Committee: Security Council (SC)

Topic: Addressing the Escalation of Armed Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Position: President & Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

It is my utmost honour to welcome you to the 9th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki Model United Nations (DSTMUN). My name is Zoi Triantafyllidou, I am currently an IB2 student, and I will be serving as your Deputy President this year. As a six-time delegate and second-time director, I'm genuinely excited to guide you through this year's topic and help ensure a productive and engaging conference. Whether you're a first time delegate or one with prior experience, you can rest assured that this will be a challenging, yet truly remarkable experience.

It is also my utmost honor to welcome you to the 9th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki Model United Nations (DSTMUN). My name is Athanasios Theodorou, but you can call me Thanos, and I am currently an IB1 student of Platon School. In this year's session, I will be serving as the President of the Security Council. I assure you that all delegates, regardless of their experience and background, will be able to learn, grow and experience a most pleasant Security Council with me and Zoi as your chairs. Any assistance that you may require will be provided and any concerns that you may have will be addressed, please do not be afraid to approach us regarding any issue that you may have.

The guide contains some foundational knowledge of the topic, serving as a starting point for your own research. Try to connect the information given along as well as your own research to your delegation's policy and beliefs, so that you can prepare strong and valuable solutions for a fruitful debate.

We're both excited to work closely with all of you during the conference. Until then, if there are any questions, concerns or issues while figuring out your delegation's policy, do not hesitate to contact us at either 20211044@student.anatolia.edu.gr (Zoi Triantafyllidou) or teothanos10@gmail.com (Athanasios Theodorou). We will always be at your disposal and answer as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Thanos Theodorou and Zoi Triantafyllidou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), particularly its provinces of North and South Kivu as well as Ituri, remains dominated by the most prolonged security and humanitarian crises in modern history. Decades of structural fragility and political challenges have been forming DRC's power dynamics in the region. Today, these power dynamics are actively exploited by multiple non-state armed groups whose violent campaigns continue to subvert regional stability and peace, destabilizing local administration systems and provoking severe casualties for the civilians. The crisis has intensified due to the revival of the March 23 Movement along with the established armed organizations, such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and the Allied Democratic Forces, which overall destabilize national integrity and make the Democratic Republic of Congo more vulnerable to external and internal threats. Apart from such challenges, the escalation of hostilities in the country have led to more geopolitical tensions across the Great Lakes region, threatening regional stability overall.

The factors leading to this conflict extend beyond just political grievances, but they are mostly originating from regional rivalries and the continuous exploitation of natural resources. Especially in Eastern Congo the conflicts are rising against civilians by organized terrorist groups. On top of such a challenge, Eastern Congo possesses a variety of valuable minerals and resources, including gold, cobalt and coltan, which serve both as sources for profit and causes for conflicts to rise. The illicit extraction and exploitation of such commodities fund armed groups, constituting incentives for local warfare and perpetuating continuous violence. The impact on human rights and health of the civilians is also huge, as millions of them face severe food scarcity issues, gender-based violence in all fields and internal displacement in the country, reaching over 6 million people, placing an international humanitarian threat.

Addressing the issue is of vital importance, as it poses a great danger in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the dilemma of the Security Council regarding international intervention and peacekeeping movements persists. For our committee, it is important to come up with solutions for resolving the ongoing escalation and challenges posed to DRC. This requires a balance of immediate, direct humanitarian needs along with long-term structural reforms that need to take place. Member states should evaluate the importance of such strategies and the effectiveness of existing structures or prior attempts for solutions, in order to achieve long-term stability through the cooperation of the international community.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Arms Embargo

"A prohibition on the transfer of weapons to a specific entity, often enforced through international agreements. It serves as a diplomatic tool to prevent conflict escalation and maintain global security. By restricting arms flow, embargoes aim to influence the behaviour of states or non-state actors, ensuring compliance with international norms" [TRT World Research Centre].[1]

Asymmetric/Unconventional Warfare

"Unconventional strategies and tactics adopted by a force when the military capabilities of belligerent powers are not simply unequal but are so significantly different that they cannot make the same sorts of attacks on each other" [Encyclopedia Britannica].[2]

Coltan

"A dull black ore that consists of a mixture of columbite and tantalite and is a minor source of tantalum" [Merriam-Webster Dictionary].[3] "Congo holds 80 percent of the world's reserves of coltan" [Pulitzer Center].[4] Its high commercial value makes its illegal mining and trade a primary factor leading to armed conflict financing.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

"A process that contributes to security and stability by disarming combatants, removing them from military structures, and socially and economically integrating them into society. DDR programs downsize armed forces, or disband them completely. They are usually part of other efforts to demilitarize (e.g. landmine removal, Security Sector Reform, etc.) and consolidate peace (e.g. justice, reconciliation, community-based reconstruction, etc)" [Social Development Department].[5]

