



CONFLICT SPOTLIGHT

A Silent Crisis in Congo: The Bantu and the Twa in Tanganyika

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Bantus and Twas participating in a community meeting held during March 2016 in Kabeke, located in Manono territory in Tanganyika. The meeting was held to nominate a Baraza (or peace committee), a council of elders composed of seven representatives from each community.

Photo: Sonia Rolley/RFI

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with 920,000 new displacements related to conflict and violence in 2016, surpassed Syria as the country generating the largest new population movements.¹ Those displacements were the result of enduring violence in North and South Kivu, but also of rapidly escalating conflicts in the Kasai and Tanganyika provinces that continue unabated. In order to promote a better understanding of the drivers of the silent and neglected crisis in DRC, this Conflict Spotlight focuses on the inter-ethnic conflict between the Bantu and the Twa ethnic groups in Tanganyika. This conflict illustrates how marginalization of the Twa minority group due to a combination of limited access to resources, exclusion from local decision-making and systematic discrimination, can result in large-scale violence and displacement. Moreover, this document provides actionable recommendations for conflict transformation and resolution.

¹ <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/pdfs/2017-GRID-DRC-spotlight.pdf>

1. OVERVIEW

Since mid-2016, inter-ethnic violence between the Bantu and the Twa ethnic groups has reached an acute phase, and is now affecting five of the six territories in a province of roughly 2.5 million people. Between July 2016 and March 2017, the conflict had resulted in the destruction of over 400 villages, murder and injury of hundreds of people, and the rape of more than 200 women, although official statistics underestimate the actual toll from the conflict.^{2,3} The violence also displaced over 557,000 people in Tanganyika according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or about 22% of the population.⁴ For both Bantu and Twa, this severe conflict causes growing insecurity, reduced trust between communities, increasingly limited access to basic services, and disrupted agricultural production and livelihoods. As a result, the World Food Program recently declared food emergencies or crises in 4 out of 6 territories of the province.⁵ The pre-existing context of limited social cohesion and widespread poverty further reinforces the negative impacts of the conflict.

This conflict spotlight first presents the structural or longer-term factors that underpin the crisis (**section 2**). This includes the overall country context, an overview of decentralization and local governance structures, and the historical context of the relations between the Twa and Bantu. The analysis then turns to shorter-term factors driving the violence, which include access to land, taxation and local governance, as well as systematic discrimination against the Twa (**section 3**). This is complemented by a summary of the trajectory of the conflict since violence erupted in 2012-13, and a presentation of the key actors involved. An analysis of current threats and opportunities for conflict transformation will be followed by specific recommendations on how to best help mitigate and resolve the crisis (**section 4**). The document will close with a brief conclusion highlighting the key role of longer-term interventions and that of Congolese authorities for resolving this crisis (**section 5**). The findings highlighted in this conflict spotlight have been assembled through a desk review and key informant interviews conducted in Kalemie during May 2017.

2. THE STRUCTURAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE CONFLICT

2.1 The Country Context

The DRC represents the second-largest country in Africa with a land area that is equivalent to that of Western Europe. Its population was estimated at 79.7 million people in 2016, with an estimated annual growth rate of 3.2%.⁶ Despite its significant mineral and natural resource wealth, the latest Human Development Index ranked DRC 176th out of 188 countries. The country also ranks as a failed state and one of the weakest in the world according to the Worldwide Governance Indicators compiled by the World Bank. The country particularly lags relative to comparable countries for three out of the six dimensions measured by the indicators.

² Official figures on fatalities and injured people are unreliable. The UN was confirming 150 deaths and 200 injuries between July 2016 and March 2017, although by numerous accounts, these figures largely underestimate the actual toll. (see:

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/decision_de_financement_-_province_de_tanganyika.pdf)

³ <http://www.radiokapi.net/2017/02/23/actualite/securite/le-conflit-entre-luba-et-pygmee-fait-environ-150-morts-au-tanganyika>

⁴ http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/drc_factsheet_trim2_2017_en.pdf

⁵ <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP292612.pdf>

⁶ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=democratic%20republic%20of%20the%20congo>

These three dimensions concern: 1) political stability and absence of violence; 2) government effectiveness; and 3) rule of law.⁷

The end of the Mobutu regime in 1996-97, which capped nearly a decade of economic, political and social decline, still explains in good part the current state of the country. This decline triggered the Congo wars of 1996–2002, which marked a low point for the country in the post-independence period. These years of conflict resulted in massive displacements and millions of deaths, whether due directly to violence or due to a lack of access to basic life-saving services.⁸ The Sun City Agreement followed by the arrival of the transitional government in 2003, and two rounds of presidential and legislative elections in 2006 and 2011, placed the DRC on a path of gradual recovery.

