

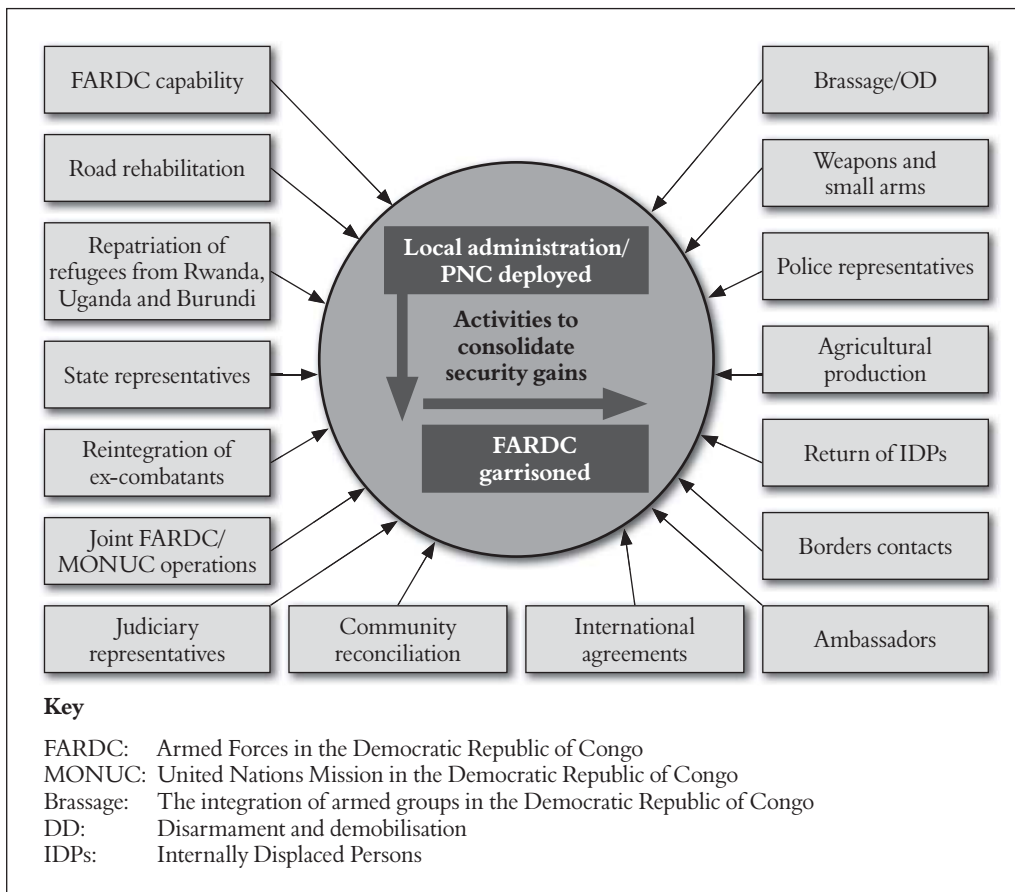
Stabilising the Eastern DRC

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The stabilisation of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is based on the implementation of the Goma and Nairobi agreements, supported by the stabilisation plan of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). The aim of the stability core programme is to help stabilise the Eastern DRC and protect civilians by improving the security environment and extending state authority. To achieve this MONUC and its partners will support the government of the DRC with the containment of armed groups, to put in place basic elements of state authority and ensure the return of refugees and IDPs, and so improve regional relations, too.