Ethnic Cleansing

"The systematic and forced removal of a specific ethnic or religious group from a territory, often justified by the belief that the targeted group is undesirable. This practice raises significant ethical concerns related to bigotry, prejudice, and human rights violations. [It] may involve various tactics, including forced emigration and population exchanges, and is

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[1] Bakar, E. (2026, May 5). Arms Embargo: Definition, Conceptual Context & Why It Matters - TRT World Research Centre. TRT World Research Centre. https://researchcentre.trtworld.com/dictionary/arms-embargo/. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[2] Sexton, E. (2019). Asymmetrical warfare | Britannica. In Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/asymmetrical-warfare. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[3] Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2025). In Merriam-webster.com. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coltan. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[4] In Search of Congo's Coltan | Pulitzer Center, pulitzercenter.org/stories/search-congos-coltan. Accessed 27 July 2026.

[5] 1 No. 119 / February 2009 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39242-doc-192._social_development_notes._conlfict_crime_and_violence.pdf. Accessed 27 July 2026.

frequently associated with state-sanctioned acts such as murder and land confiscation" [EBSCO].[6]

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as Method of Warfare

"Any act of violence that is directed against an individual based on their gender identity or perceived gender. It is a widespread and persistent problem that affects people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds" [Plan International].[7]

Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)

"The movement of money across borders that is illegal in its source (e.g. corruption, smuggling), its transfer (e.g. tax evasion), or its use (e.g. terrorist financing)" [International Monetary Fund].[8]

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

"Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border" [UNHCR].[9]

Protection of Civilians (PoC)

"A responsibility that includes all parts of a peacekeeping mission: civilian, police and military. In many cases, peacekeeping missions are authorized to use all necessary means, up to and including the use of deadly force, to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians" [United Nations Peacekeeping][10]

Proxy Warfare

"A military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or nonstate combatants in an effort to influence the conflict's outcome

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[6] Ethnic cleansing | EBSCO. (2023). In EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | www.ebsco.com. https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/ethnic-and-cultural-studies/ethnic-cleansing. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[7] Plan International. (2024). What is gender-based violence (GBV)? - Plan International. In Plan International. https://plan-international.org/learn/what-is-gender-based-violence-gbv/. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[8] International Monetary Fund. (2023). The IMF and the Fight Against Illicit Financial Flows. In IMF. https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2023/Fight-against-illicit-financial-flows. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[9] UNHCR. (2024). Internally Displaced People. In UNHCR. https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/internally-displaced-people. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[10] United Nations. (2017). Protection of Civilians Mandate. In United Nations Peacekeeping. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protection-of-civilians-mandate. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

and thereby to advance their own strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents" [Encyclopedia Britannica][11]

Targeted Sanctions

"Measures designed to apply selective pressure on specific individuals, entities, groups, or undertakings, rather than broader populations. These sanctions are intended to be precise and strategically focused. Targeted financial sanctions specifically involve two key components: the freezing of assets and the prohibition of making funds or other assets available—either directly or indirectly—to sanctioned individuals, entities, groups, or undertakings" [Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs][12]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background of Regional Conflict & State Fragility

The present security and social crisis in the Eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is rooted in the institutional collapse, political instability as well as the proxy interventions during the late 20th century. Following the Rwandan genocide (1994), numerous refugees of the former Rwandan armed forces entered eastern Congo. This cross-border movement led to destabilization of the local stats and demographics, provoking ethnic rivalries, thus even leading to ethnic cleansing in the region. Such challenges acted as a catalyst for the First Congo War (1996-1997) and the Second Congo War (1998-2003). The Second one, often referred to as "Africa's World War", involved nine African nations and over 20 non-state actors fighting for Congolese territory. This conflict resulted in around 5.4 million deaths due to starvation and diseases. "A staggering 23.4 million Congolese suffer from food insecurity, making DRC the country most affected by food insecurity in the world" [Center for Preventive Action][13] Although the 2003 Sun City Agreement ended the internal hostilities and led to the establishment of a provisional government, it failed to establish state sovereignty and stable functioning judicial systems [Peacemaker].[14] This agreement followed the Security Sector Reform (SSR), which was established to exchange information, knowledge and experiences among the various actors

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[11] Baugh, S. (2019). Proxy war | armed conflict. In Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[12] Overview and Definition. (2026). In Mofa.gov.sa. https://securitycouncil.mofa.gov.sa/en/Pages/Overview.aspx. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[13] Center for Preventive Action. (2025). Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Global Conflict Tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[14] Inter-Congolese Negotiations: The Final Act (Sun City Agreement) | Peacemaker. (2003). In Un.org. https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/9166. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

in the field of Security Sector Reform [MONUSCO],[15] as well as army integration programs, which even further exacerbated instability in the region. Thus, the lack of official law enforcement allowed armed groups, foreign organizations and local Mai-Mai militias to seize power and exploit Congo's weak governance. As a result, DRC turned into a warzone, completely ignoring the central government's legislation.