This recovery led to a reassertion of the authority of the Congolese State and some improvements in access to basic services, which were largely supported by foreign donors. Natural resource driven economic growth - averaging 6.7% of Gross Domestic Product between 2005 and 2015 - has generated higher government revenues and expenditures and supported this recovery. Nonetheless, services generally remain of poor quality and their access, when Congolese citizens can afford formal and informal user fees, limited.⁹ In addition, despite the presence of the



United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the largest peacekeeping operation in the world, localized violent conflicts have remained recurrent, particularly in the eastern provinces. This underscores the persistent weaknesses of the state security apparatus, and its failure to fully control its territory and monopolize the use of violence.

More recently, the postponement of the presidential and legislative elections initially scheduled for 2016, and the associated degradation in the political environment also resulted in a weakening of the rule of law, as well as an upsurge in human rights violations, violence and displacements.¹⁰ In parallel, a decrease in the price of natural resources and reduced economic growth at 2.5% in 2016, have caused significant cuts to the national budget, further eroding recent gains.¹¹ It is against this backdrop that nearly eight out of ten Congolese citizens live on less than \$2 a day.¹² They also continue to have limited access to basic services, regularly see their livelihoods threatened by insecurity, and face a closing space to peacefully express their opinions and

⁷ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wqi/index.aspx#home>

⁸ <https://www.rescue.org/report/mortality-democratic-republic-congo-ongoing-crisis>

⁹ <https://www.rescue.org/supplemental/policy-and-practice-brief-improved-management-and-accountability-conditions-better>

¹⁰ <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/05/24/congo%E2%80%99s-bad-year-about-get-worse>

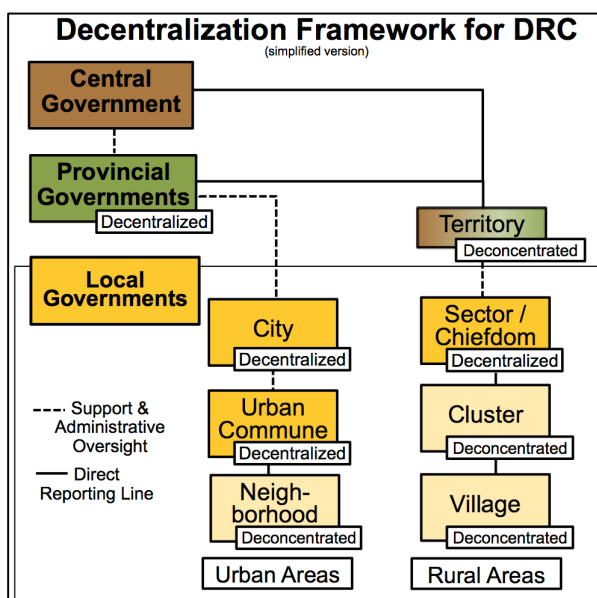
¹¹ http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/01/04/en-rdc-la-crise-est-aussi-economique_5057573_3212.html

¹² http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/COD.pdf, p. 7.

grievances. This wider country context has had a strong influence on the local context in Tanganyika.

2.2 Decentralization and Local Governance in DRC

Given the key role of local governance in the conflict between the Twa and the Bantu, a good understanding of the architecture of decentralization in DRC enables a more complete perspective on the context. As described in the 2006 constitution, there exist three levels of government in DRC: the central, the provincial and the local (or “Entités territoriales décentralisées” [ETDs] in this last case). Under this framework, provincial and local governments possess autonomous powers over the management of key decentralized responsibilities, along with dedicated fiscal resources. There are also a number of areas of shared responsibility between the three levels of government. In principle, elections are to be held sequentially at each level, but provincial elections were only conducted in 2007, while local elections have never been held. In practice, pending elections, the presidency retains the power to officially appoint the head of ETDs and most government officials. The presidency further retains a large degree of influence on provincial governments, as the mandate of the members of provincial parliaments has continued to be extended by presidential decree since 2011. Finally, a number of required laws and institutions for the full implementation of the decentralization framework are not in place. In practice, this results in an unclear institutional framework, insufficient financial transfers toward lower levels, weak capacity at provincial and local government levels, and a state that remains *de facto* highly centralized.¹³



In rural areas, ETDs are composed of either chiefdom (“chefferie”) or sector (“secteur”). The head of a chiefdom is nominated following local customary practices, whereas the head of a sector is elected.¹⁴ However, the presidency currently formally appoints ETD heads, given no local elections have been held and some enabling laws and regulations are not in place or enforced.¹⁵ In terms of structure, local governments are themselves divided into clusters (“groupements”) composed of a number of villages (“localités”), which both represent deconcentrated entities of the ETD. Cluster and village chiefs are selected according to local customary practices. In principle, and consistent with the 2015 law on customary authorities, following their nomination, ETD heads should officially appoint cluster chiefs, while cluster chiefs would officially appoint village chiefs.¹⁶ However in practice, the President currently retains the authority to officially appoint cluster

¹³ Pierre Englebert and Emmanuel Kasongo Mungongo, “Misguided and Misdiagnosed: The Failure of Decentralization Reforms in the DR Congo”, *African Studies Review*, April 2016, pp. 10.

