had been noted. As long as progress is not made in the areas of human rights, health, infrastructure and good governance, the sad and somewhat unfair complaint will continue to be heard: *But what does MONUC do?*

The most pressing concern is the impression that a large part of the Congolese political class does not seem to share the priorities of the international community, as far as peace, security and good governance are concerned. Aside from the immobility of the transitional government, there are many disagreements with the Kabila regime, both on how to resolve the Kivu conflict and on the fate of the opposition.

At the same time, the Congolese government, supported by donors, is becoming more active in the transition towards development, especially in the 'revisiting' of mining contracts. The consequences in terms of private investment are enormous and are giving rise to greed and mistrust. The road to peace in DRC is thus steep and strewn with pitfalls. Will we have to wait another ten years to see the end of the Congolese 'Long March'?

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The history of the Congolese conflict has, since 1999, been intertwined with that of the United Nations mission in Congo. The continued strengthening of the mandate of the UN mission has resulted in the slow rise to power of the international community in this country.

Throughout its history, MONUC has been a peace experiment and, as such, a diligent supplier of 'lessons learned' for the United Nations Secretariat. Owing to the extremely complex situation in the country, it has become an all-purpose mission: it seeks to consolidate peace through the carrying out of elections and by participating in security sector reform and DDR, and it also participates in state-building, through its endeavours to support a return to the rule of law. Simultaneously, the mission continues with its traditional peacekeeping tasks.

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