Figure 1: Map of Democratic Republic of Congo and Borders [CPA][16]

Resurgence of March 23 Movement (M23) and Territorial Escalation

The military in North and South Kivu experienced a shift following the structural reconstitution of the March 23 Movement (M23). M23 was originally formed in 2012 by former army renegades willing to protect ethnic Tutsi interests and got defeated in 2013 by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). However, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), "following years of sporadic violence after their defeat in 2013, the M23 initiated an offensive against Congolese military forces and allied militias in November 2021. While fighting was initially concentrated around Southeast Rutsuru territory, the M23 developed a clear southern push towards Goma and later radiated north and west on their initial positions" [ACLED].[17] The group's superiority enabled it to exploit primary supply corridors leading to Goma, effectively encompassing the city and provoking supply shortages, military detentions/retreats and administrative gridlock.

[15] Security Sector Reform. (2016). In MONUSCO. https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/security-sector-reform. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[16] Center for Preventive Action. (2025). Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Global Conflict Tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[17] The resurgence and alliances of the March 23 Movement (M23). (2024). In ACLED. https://acleddata.com/report/resurgence-and-alliances-march-23-movement-m23. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

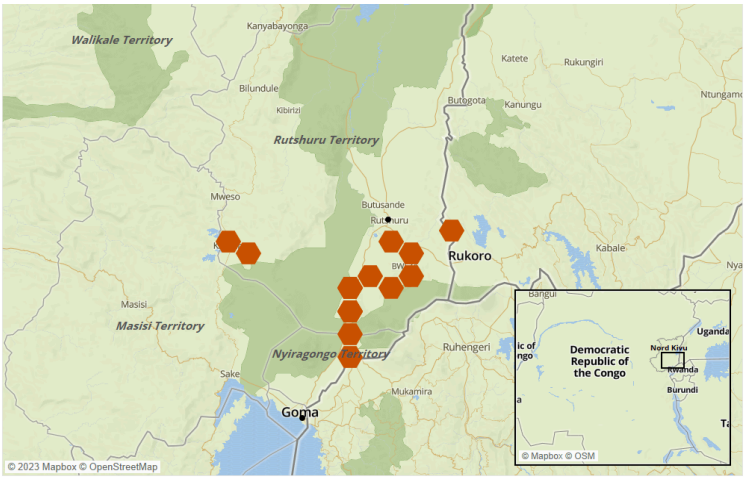


Figure 2: Reported Joint Operations of the M23 and Rwanda Defense Force in Eastern DRC [ACLED][18]

Reports by the UN Group of Experts on the DRC found out that the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) deployed thousands of troops directly into Congolese territory to operate alongside M23. Other reports noted logistical tactical alliances with local para-military groups known as "Wazalendo" and partnering with foreign contractors, which further escalated the local proxy warfare and the dangers posed to DRC. [UN Security Council][19]

Proliferation of Non-State Armed Groups

Apart from the clashes with M23, the security context in eastern DRC has been fragmented by multiple non-state armed groups that conduct acts of terror against civilians. "Armed groups and often abusive security forces [...] carry out massacres, abductions, rape and sexual violence, recruitment of children (such as the "Wazalendo" recruiting children under the age of 15) [OHCHR/reliefweb],[20] and other attacks on civilians with near total impunity" [Human Rights Watch][21]. Operating primarily in North Kivu and southern Ituri, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) utilize such unconventional tactics to intimidate local populations, assert control/dominance over them and deter state operations. At the same

[18] The resurgence and alliances of the March 23 Movement (M23). (2024). In ACLED. https://acleddata.com/report/resurgence-and-alliances-march-23-movement-m23. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[19] Reports | Security Council. (2020). In Un.org. https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1533/panel-of-experts/expert-reports. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[20] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025, September 5). DRC: UN report raises spectre of war crimes and crimes against humanity in North and South Kivu. ReliefWeb. https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/drc-un-report-raises-spectre-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-north-and-south-kivu. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[21] Human Rights Watch. (2024). Democratic Republic of Congo | Country Page | World | Human Rights Watch. In www.hrw.org. https://www.hrw.org/africa/democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

time, inter-communal conflict systems use similar types of violence across Ituri and Kivu provinces. In Ituri, the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO), an association of Lendu armed militias [CODECO][22], frequently clashes with rival self-defense forces and state authorities, provoking attacks on displacement territories/camps, mining as well as humanitarian protection centers [Amnesty International][23]. In South Kivu, on the other hand, the presence of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (DLF), a Hutu-led armed group with elements associated with the 1994 genocide, opposes military operations by rival ethnic groups/communities (such as the Tutsi). The development of these military and para-military groups has been creating an environment of danger, fear and fragility in the Democratic Republic of Congo, fracturing local governance and provoking national security issues.