¹⁴ République Démocratique du Congo, Loi organique n 08/016 du 7 octobre 2008 portant composition et fonctionnement des Entités Territoriales Décentralisées et leurs rapports avec les provinces

¹⁵ Pour les chefferies, le gouverneur provincial devrait nommer formellement le chef de chefferie une fois qu’il aura été nommé selon la coutume, selon la Loi de 2015 sur les autorités coutumières (République Démocratique du Congo, DÉCRET-LOI 082 du 2 juillet 1998 portant statut des autorités chargées de l’administration des circonscriptions territoriales)

¹⁶ République Démocratique du Congo, Loi fixant le statut des chefs coutumiers, Aout 2015.

chiefs, upon the recommendation of the Minister of interior and customary affairs.¹⁷ It should further be noted that the prime minister and the territorial administrator respectively, have the authority for creating a new cluster or a new village.¹⁸ In practice, most Congolese citizens living in rural areas will interact with the village or sometimes the cluster head, but rarely with the ETD head, given the relatively large geographical area of the typical rural ETD.

Outside of cities and communes, which represent local government entities for urban areas (complemented by their own set of deconcentrated entities at the neighborhood level), another key structure is the territory. A territory forms an administrative geographical unit that regroup a number of ETDs. The Territory is a deconcentrated unit of both the central and provincial governments. It coordinates the cross-sectoral support of the government and fills the administrative oversight role of the province for rural ETDs. Even if the territory is not an autonomous entity, territorial administrators, who are appointed by the presidency and report directly to the provincial governor, normally represent the most influential government actor in rural areas.

In the context of Tanganyika, explored further below, one important implication is that the presidency is still involved in appointing most of the heads of local authorities, including at the ETD, the cluster and the village levels. Another key point is that the prime minister can create a new cluster and that the territorial administrator can create a new village. These issues have a key role in the conflict analyzed below, given the absence of Twa villages and Twa village chiefs contributes to the marginalization of the Twa and has resulted in violence. How decentralization is currently applied and how local governance works in the province thus plays a key role in the conflict. This further highlight that longer-term peace will depend at least in part on the willingness and ability of national and local actors to address those issues.

2.3 Historical Context of the Conflict

The conflict in Tanganyika is rooted in the long-standing marginalization of all the indigenous ethnic groups commonly referred to as Pygmies in central Africa, of which the Twa form one of the main groups. The Pygmies were the first inhabitants of the DRC, living as nomadic hunter-gatherers at the fringes of forest-savanna areas. However, Bantu tribes, primarily relying on agriculture for their livelihoods, started migrating into the Congo River Basin at the beginning of the first millennium, progressively displacing Pygmies toward ever more remote forest areas. Over time, the Bantu exerted their control over land and established hereditary, hierarchized and interrelated tribal power structures that excluded Pygmies.¹⁹ These tribal or customary power structures still underlie to this day the configuration of local governments in DRC, especially at the village and cluster levels, along with chiefdoms. This also explains in good part the absence of the Twa from positions of power in Tanganyika.

During colonial times and since independence, the cutting of forests for logging, agriculture, cattle herding, and mining, combined with the creation of national parks, gradually pushed the Pygmies

¹⁷ Sadly, the current large-scale conflict in the Kasai region was triggered by the central government refusal to recognize a customary chief, an outright and very negative consequence of the centralization of local government affairs in DRC.

¹⁸ République Démocratique du Congo, Loi organique n 10/011 du 18 mai 2010 portant fixation des subdivisions territoriales à l'intérieur des provinces.

¹⁹ <http://documents.banquemondiale.org/curated/fr/327611468235752303/pdf/511080ESW0P1131Strategy0Eql0version.pdf>, pp. 11-12.

out of forests. This resulted in an accelerating trend toward sedentary life for those populations.²⁰ Sedentarization, accompanied by a significant reduction in access to forest resources, and limited access to land, has resulted in systematically higher poverty for Pygmy populations relative to the Bantu majority. Unsurprisingly, this led the author of a World Bank report to summarize their situation in this manner: “Pygmies in DRC can best be described as poor, vulnerable and marginalized.”²¹ This higher poverty and vulnerability also characterize the situation of the Twa in Tanganyika.

3. SHORT-TERM CONFLICT DRIVERS, TRAJECTORY AND ACTORS

3.1 Access to land, customary taxes and local governance

In Tanganyika, the majority of the Twa population is sedentary or semi-sedentary. They are typically settled near roads and Bantu villages, where they can work as agricultural day laborers and maintain some access to forest resources. While some Twas have fields and practice agriculture, land rights in DRC remain rooted in the customary practices of Bantu chiefs. As a result, the Twa have limited access to land that is contingent on Bantu customary village chiefs allocating land in exchange for a customary tax (typically a variable share of the annual crop). Bantu customary chiefs also collect similar taxes for hunting, fishing or artisanal mining activities.²²

Although the territorial administrator has the authority for creating new villages within a cluster, no recognized Twa villages exist in Tanganyika so far. The absence of state recognized Twa village chiefs comes in spite of the fact that the Twa account for an estimated 15% of Tanganyika’s population (or 375,000 people), and up to 35% of the population in the Nyunzu and Manono territories.²³ A significant share of the population in those two territories has also mixed Twa and Bantu heritage. Twa populations therefore possess no established land rights or state-recognized village chiefs. Despite this, Twa clan leaders play a de facto leadership role in their communities, even if they fall nominally under the jurisdiction of Bantu village chiefs. The lack of education and social status of Twa clan leaders outside of their communities, however, forms a constraint that reduces their ability to influence local authorities.

