



## **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : REPUBLIC OF CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE)**

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

The Republic of Congo is slowly recovering from a decade of political violence that has left the country's infrastructure severely damaged and its people highly impoverished. Today, a fragile peace reigns in the country, and the majority of the 800,000 persons previously displaced by conflict have returned home. By 2001, estimates of remaining IDPs ranged anywhere from zero to 150,000 (USDOS February 2001; USCR 2 October 2001).

The worst of the violence in Congo-Brazzaville took place from June to October 1997 and from September 1998 to December 1999. During these periods, three politicians, each with their own militia, fought for control of the country's rich oil resources. The different sides were: Pascal Lissouba, who had his stronghold in the south and exerted military and political pressure through his *Cocoye*, or *Zulu*, militia; Denis Sassou Nguesso, who had his stronghold in the north and depended on his *Cobra* militia; and Bernard Kolélas, whose power-base lied in the capital, Brazzaville, and who relied on the *Ninja* militia (EPCPT November 2000).

In the 1997 conflict, Sassou Nguesso's forces, assisted by Angolan government troops, won control of Brazzaville and the country's seaport city, Pointe Noire. Sassou Nguesso ousted Pascal Lissouba, the democratically-elected leader of the country, and took over the presidency (EPCPT November 2000). Fighting in the capital resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

Despite efforts to restore peace to the country after the 1997 civil war, violence erupted once again in September 1998. This time round, the militias of Pascal Lissouba and Bernard Kolélas launched guerrilla-style attacks on villages thought to be sympathetic to Sassou Nguesso in southern Congo; Sassou Nguesso's forces responded with counter-attacks and mopping-up exercises. After months of intense clashes, the conflict finally ended with the signing of a peace agreement in December 1999, and President Sassou-Nguesso's offer of amnesty to all combatants willing to lay down their arms (USCR 2001; EPCPT November 2000).

By 1999, tens of thousands of persons had been killed in the two civil wars in Congo and hundreds of thousands had been displaced. Estimates of the number of persons displaced from Brazzaville during the 1997 conflict stand at 500,000 (EPCPT November 2000). Estimates of those displaced in the 1998-1999 conflict reach some 810,000, most of whom were forced from their homes in the southern provinces of Pool, Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou, but also from the capital of Brazzaville (ICRC 2001; WFP 2001). Several towns, including Dolisie (80,000) in Niari Province and Nkayi (60,000) in Bouenza Province, were completely emptied of their populations (UN November 1999).

During the 1998-1999 war, combatants on all sides committed widespread human rights violations. Amnesty International reported the raping of women and girls and the use of persons in flight as human shields (AI 2001). In this context, thousands of IDPs chose to hide in the forests of the Pool region. There, they were completely without aid or shelter (AI 2001). As a result, the IDP populations were extremely vulnerable to death and disease. In fact, UNICEF reported in 2000 that some 70 percent of the internally displaced persons were "severely malnourished" at the height of the emergency in Congo (UNICEF 12 October 2000). MSF confirmed that the principal cause of death during the war was malnutrition (MSF 18 November 2000).

Immediately following the signing of a cease-fire at the end of 1999, relative stability was restored, and a massive return of IDPs took place. Agencies estimate that as many as 500,000 to 600,000 IDPs returned home in the first four months of 2000 (USCR 2001; EPCPT November 2000). Return was so swift and widespread that the four remaining IDP camps in Brazzaville at the beginning of 2000 were already closed

by April (ICRC 21 November 2001). Returns continued throughout the rest of the year, the majority of which took place to urban centres (UNICEF 12 October 2000; WFP 19 September 2000).

By end 2001, information about any remaining concentrations of IDPs in Congo had become increasingly sparse. In fact, few public documents existed with any reference to IDPs, and news out of the Congo centered on reconstruction and poverty-eradication. Still, USCR reports in its Current Country Update released in October 2001 that as many as 150,000 IDPs remain in the country (USCR 2 October 2001). This figure has been confirmed to the Global IDP Project informally by still other agencies. Most of the remaining IDPs are said to reside in Brazzaville and no longer require life-sustaining assistance. At the same time, however, the UN has reported that at least some of these IDPs are not able to find formal or informal work in the city (UN 20 November 2000). In addition to the residual caseload of IDPs from the 1998-1999 war, there is also a smaller caseload of some 30,000 persons who were temporarily displaced from Mindouli, southeast of Brazzaville, in May 2001. These persons were forced to flee their homes as a result of isolated clashes between army soldiers and armed supporters of the exiled prime minister, Bernard Kolélas (USCR 2 October 2001; WFP 10 August 2001).

The Government of the Republic of Congo has initiated various post-conflict projects aimed at reconstructing the country and at eradicating poverty. A poverty eradication strategy put together by the Government is now under review by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (PANA 22 October 2001).