Illicit Natural Resource Exploitation & Conflict Financing

Although the United States used to own a large percentage of the rights to Congolese land, such rights have been relatively recently transitioned to China, primarily during the Obama and Trump administrations [Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker][24]. Currently, the DRC produces 80% of the world's cobalt, with China controlling 80% of that total output [USAWCSSI][25], rendering the state accountable for 64% of the world's supply of cobalt, a fact which establishes China as a virtual monopoly in the cobalt industry. It is only natural that China has invested heavily in the mining industry of the DRC, with its mines spanning all over the country; however, not all of China's facilities are operating legally and evidence have shown that they would not be able to withstand international scrutiny, as a 2022 report revealed that Chinese companies in the DRC had engaged in some kind of illegal activity, potentially including child labour [Council on Foreign Affairs Global Conflict Tracker][26]. Therefore, the US is likely to have been correct in selling its rights to DRC resources to China, as the country no longer seeks to be involved in importing

[22] UnderStand UPSC. (2026, May 26). *Cooperative For The Development Of Congo (CODECO) CODECO Militia » UnderStand UPSC*. UnderStand UPSC. https://www.understandupsc.com/cooperative-for-the-development-of-congo-codeco-codeco-militia/. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[23] Amnesty International. (2022). Amnesty International (Author): "Amnesty International Report 2022/23; The State of the World's Human Rights; Democratic Republic Of The Congo 2022," Document #2089471 - ecoi.net. Ecoi.Net. https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2089471.html. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[24] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[25] Gregory, Farrell, and Paul Milas. "China in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Dynamic in Critical Mineral Procureme." *US Army War College - Strategic Studies Institute*, 17 Oct. 2024, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/SSI-Media/Recent-Publications/Article/3938204/china-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-a-new-dynamic-in-critical-mineral/. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[26] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

"conflict-minerals" which could further fund conflict, such as tin and gold, among others [Council on Foreign Affairs Global Conflict Tracker][27].

Humanitarian Crisis & Mass Internal Displacement

The DRC is currently facing one of the most dire humanitarian and internal displacement crises in the world, with its roots leading to the very first Congo War, during which displacement began during Tutsi and Hutu population movements. In recent years, overexpansion of mining, conflict and extreme poverty have led to the displacement of nearly 358.000 people, with the primary cause being armed conflict [Council on Foreign Affairs Global Conflict Tracker][28]. Meanwhile, 23.4 million Congolese suffer from food insecurity and 1.1 million others are seeking refuge outside the country [Council on Foreign Affairs Global Conflict Tracker][29], showcasing the disheartening conditions people are experiencing in one of the states most affected by prolonged conflict.

Impact on Civilians - Human Rights Violations & Gender-Based Violence

Human Rights violations in the DRC are mostly the result of the M23 Movement's actions; false imprisonment, ill-treatment, abduction and even silencing the press are some of the activities the M23 have partaken in [Amnesty International][30], all blatant violations of human rights. Needless to say that the group has also engaged in various attacks and killings, with some even resulting in casualties surpassing 200 victims [Amnesty International].[31] However, the most repulsive and serious offence that the M23 have engaged in is gender-based violence and rapes. Their behaviour on that aspect of violence seems to be worsening with the passage of time, as the UNFPA has most recently reported over 80.000 known cases of rape in the period of January-September 2025, a 32% increase from that

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[27] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[28] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[29] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[30] Amnesty International. "Democratic Republic of the Congo 2020 Archives." *Amnesty International*, 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/report-democratic-republic-of-the-congo/. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[31] Amnesty International. "Democratic Republic of the Congo 2020 Archives." *Amnesty International*, 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/report-democratic-republic-of-the-congo/. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

same period in 2024 [Human Rights Watch],[32] which is mostly attributed to the violent behaviour and general lawlessness caused by the existence and activities of the M23 Movement. The Ministry of Health and local hospitals are making significant efforts to support all survivors and monitor the situation; however, as a Wazalendo fighter stated that "any women who come to the field, [they] will always rape them" [Amnesty International][33], the behaviour of armed groups only seems to keep worsening, as strain in national institutions becomes increasingly apparent.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Belgium

Belgium is the Democratic Republic of Congo's former colonial master and one of the most convoluted actors assisting the DRC in mitigating tensions within its borders. In the past, Belgium had been majorly involved in Belgium, holding adversarial feelings due to having to grant the state its freedom. Such is why they coordinated with the US to assassinate its first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, in an attempt to destabilise the country and the region [The Conversation][34]. Since then, however, both countries have evolved and their relationships have mended, with Belgium providing aid to the DRC through aid mechanisms and firmly condemning any violence in the region [Kingdom of Belgium Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation][35]. Such is the result of years of negotiations, understanding the differences in their cultures and practices, as well as rebuilding from a state of foreign rule between the DRC and Belgium.