The lack of Twa local political representation leads to inequitable practices and abuse of power by Bantu chiefs, who request higher customary taxes from the Twa than those typically paid by Bantu community members. Even when the Twa pay land taxes, Bantu chiefs can still arbitrarily rescind allocations if they find the land productive. In case of dispute, cluster chiefs or ETD heads systematically favor the Bantu side. Territorial and provincial authorities typically supported those decisions. This led to the refusal by some Twa leaders and communities to pay customary taxes, which in some cases sparked violence. In parallel, the lack of access to land, combined with typically poor agricultural techniques, causes chronic malnutrition for Twa communities. This can trigger negative coping mechanisms, including stealing food from Bantu neighbors or prostitution, and also sometimes lead to violence. This highlights some of the consequences of the exclusion

²⁰ http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/JointNGOsubmission_DRCForTheSession55_fr.pdf, pp. 12-15.

²¹ <http://documents.banquemondiale.org/curated/fr/327611468235752303/pdf/511080ESW0P1131Strategy0Egl0version.pdf>, p. 5.

²² <http://documents.banquemondiale.org/curated/fr/327611468235752303/pdf/511080ESW0P1131Strategy0Egl0version.pdf>, pp. 14-15.

²³ There are limited population data in DRC; statistics for Tanganyika and Twa populations for 2010 were derived from two sources: <http://documents.banquemondiale.org/curated/fr/394761468247843940/Congo-Republique-Democratique-du-Cadre-strategique-pour-la-preparation-dun-programme-de-developpement-des-Pygmees>, p. 100 and <http://www.africamuseum.be/museum/research/publications/rmca/online/tanganyika.pdf>, p. 409.

of the Twa from local decision-making and how this currently fuels the conflict.²⁴ **The Twa's unaddressed grievances on limited access to land and unfair taxation, as well as the unresponsiveness of local governance structures to their needs, are key drivers of the conflict directly linked to instances of violence.**²⁵

3.2 Systematic Discrimination Against Twa Populations

Systematic discrimination and prejudice from Bantu populations accompanies the long-standing economic and political marginalization of the Twa. The Twa are treated as second-class citizens, if not outright “subhumans.” This is both a cause and a consequence of their marginalization, as they are typically poor, illiterate, and with limited access to basic services. High service fees and mistreatment due to their ethnicity from education and health personnel form key impediments to access. Twa women and girls are especially vulnerable in this context.²⁶ Bantu villagers will also frequently prevent “dirty” Twa from collecting water from the same source or eating at the same table. Bantu men may marry Twa women, whereas Twa men cannot marry Bantu women. This discrimination further extends to salaries, as Twa are paid less than Bantus for performing the same work; they may also be coerced into providing forced labor. Speeches and messages by certain politicians and notables promoting hate, and in some cases violence against Twa community members, harden discriminatory attitudes and further fuel the conflict.²⁷ **Systematic discriminatory practices against the Twa represent another main unaddressed grievance directly linked to instances of violence, and is a key causal driver of the conflict.**²⁸

3.3 Trajectory of Violent Conflict

The recent violent conflict between Bantu and Twa started in Manono territory in 2012-13, following the refusal of the Twa to join the Bakata-Katanga uprising led by the Luba (a Bantu tribe). Instead, some Twa cooperated with the DRC armed forces (FARDC) against this rebellion. In parallel, increasing activism by a handful of Twa civil society organizations (CSOs) stimulated demands for the respect of their rights. These included local government representation, access to land, fair customary taxes and an end to discrimination. This jointly triggered localized violent incidents between the Twa and the Luba. The subsequent failure of public authorities and state security forces to intervene constructively, resulted in the formation of militia groups by leaders from both sides and a series of retaliatory massacres in Manono territory.

Violence gradually escalated from 2013 to 2015, and spread to Nyunzu and Kabalo, resulting in significant population displacements.²⁹ Some of the incidents that took place near Nyunzu during this period, which resulted in dozens of victims, have been well documented by Human Rights Watch and provide a prime example of the dynamic of the conflict in Tanganyika. This includes how the conflict generates both Twa and Bantu victims, how local security forces failed to protect a camp of displaced Twa right on the outskirts of Nyunzu town, and how local authorities have later attempted to minimize the number of victims.³⁰ This incident and others prompted donor-

²⁴ http://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Conflict-Scan2_Nyunzu_COD740_Nov2016.pdf, p. 6.