The plan is summarised in the following diagram¹:

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Figure 1 Concept of stability core programme

The plan will focus on the following areas:²

Containment of armed groups

- Members of armed groups will enter brassage or disarm/demobilise as a result of sensitisation, community pressure and negotiations
- FARDC capabilities will improve as a result of training, mentoring, garrisoning and quarter mastering
- Armed groups will collapse as a result of joint FARDC/MONUC offensive actions

Improved state authority

- National police units will be deployed and given the means to discharge their duties as a result of a support package

- Members of the judiciary will be deployed and given the means to discharge their duties as a result of a support package
- State representatives will be deployed and given the means to discharge their duties as a result of a support package

Return of refugees and internally displaced persons

- Responsibility for sensitive refugee issues will be handed over to their areas of origin and reintegration and reconciliation will commence as a result of household and community support packages
- IDPs will return to their areas of origin and reintegration will commence as a result of household and community support packages
- Ex-combatants will reintegrate economically and socially as a result of community-based schemes
- Community tensions will lessen as a result of reconciliation and SALW programmes
- Household incomes will increase as a result of purchases of local agricultural goods and road rehabilitation

Improved regional relations

- Ambassadors will be exchanged between the DRC and Rwanda as a result of advocacy
- Relations will improve as a result of confidence-building measures
- International agreements including the Stability Pact and Nairobi Communiqué will be implemented as a result of advocacy and support for JVM/JMG and other mechanisms

One must be optimistic about this plan but also recognise the following risks:

- Rapid and simultaneous roll-out of the stabilisation plan in specific communities will be nearly impossible because it has too many separate sections that need to be implemented by too many partners
- There is insufficient capacity among partners, particularly in remote locations, to implement the multiple sub-components

- Government buy-in will be inadequate, particularly among local authorities and national security organs
- Implementation of the stabilisation plan could end up exacerbating tensions between communities which receive support and those that do not
- Because of current stove-piping, MONUC will be unable to co-ordinate the civilian and military components at the strategic and operational levels
- Because of amongst others delays in recruitment, MONUC will be unable to deploy enough appropriate staff in the field to co-ordinate and implement the stabilisation plan
- Donors will lose confidence in the process and withhold the required funding

The fighting that has occurred since mid August 2008 between FARDC and General Laurent Nkunda's rebel forces has already put some strain on this plan. The demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) plan, which forms part of the Amani process, has not been successfully implemented because of ongoing fighting between the signatories of the Nairobi and Goma agreements ever since the two agreements were signed. The completion of the DDR and security sector reform (SSR) processes is crucial. As Tawanda Hondora, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme, put it: 'Reform of the army is not just a desirable military activity, it is a pre-condition for peace and stability in the DRC. While demobilisation is an essentially civilian project, and army reform a military initiative, there is a fundamental link between the successes of both. One cannot succeed without the other.'

The components of the stabilisation plan clearly show that the DDR of all armed groups and the reform of the military and police is a precondition for the successful implementation of the plan. This includes capacity building within the FARDC and the police force (PNC). MONUC, the government of DRC and the international community has embarked on several projects to build the capacity within the security sector with the focus on FARDC and the PNC.

For the reform of the FARDC, the roundtable on SSR of 25 February 2008 adopted the installation of a Congolese co-ordination plan to study the contributions to the programme of dissuasion for the army. It also adopted the programmes already in progress, in particular the training of FARDC battalions by MONUC and the training and equipping of the general-purpose engineering units, as well as the control of manpower through a biometric census. MONUC successfully completed the pilot phase of the Mission's main training project in March 2007 and the graduation of a FARDC integrated battalion. MONUC has also delivered two additional basic training programmes for 12 FARDC

integrated battalions. In spite of logistical deficiencies and the lack of FARDC weapons and equipment, the second main training project was successfully completed, with the units entering service in the FARDC integrated brigades.

MONUC expects to conduct similar courses for the rest of the year and intends to enhance the training programme with supplementary training courses to develop the operational effectiveness and planning ability of FARDC officers. The introduction of mortar and engineering courses into the programme will enhance specific combat-support capabilities. This training and capacity building is crucial because most of these battalions must be deployed in North and South Kivus, supported by MONUC, to implement the stabilisation plan.

Notes

- 1 Author's interview with MONUC official, 14 August 2008, Kinshasa.
- 2 Author's interview with MONUC official, 14 August 2008, Kinshasa.