Burundi

One of the most interesting cases in the region is Burundi, which has evolved to become one of the DRC's most stern supporters and allies, after fighting against the state in the First and Second Congo Wars. Burundi is concerned regarding instability in the DRC as

[32] Human Rights Watch Editors. "DR Congo: Surge in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence." *Human Rights Watch*, 12 Jan. 2026, https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/01/12/dr-congo-surge-in-conflict-related-sexual-violence. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[33] Amnesty International. "Democratic Republic of the Congo 2020 Archives." Amnesty International, 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/report-democratic-republic-of-the-congo/. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[34] Bobineau, Julien. "Retracing Belgium's Dark Past in the Congo, and Attempts to Forge Deeper Ties." *The Conversation*, 12 June 2022, https://theconversation.com/retracing-belgiums-dark-past-in-the-congo-and-attempts-to-forge-deeper-ties-184903. Accessed 13 Sept. 2026.

[35] Kingdom of Belgium Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. "Belgium Supports the Fight Against Impunity in the DRC." *FPS Foreign Affairs - Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation*, 5 June 2021, http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/belgium-supports-fight-against-impunity-drc. Accessed 13 Sept. 2026.

the two countries share a border and Burundi is significantly smaller, meaning more likely to be affected by increased regional instability at the border. Such is why Burundi has agreed to host approximately 86,857 refugees from the DRC, while also deploying 100 soldiers to assist in the peacekeeping process in North Kivu [The Conversation][36]. The country's actions seem to be a pledge to remain by the DRC's side as conflict continues within the borders of Burundi's neighbour and ally.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

China has one of the most major stakes in the DRC, as a large amount of its mineral resources are being mined and then imported from the country. As mentioned previously, China manages a staggering 64% of the world's cobalt market through the DRC [US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute],[37] a figure that renders China a virtual monopoly in cobalt production and the DRC one of China's most valuable investments. China has provided the DRC's national army with technical assistance and equipment to combat the threat posed by the M23 Movement [Council on Foreign Affairs Global Conflict Tracker][38], as well as has commented on its internal and regional affairs, a rare occasion for China, publicly stating that the Chinese government is "hoping" that Rwanda ceases supporting the M23 militarily [British Broadcasting Corporation].[39]

Rwanda

Rwanda is a state which has repeatedly been accused of funding and/or supporting/backing the M23 Movement, primarily due to its connection to the group's history, starting during the First and Second Congo Wars. Investigations have also showcased a connection between Rwanda and various other insurgencies and violent acts within the DRC [Amnesty International],[40] showcasing the country's constant presence in the region and long-standing conflict with the DRC. Various initiatives, and even the most recent revival of the Luanda Process, suggest that the DRC and Rwanda are very unlikely to ease tensions

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[36] Wielenga, Cori, and Patrick Hajayandi. "East Africa's Peace Mission in the DRC: Why It's in Burundi's Interest to Help." *The Conversation*, 17 Apr. 2023, https://theconversation.com/east-africas-peace-mission-in-the-drc-why-its-in-burundis-interest-to-help-203486. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[37] Gregory, Farrell, and Paul Milas. "China in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Dynamic in Critical Mineral Procureme." *US Army War College - Strategic Studies Institute*, 17 Oct. 2024, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/SSI-Media/Recent-Publications/Article/3938204/china-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-a-new-dynamic-in-critical-mineral/. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[38] CFR's Wachenheim Center for Peace and Security. "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[39] Lau, Jack. "DR Congo Conflict Tests China's Diplomatic Balancing Act." BBC, 26 Mar. 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c234j4yj3klo. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[40] Amnesty International. *DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: An Long-Standing Crisis Spinning out of Control*. 3 Sept. 1998, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/afr620331998en.pdf. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

between them in the foreseeable future, hinting at their long history of constant conflict, their reluctance to cooperate with each other, as well as the various accusations regarding the incitement of proxy conflicts within each other's borders.

Uganda

Uganda is another regional actor which has historically acted against the DRC, especially during the First and Second Congo Wars, when it was fully-allied with and fighting alongside Rwanda. Ugandan armed forces are also currently engaged in the easternmost parts of the DRC, engaging in counter-terrorism operations against Congolese armed forces as their own method of maintaining peace in the region [Never Again Rwanda][41]. Regional pressure and scrutiny has led Uganda to almost abandon such operations but they seem to still remain active. Considering historical DRC-Ugandan relations, these armed forces are unlikely to withdraw and Ugandan involvement in the DRC will consequently continue.