²⁵ Numerous points from this paragraph were obtained through key informant interviews conducted with humanitarian and civil society actors in Tanganyika during May 2017.

²⁶ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/annexe_3.3_etude_approfondie_sur_la_dynamique_des_co_nflits_inter_et_intracommunautaires_-_g.k.kavusa.pdf, pp. 25-26.

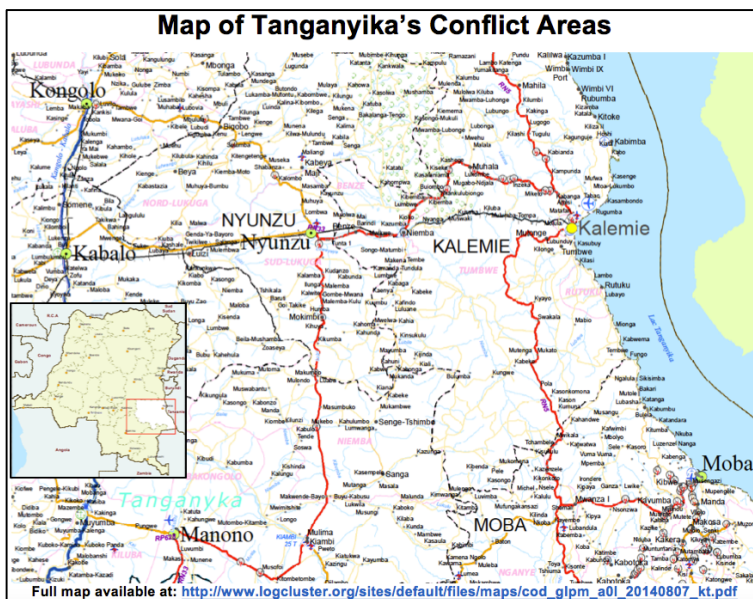
²⁷ http://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Conflict-Scan2_Nyunzu_COD740_Nov2016.pdf, p.7.

²⁸ Numerous points from this paragraph were obtained key informant interviews conducted with humanitarian and civil society actors in Tanganyika during May 2017.

²⁹ <http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2015/05/20/katanga-martin-kobler-choque-par-le-degre-des-violences-entre-pygmees-bantous-nyunzu>

³⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/11/dr-congo-ethnic-militias-attack-civilians-katanga>

funded humanitarian responses and conflict mitigation interventions, which briefly stabilized the situation. This included, with the support of MONUSCO, the establishment of local peace committees around Nyunzu and Manono and the organization of a peace forum in Nyunzu in November 2015. However, these efforts did not succeed in resolving the conflict's causal drivers and violence re-escalated during 2016³¹ and continued into 2017. As a result, violence has spread to Kalemie and Moba territories, generating further population displacements.³² Slightly half of those displaced live in camps or with host populations in and around Kalemie.³³ Currently, Twa militias control most rural areas and Bantu militias control most of the areas near main towns. Reports of violent clashes perpetrated by both the Twas and the Bantus continue to surface regularly.^{34,35}



3.4 Key Actors

At the local level, the conflict is pitting Twa leaders and communities against Bantu customary village chiefs, cluster heads and their communities. As per above, control over local resources (i.e., access to services, access to land and customary taxes), political representation (i.e., demands for the recognition of Twa village chiefs) and an end to discriminatory practices drive the conflict. Other key actors include ETD heads, as well as territorial and provincial authorities that have generally supported Bantu customary chiefs. These authorities, despite statements supporting peace, are not perceived as neutral, and often attempt to hide or minimize the situation. Authorities also openly blame Twa CSOs for inciting violence.³⁶ The lack of trust between Twa leaders and local authorities resulted in limited participation by the Twa in peace initiatives, including the recent peace forum held in Kalemie during February 2017. Both sides have accused various humanitarian actors and the MONUSCO of favoring the other side.

Without legitimate actors or functional dialogue mechanisms to effectively mitigate and manage local conflicts, disputes on customary taxes, access to land, or services, and even marriage, have resulted in violence. In this conflict, men represent the main perpetrators of violence, while violence against women of the other group is prevalent and perpetrated by both sides. Women are also marginalized in both Twa and Bantu communities, with limited influence on community and local decisions.

³¹ <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/366313/societe/rd-congo-vingtaine-de-morts-affrontements-entre-pygmees-bantou/>

³² <http://www.radiookapi.net/2017/06/16/actualite/en-bref/tanganyika-plus-de-20-000-deplaces-enregistres-moba>

³³ <https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/07/11/displaced-congolese-civilians-sent-back-widening-war>

³⁴ <http://www.radiookapi.net/2017/07/25/actualite/societe/tanganyika-un-calme-precaire-regne-bendera> &

<http://www.radiookapi.net/2017/07/25/actualite/societe/moba-les-affrontements-entre-larmee-et-une-milice-provoquent-le>

³⁵ The overall timeline of the conflict was developed through key informant interviews conducted with humanitarian and civil society actors in Tanganyika in May 2017, and complemented by key news reports.