United States of America (USA)

The United States is a faraway yet firm supporter of peace initiatives in the DRC, even developing its own peace agreements and sanctioning non-compliant parties. More specifically, when Rwandan-backed M23 fighters violated the most recent Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity between the US and the DRC by capturing the city of Uvira, the States decided to place sanctions upon them and condemn their actions, in adherence to similar past actions of the UN Security Council [US Department of State].[42] Such actions, as well as others, including its constant funding of MONUSCO as one of the UN's top contributors, showcase the commitment of the US to up-keeping peace in the DRC and the region, in an effort to maintain greater international security.

African Union (AU)

The AU has been primarily responsible for various initiatives to promote peace in the DRC and the region, as well as has endorsed interstate agreements on the matter, such as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region. Furthermore, it has called for the proper implementation and compliance to the revived Luanda Process, but the effectiveness of its directives has remained limited as it relies on the willingness of its member states to implement them. It has been deemed crucial that the role of the AU in the DRC specifically is reformed, in order to ensure that future initiatives can be properly supported by one of the most significant regional actors in Africa.

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[41] Never Again Rwanda. *Position Paper on RSSB Pension Reform Implementation QUARTERLY PEACE and SECURITY ANALYSIS in the GREAT LAKES REGION Q1 2026 JANUARY -MARCH Prepared by Never Again Rwanda*. Mar. 2026.

[42] Pigott, Thomas. "Sanctioning Rwandan Violators of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity - United States Department of State." *United States Department of State*, 2 Mar. 2026, https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/03/sanctioning-rwandan-violators-of-the-washington-accords-for-peace-and-prosperity. Accessed 13 Sept. 2026.

International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

Although not the most significant or impactful, the ICGLR is the regional organisation with the closest proximity to the conflict, as those who fought in the First and Second Congo Wars are almost all of its members [ICGLR].[43] As has the AU, the ICGLR has been majorly involved in many of the regional initiatives to promote peace in the DRC and the region, especially the most recent efforts to revive the Luanda Process. Furthermore, with its Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM), the ICGLR can monitor ceasefires, as well as report and investigate any security concerns and/or incidents. However, the ICGLR also mostly relies on the compliance and willingness of its members to cooperate, a prospect that becomes increasingly distant as conflict fractures the region.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

These are countries which are directly involved in and affected by the issue and which seek an immediate resolution of tensions in the DRC. During debate, their stance should depict that of an actor seeking immediate intervention, appropriate accountability and cessation of violence and conflict. Countries in this block may include Burundi, a key ally and neighbouring country of the DRC, Rwanda, a supporter of policies which involve peace and trust-building proceedings between Rwanda and the DRC [Arlaadi Media Group/Network][44], as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo itself, the most significant member of the Security Council for this topic and the one that has the greatest interest in resolving crises within its borders.

Bloc B

These are countries which are not directly involved in the regional affairs of the region around the DRC and maintain a rather neutral stance, while maintaining support for deescalation, as it benefits the greater international community. States of this block are most likely to exercise caution when engaging with the topic and not agree to any drastic measures or directives that could escalate the conflict in the DRC further. Countries in this block may include the USA, which has encouraged regional cooperation and adherence to existing guidelines and agreements on the matter, as well as China, which has remained

[43] International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. "The ICGLR Structure – ICGLR – International Conference on the Great Lakes Region." *Icglr*, https://icglr.org/the-icglr/. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

[44] Arlaadi Media Staff. "Somalia Welcomes DRC-Rwanda Pact, Urges Continued Regional Cooperation." Warteelka Arlaadi -, 27 Apr. 2025, https://arlaadimedia.com/2025/04/27/somalia-sees-hope-for-great-lakes-region-in-drc-rwanda-declaration/. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

rather inactive due to its external affairs policy [British Broadcasting Corporation],[45] despite being the DRC's largest trading partner [IDEAS][46] and relying on its mineral ores for a vast amount of its activities [US Army College Strategic Studies Institute][47].

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
6th April, 1994	The Rwandan Genocide occurs, with an estimated one million deaths and hundreds of thousands rapes of women [Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations][48].
1996-1997	The First Congo War occurs. Rwandan soldiers enter the DRC, backed primarily by Uganda, to successfully overthrow Hutu Dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and install opposition leader Laurent Kabila.
1998-2002	The Second Congo War occurs. DRC forces, backed by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, fight against Rwanda, Burundi and Ugandan forces after the DRC distances itself from Rwanda.
30th November, 1999	The UN establishes the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC, later MONUSCO).
2001-2002	Laurent Kabila dies in a coup attempt and his son, Joseph Kabila, manages to greatly limit fighting a year later.
2nd April, 2003	After a year of negotiations, the Sun City Agreement, also known as the Final Act, officially concludes the Second Congo War.

[45] Lau, Jack. "DR Congo Conflict Tests China's Diplomatic Balancing Act." BBC, 26 Mar. 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c234j4yj3klo. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[46] Manga Edimo, R. Mireille, and Julien Rajaoson. *China's Belt and Road Initiative in Africa*. Springer Nature, 19 May 2025.