³⁶ <http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2014/07/31/katanga-activiste-juge-pour-avoir-appele-les-pygmees-se-liberer-de-la-domination-bantoue>



A camp for displaced populations near the city of Kalemie, Tanganyika. Photo: William Clowes/IRIN

4. OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The first priority in Tanganyika, along with the provision of life saving humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by violence and displacement, is to work toward de-escalating the conflict and reducing the use of violence. This would demand longer term peacebuilding interventions of a minimal duration of two to three years that would work on leveraging and building local capacities for peaceful conflict resolution. Conflicts and tensions exist in all places and societies; the problem is when institutions within a society are unable to address and resolve them before they escalate and trigger violence. In Tanganyika, social norms and local governance structures which exclude the Twa minority undermine the capacity of local institutions to peacefully manage disputes and prevent the use of violence. This demand working toward the objectives of more inclusive and equitable social norms as well as more representative and responsive local governance structures. Peaceful coexistence in the province will not be possible without this.

4.1 Opportunities

There exist three main opportunities that could be leveraged toward peaceful coexistence: 1) a growing interest by government authorities and donors in resolving this conflict; 2) some recently announced donor funding; and 3) the relative absence of firearms and clear conflict lines so far. Indeed, the increasing scale of the conflict and its impact on the livelihoods and well-being of the communities living in Tanganyika has increased pressure on local, provincial and national authorities to find sustainable solutions. The MONUSCO has also deployed additional personnel to Nyunzu and Kabalo to help stabilize the situation, although this has not prevented violence from spreading to other areas.³⁷ The pressure in favor of solutions to the conflict provided some impetus for the provincial government to hold a peace forum in Kalemie during February 2017. However, the lack of trust of Twa leaders in government authorities resulted in limited Twa representation, which explains in part why many recommendations were skewed toward the positions adopted by Bantu leaders. Despite its limitations, the forum produced some recommendations that could help mitigate the conflict. This notably includes the state recognition

³⁷ <http://www.radiookapi.net/2016/11/25/emissions/linvite-du-jour/felix-prosper-basse-parle-des-efforts-de-la-monusco-pour-mettre>

of some Twa villages and chiefs (recommendation 7) and free primary education for Twa children (recommendation 9). If the more neutral and positive recommendations such as those could be acted upon by the authorities in the short to medium term, with the support of other national and international actors working in Tanganyika, this would represent a meaningful step toward peaceful coexistence.³⁸

Given the disruption to agriculture, livelihoods, and the associated food insecurity, a USAID Food for Peace intervention in its planning phase could be leveraged meaningfully toward peaceful conflict resolution, and have a catalyzing role toward the peaceful resolution of the conflict. This intervention will provide food, nutrition and livelihoods support to communities in some of the conflict-affected areas, in addition to interventions supporting peaceful coexistence. This will supplement some of the direct food assistance provided by the World Food Program for conflict-affected populations. The next round of the ECHO / UNICEF funded “Projet de Réponse rapide aux mouvements de population” (RRMP), which provides health, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions for displaced populations in the province, will also help provide basic lifesaving services in response to the crisis. Another USAID/OFDA funded emergency healthcare intervention focusing on Nyunzu and Kalemie territories will also play a key role in responding to the crisis. One relevant question, though, is whether the short-term resources foreseen for those more humanitarian focused interventions will be sufficient to generate sustained positive gains. For all these interventions, the provision of aid in a neutral and on-discriminatory basis is also a priority, given recurrent complaints across Bantu and Twa communities.

Notwithstanding the violence and large-scale displacement experienced in Tanganyika over the last few years, weapons used in the conflict currently remain limited to arrows, machetes and knives, somewhat limiting the number of victims. The relative absence of firearms so far (despite some recent reports where Twa or Bantu militias were found with such weapons), and the relatively clear-cut conflict lines between the two communities, provide a good opportunity for longer-term interventions to reduce violence and help mitigate the crisis and sustainably transform this conflict. Such a conflict transformation intervention could further leverage and build the capacity of local civil society organizations currently active in peacebuilding, along with that of existing community structures, including village development committees, community management committees³⁹, and peace committees.

4.2 Threats

There are three main threats to successful conflict transformation: 1) endemic poverty and a lack of infrastructure and basic services in Tanganyika, combined with the weakness of the provincial administration following the “découpage”; 2) a relative lack of funding for initiatives dedicated to conflict resolution; and 3) the repeated delays and political instability related to the presidential elections. Indeed, endemic poverty and a lack of infrastructure and basic services plagues Tanganyika. Limited road access, in particular, represents a barrier to trade as well as for humanitarian or peacebuilding interventions.⁴⁰ Tanganyika is also a newly formed province with weak capacity, as it was formerly a district of the Katanga province that was carved out into four distinct provinces during 2015. Provinces already faced significant challenges to fulfill their responsibilities before the “découpage”, and no meaningful resources have been allocated

³⁸ République Démocratique du Congo, Rapport des travaux du forum pour la paix, la réconciliation et la cohabitation pacifique entre les communautés pygmée et bantoue dans la province du Tanganyika, Février 2017, pp. 7-14.

³⁹ Especially the health management committees (CODESA) and the parent committees (COPA) in education.

⁴⁰ <http://www.logcluster.org/map/carte-daccessibilite-des-zones-dactivites-dacted-0>

centrally to ensure the new entities possess a minimum level of capacity. The “découpage” is thus so far only diluting the existing resources and capacities of affected provinces to manage themselves and respond to the needs of their populations. In some cases, this is even fostering more instability and conflicts.⁴¹

Another threat is the relatively short-term nature of recent humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions (typically shorter than a year) and the limited pool of resources available for responding to the multiple crises in DRC. This means for example that investments in emergency health interventions have not focused on increasing the capacity of local service providers to better respond to the needs of the population. Similarly, investments in local peace committees were not sustained over time, limiting their ability to more sustainably manage local conflicts. Successful interventions aiming to improve attitudes and behavior at community level require repeated interactions over time, making short-term initiatives less likely to have more than a transitory effect. There was also very limited if any support dedicated to improving the abilities of local, territorial and provincial authorities to mitigate conflicts or address longer term conflict drivers. Consequently, if some interventions have filled badly needed humanitarian needs, few of them have actively contributed to the longer-term prevention and mitigation of conflicts in the province. Indeed, if resources for humanitarian response were to remain scarce or decline further,⁴² the lack of past focus on local capacity would only make the current situation grimmer.

The upcoming and ever delayed presidential elections could further destabilize Tanganyika. The electoral commission has already cited violence in the Kasaï region as a reason for delaying the electoral process.⁴³ Further destabilization in Tanganyika, some of which encouraged directly or indirectly by central level politicians, could benefit members of the presidential majority by allowing them to delay the elections further and hold on to power longer. This remains one of the main risks affecting DRC and Tanganyika.⁴⁴ Moreover, given the central role the presidency retains in the appointment of key officials within local authorities, and its strong influence on provincial governments, the motivations of key local and provincial government actors in Tanganyika in favor of peaceful conflict resolution are uncertain. The fact that Tanganyika’s vice-governor was stating recently that there was “total calm throughout the whole province” and that the conflict between the Bantu and the Twa was over, underlines this point.⁴⁵ Taken together, and adding the high degree of corruption at all levels along with the very weak nature of the Congolese state, these issues represent significant challenges that could prevent peaceful conflict resolution.⁴⁶

4.3 Recommendations

For international donors and the Congolese authorities, responding adequately to the immediate humanitarian impacts of the large-scale crisis in Tanganyika represents the first requirement. This should also be done with the view of creating sufficient space for medium to long-term programming dedicated to conflict transformation. In particular:

- i. International donors need to ensure they allocate sufficient resources toward responding to the scale of the crisis in Tanganyika. This should include ensuring the provision of life-

⁴¹ http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-analyse-1093_fr.html

⁴² <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-six-months-year-humanitarian-actors-struggle-scale>

⁴³ <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/459312/politique/rdc-corneille-nangaa-un-calendrier-electoral-precis-sera-publie-avant-decembre/>

⁴⁴ <http://congoreserchgroup.org/arrangement-particulier-les-dessous-dune-fuite-en-avant/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/07/11/displaced-congolese-civilians-sent-back-widening-war>

⁴⁶ http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Congo_Blues_0512_web.pdf

saving food, health and water and sanitation interventions needed by affected populations, while paying close attention to developing local response capacity and do no harm principles.

In a second parallel step, international donors need to dedicate sufficient resources toward longer term peacebuilding interventions. The conflict's main causal drivers are rooted at the community level. They include those arising from problems concerning access to land, customary taxes, unresponsive local governance structures, or discrimination against the Twa. Therefore, any conflict transformation intervention that aims to address those issues need to build from the local level up and connect with interventions focused on higher-level government authorities. In order to have lasting impact on inter-community trust and peaceful coexistence, working at the community level on improving social norms (focusing on reaching more people) thus needs to be complemented by interventions focusing on how institutions function (focusing on reaching key officials). Peacebuilding interventions in Tanganyika should therefore contain each of the following components:

- ii. Raise the awareness of the population on 1) basic human rights recognized by the Congolese constitution and 2) how to peacefully resolve of conflicts;
- iii. Work on trauma healing for victims of the conflict and ensure gender issues are notably addressed through women empowerment activities;
- iv. Strengthen Twa and Bantu community leadership (knowledge of roles and responsibilities and associated capacities) to better represent their communities and engage in conflict resolution;
- v. Develop inclusive and representative local dialogue structures responsible for mediation and dispute resolution and ensure an adequate support to these structures over the medium term;
- vi. Work with ETD heads as well as cluster and village chiefs on documenting, developing and disseminating equitable and transparent norms concerning customary taxes and access to land.