[47] Gregory, Farrell, and Paul Milas. "China in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Dynamic in Critical Mineral Procureme." *US Army War College - Strategic Studies Institute*, 17 Oct. 2024, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/SSI-Media/Recent-Publications/Article/3938204/china-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-a-new-dynamic-in-critical-mineral/. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[48] United Nations. "Rwanda: A Brief History of the Country." *Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations*, United Nations, 2025, https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/historical-background.shtml. Accessed 12 Sept. 2026.

23rd March, 2009	The Tutsi and Rwanda-affiliated DRC-based organisation National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) becomes a political party and integrates many of its members in the DRC's national forces.
6th May, 2012	As the CNDP's integration into the national armed forces of the DRC progressively breaks down, its former members establish the M23 Movement.
20th November, 2012	The M23 Movement manages to capture the city of Goma and essentially excludes it from the jurisdiction of the DRC central government.
1st December, 2012	International pressure forces the M23 to reach an agreement with the DRC central government and it withdraws from Goma.
December 2012 - November 2013	The lengthy Kampala negotiations fail to produce a peace agreement. The M23 Movement faces initial defeat, primarily due to lack of funding from Rwanda.
24th February, 2013	The Peace, Security and Cooperation Agreement for DRC and the region is signed, as the DRC enters an era of rebuilding and reforming.
2022 - October 2023	As the M23 is revived, the Luanda process is reestablished with Angola as a mediator. It later falters due to a fighting stalemate between the DRC armed forces and the M23.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) (July 1, 2010)

"MONUSCO took over from an earlier UN peacekeeping operation – the United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) – on 1 July 2010. It was done in accordance with Security Council resolution 1925 PDF Document of 28 May to reflect the new phase reached in the country". It aims at the "protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical

violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts". [MONUSCO][49]

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2098 (March 28, 2013)

Adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, Resolution 2098 creates the Force Intervention Brigade (FBI) within the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). [UNSC][50] It set the precedent, as it was the first time a UN peacekeeping body was given reconsideration of an offensive targeted mandate to neutralize/limit non-state armed groups and bring stability in the state (specifically targeting the M23 at the time and later, the DFL of Rwanda and ADF).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2773 (February 21, 2025)

This resolution, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, strongly condemns the ongoing offensive and advances of the M23 in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces of the DRC calling on the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) to cease support to M23 and immediately withdraw from DRC territory without preconditions. The resolution also reiterates an urgent call for all parties to conclude an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. [UNSC][51]

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region, also known as the Addis Ababa, the location where the document was signed, Framework was an African initiative to conclude conflict in the DRC, signed on 24 February 2013. Its main purposes were addressing the underlying causes of conflict within the DRC, including systemic poverty and lack of proper law enforcement [Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region],[52] and then resolving them through more robust security sector reform (SSR), a cessation of all financing of terrorist groups within the

[49] United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). (2025). In Unmonusco.org. https://unmonusco.org/www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/index.html. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[50] Year: 2013), U. S. C. (2013). Resolution 2098 (2013) /: adopted by the Security Council at its 6943rd meeting, on 28 March 2013. Digitallibrary.Un.Org. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/747650?ln=en&v=pdf. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[51] S/RES/2773. (2025). S/RES/2773. In Security Council Report. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-res-2773.php. Accessed 27 July, 2026.

[52] Government of Angola, et al. *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region*. 2025, https://papsrepository.africanunion.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/971b09ba-1f90-4b3f-ba26-8f6b27ed8d93/content. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

country by foreign states, as well as regional cooperation to, supported by the African Union and neighbouring states, to ensure that these measures are appropriately enforced. Implementation, however, was significantly impacted due to a lack of enforcement by all signatories, as the framework was not legally-binding, a lack of lead organisation or state in oversight efforts, as well as the various economic and strategic interests in the region which conflicted with the provisions of the framework. Potential improvement could be possible through the establishment of an independent regional body to oversee and coordinate the actions described within the document, as well as set some specific timelines and guidelines for implementation, and improving the language of the text itself, opting for links to actual actions and initiatives instead of supporting past initiatives and reiterating the importance of rebuilding efforts within the region, as many potential solutions within the framework suggested [PSCFDR][53].