As per the above, these community-level interventions would need to be complemented by working toward increased capacity of territorial and provincial authorities to actively support intercommunity dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This should include:

- vii. Technical support to improve their ability to support and oversee the responsibilities of local governments, including on the application of the law on customary authorities;
- viii. Work with provincial, territorial and local authorities to identify the criteria that would enable the creation of new villages (Twa, Bantu, and mixed) and on objective criteria enabling the selection of Twa village chiefs;
- ix. Support the ability of key territorial and provincial officials to contribute to mediation and conflict resolution.

In a third stage, and once the crisis would be stabilized, international donors would need to plan for a transition away from short-term humanitarian interventions and toward longer-term programming addressing poverty, limited access to basic services, and exclusion in Tanganyika. This should involve working closely with the central, provincial and local governments, and include the following interventions:

- x. Community driven development interventions that provide a peace dividend while making local governments and service providers more responsive and accountable to their populations;
- xi. Organizational and technical development support to service providers, local and provincial governments to enable them to better carry out their roles and responsibilities and be more responsive to the needs of the population;
- xii. Interventions in agriculture and associated value chains that improve livelihood opportunities of the population, including initiatives targeting the Twa and women.

Finally, in order to ensure more representative governments at all levels, the Congolese government needs to prioritize holding free and fair elections as soon as possible. Ensuring the application of the decentralization framework and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government should also be prioritized. This would both help improve the currently unclear institutional framework and stimulate more accountable governance at local, provincial and national levels. Specifically, this should include an engagement by the Congolese government toward the following measures:

- xiii. Prioritizing the conduct of free and fair presidential and legislative elections to help stabilize the national political context in DRC;
- xiv. Holding free and fair provincial and local elections as soon as logistically possible following national elections;
- xv. Working toward finalizing and applying the decentralization framework included in the 2006 constitution and ensure the application of the 2015 Law on customary authorities.

The enactment of these measures on elections and decentralization would likely require significant support by the international community, but first require the political willingness of Congolese authorities to break with the status quo. This remains to this day the main barrier to reforms in the country, even when considering issues of capacity and resources. Furthermore, ensuring local communities are empowered to choose their local government leaders through regular elections would result in more representative and responsive governments, and in many instances, this would help to better manage local conflicts.

5. CONCLUSION

This conflict spotlight highlights that longer term peacebuilding in DRC depends on addressing conflict drivers that emanate jointly from individual community members, community leaders, and Congolese authorities at different levels. Many of those drivers are embedded in social norms that express themselves in the attitudes and behaviors of community members. Other conflict drivers express themselves through poorly functioning institutions. **These root causes cannot be addressed by humanitarian aid or short-term interventions. Instead, they require longer-term adaptive interventions that can flexibly react to the evolving dynamics of such a conflict over time and help resolve it.** It is this type of longer-term interventions that are necessary for stabilizing and improving the situation in Tanganyika, a neglected province that finds itself in the middle of a silent crisis.

Moreover, the role of the Congolese authorities at all levels, along with their willingness to meaningfully support conflict transformation and peacebuilding, will be the most important constraint or enabling factor to peacebuilding in Tanganyika. On this account,

there are already examples of local authorities and government officials that have adopted a more constructive attitude. They realize that peaceful coexistence will require more respect for basic human rights, more dialogue, and a greater understanding of grievances on both sides of the conflict. It will also be crucial for any intervention to identify and work with these actors. Here is a good illustration of such an attitude by the former Minister of the Interior for Katanga:

“The Pygmies considered that they were living in an apartheid situation. This conflict will not end today or tomorrow. It represents a movement for the emancipation of a people. We will not stop the movement, but it must better channeled. One of the solutions lies in improving access to education and land for Pygmies. They are a nomadic people who lived in the bush as hunters, but with the changes in the ecosystem they began to settle in the villages. Currently, they are treated as sub-humans forced to work for the Lubas.”⁴⁷

As is often the case in DRC, the support of international donors will play a strategic role toward inducing such an attitudinal shift by key actors in Tanganyika, whether at the community level or within local or provincial governments. Concrete behavior changes and actions by government actors that match those attitudinal shifts will also be fundamental conditions for the overall peace in the province.

WHO WE ARE

The mission of the **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** is to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. Our vision is that the IRC will lead the humanitarian field by implementing high-impact, cost-effective programs for people affected by crises, and shape global policy and practice in the sector by sharing our learning and experience with others.

All IRC programs are designed to achieve meaningful change in people’s health, safety, education, economic well-being and ability to influence the decisions that affect their lives. The **Governance Technical Unit**, as part of the **Policy & Practice Department**, works to ensure people have a voice in how their societies are managed and governed at community and local government levels. We further work to ensure people have the power to influence the quality of the services they receive and are able to regain control over their lives.

⁴⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/11/dr-congo-ethnic-militias-attack-civilians-katanga>