Kampala Negotiations

The Kampala Negotiations were a series of talks held between the DRC Government and the M23 militia, shortly after the city of Goma had been captured, in 2012-2013. The negotiations were primarily aimed at integrating the M23 as a political actor and acknowledging the political grievances and cause for rebellion from the perspective of the rebels themselves, such as the accusation that the Congolese state had become dysfunctional and that deep-rooted political weaknesses were present within its systems [UK Government Stabilisation Unit][54], The talks were overshadowed by various challenges, such as the fact that the M23 were considered an autonomous political entity while they still relied on external funding and a reluctant stance from the DRC to cooperate and negotiate with the armed group [UK Government Stabilisation Unit][55], ultimately leading to no actual results, as no documents were signed or actions were made after negotiations concluded. What could have improved this attempt would have been a more realistic assessment of the M23's political nature, potential broader political reforms that could have been discussed given this opportunity, which could have also eased M23 demands, as well as an actual mandate and timeline for the negotiations, which would have included an agreement signing at its conclusion.

[53] Government of Angola, et al. *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region*. 2025, https://papsrepository.africanunion.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/971b09ba-1f90-4b3f-ba26-8f6b27ed8d93/content. Accessed 11 Sept. 2026.

[54] Shepherd, Ben. *Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Democratic Republic of Congo (M23) Case Study*. 2018.

[55] Shepherd, Ben. *Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Democratic Republic of Congo (M23) Case Study*. 2018.

Luanda Process

One of the most recent attempts at deescalation in the DRC is the Luanda Process, an AU-backed initiative which aimed to resolve tensions between Rwanda and the DRC. More specifically, the process aimed to address concerns regarding Rwandan financing of the M23 group by securing a ceasefire in eastern DRC, withdrawing all forces from the region and establishing verification mechanisms to combat violations. Many factors during negotiations significantly impacted results, including deep-rooted distrust between the Rwandan and DRC governments after years of conflict with M23, a reluctance by the DRC government to include M23 leaders in the framework, as well as reliance on political will, which lead to the measures established never being properly implemented. Proper security commitments by both parties, as well as increased external oversight by trusted regional actors, the inclusion of, if not M23, local leaders and civil society in negotiations and tying compliance to the framework to tangible benefits for participants, including developmental aid, as well as costs, including targeted sanctions and travel bans, could have encouraged both the DRC and Rwanda to cooperate more actively and more effectively, leading the process to produce much better results.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strengthening Enforcement, Verification and Oversight

Potentially the most effective way to ensure compliance to all directives and/or guidelines set by past attempts to resolve conflict in the DRC would be creating a regional coordinating body, under the supervision of the African Union and leading all efforts to mitigate conflict in the DRC, which would also provide technical and logistical support to it. This body, which would be composed of military observers, civilian monitors, as well as AU experts on the DRC and M23, could track and verify troop movements, monitor ceasefires and report them to all states involved. Furthermore, a Regional Compliance Framework, similar in principle to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region, which would ensure that all parties are aware of potential benefits, such as developmental aid and simpler facilitation of trade, as well as disadvantages, such as suspension from regional initiatives and travel restrictions, that compliance in any directives of the AU and the newly-founded body would carry. Ensuring accountability and compliance is the first and most important step to reinstating order in the DRC and the region.

Implementation of Conflict-responsive Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Practices

A DDR approach during active conflict can prove ineffective, as seen in previous attempts in the DRC. However, effective DDR can truly occur during conflict, if realistic

timelines exist and guidelines are followed. More specifically, this new effort to introduce DDR in the DRC and the region would involve specific planning, deadlines and realistic goals for progress, calling for the complete disarmament of any armed forces that do not belong to the national army and also prohibiting their re-armament. Furthermore, screening of all citizens wishing to enlist will be mandatory and extensive and individuals which have been involved in past human rights abuses will not be allowed entry to armed national forces, who will reorganise themselves and redistribute their units to ensure that the tasks of patrolling and securing citizens and resources are completed successfully. Lastly, in regards to reintegration, local communities will have the opportunity to be involved in DDR efforts and will receive developmental aid packages, as well as training and work opportunities to improve their standards of living and later ensure a safe and prosperous transition from conflict regardless. All of the above will be completed in cooperation with regional actors and international organisations, such as the African Union and the appropriate bodies of the UN respectively, in order to secure the funding and technical support required to improve the future of the DRC and the region.

Redefining Political Negotiations Involved in the Peace Process

The most critical issue requiring a resolution in the negotiation process is the countries and groups involved in them, which may not always agree with and/or recognise each other as autonomous political entities. Such is why negotiations will be separated to those happening between the DRC government and the groups within the state, such as the M23 militia, and those happening between the DRC and countries in the region, primarily Rwanda, as trust-building between the two states has not yet reached an acceptable level. Timelines will again be created for these negotiations, always including realistic but firm goals and in-between achievements, as well as an agreement signing or some kind of concession when they reach their conclusion, in order to ensure that no efforts for peace are fruitless. To oversee all of the above, a special council of AU experts and representatives from willing African countries that have no stake in the situation will be formed, ensuring transparency and no back-tracking, stalling or any other issue with ongoing negotiations. Communication is key when resolving conflict and a comprehensive plan to properly facilitate is just as important.

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