The international community, for its part, has offered millions of dollars to Congo in 2001 to support the reconstruction process, the demobilization of former combatants and the economic development of the country. Still, the UN reported in October 2001 that its efforts to support the country during the post-war recovery phase were being cut short by a lack of funding. As of August 2001, only one-third of UN requirements had been funded (IRIN 25 October 2001). Still, the UN reports that some initiatives are indeed moving forward and remains optimistic about the country's prognosis. This optimism can be seen in the decisions to close down the OCHA offices in Congo in June 2001 and to reopen the WHO Africa Regional Office in Brazzaville in October (UNICEF 4 September 2001; PANA 3 October 2001).

(November 2001)

# CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

## Causes of displacement

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### **Recurrent civil war during 1990s forced hundreds of thousands from their homes (2000-2001)**

- From 1993, country suffered three civil wars in six years
- By 1999, violence had forced as many as 800,000 persons from their homes
- June-October 1997 civil war resulted in the displacement of approximately 500,000 persons

"Ethnic-based political violence has destabilized Congo-Brazzaville for almost a decade.

Following disputed elections in 1993, the country suffered three civil wars in six years. In 1997, President Sassou-Nguesso, a northerner, overthrew the country's democratically elected leader, Pascal Lissouba, a southerner, sparking another deadly cycle of north-south violence. The conflict featured a wide array of armed combatants: Angolan government troops; Angolan rebel forces; exiled soldiers from Rwanda, Congo-Kinshasa, and Central African Republic; alleged international mercenaries; and myriad militia groups allied with warring politicians.

By 1999, violence had claimed an estimated 20,000 lives and displaced as many as 800,000 people - nearly one-third of the country's 2.7 million population. The capital was in ruins, and what remained of the country's infrastructure was severely damaged." (USCR 2001, p. 66)

"The people of Congo Brazzaville suffered severely from the devastating consequences of the civil war. The fierce fighting in the streets of Brazzaville, including indiscriminate bombing of crowded neighbourhoods, caused massive population displacements. During the June-October 1997 civil war, approximately 500,000 out of the 858,000 inhabitants of Brazzaville fled their homes. Humanitarian sources said clashes in January 1999 led to 30,000 displaced people in Brazzaville alone." (EPCPT November 2000)

### **An estimated 30,000 persons temporarily displaced from Mindouli, south of Brazzaville, during 2001 (October 2001)**

- 30,000 persons displaced by clashes between army soldiers and armed supporters of exiled prime minister in May 2001

"In May 2001, isolated clashes between army soldiers and armed supporters of the exiled former prime minister, Bernard Kolelas, temporarily pushed an estimated 30,000 Congolese from their homes in Mindouli, located south of Brazzaville. No other significant population upheavals were reported during the January-September period." (USCR 2 October 2001)

## Background to the conflict

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## **Two major wars took place from June to October 1997 and from September 1998 to December 1999 (1999-2000)**

- Analysts have pointed to struggle over country's natural resources as reason for civil wars
- Conflict in 1997 pitted three politicians against one another: Pascal Lissouba and the Cocoye or Zulu militia; Denis Sassou Nguesso and the Cobra militia; Bernar Kolélas and the Ninja militia
- Despite reconciliatory efforts, violence flared again in late 1998 and early 1999
- Republic of Congo continually destabilised during 1990s by situation in neighbouring Congo-Kinshasa

"The Republic of Congo (ROC) recently suffered two wars, from June to October 1997 and beginning again in September 1998. War spread to the capital, Brazzaville, in December 1998." (UN November 1999)

"About 10,000 people are reported to have been killed and about 80,000 displaced during a civil war in the Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville) that lasted from June to October 1997. After the war had stopped, clashes continued to occur, until an additional cease-fire was reached in November 2000, which brought back stability to the country. Since then, Congo Brazzaville, both its government and NGOs has been engaged in trying to recover the huge material and societal damage resulting from the war.

[...]

Analysts have interpreted the turmoil in the Republic of Congo as a civil war fuelled by the struggle for control over the country's rich oil resources. According to this analysis rival factions within the country's elite have tried to grab the financial revenues for themselves and their dependents. The conflict has pitted three politicians, each with their own militia, against one another. These are: Pascal Lissouba, who has his stronghold in the south and exerts military and political pressure through his Cocoye, or Zulu, militia; Denis Sassou Nguesso, who has his stronghold in the north and depends on his Cobra militia; and Bernard Kolélas, whose power-base lies in the capital, Brazzaville, and who relies on the Ninja militia. The regional divisions coincide with different ethnic loyalties, giving the conflict an ethnic dimension.

[...]

Apart from being a new phase in the struggle for access to oil resources, the civil war that broke out in Congo Brazzaville in June 1997 also represented a new phase in the turbulent process of democratisation that had started in 1990. The introduction of a multiparty system and the reshuffle of power resulting from the 1992 elections increased tension among rival factions within the country's political elite. Due to mutual mistrust between the major political factions and their inability to form strong coalition governments the democratic mechanisms installed in 1992 never functioned properly.

The three major factions began to form their own militias. In late 1993, clashes occurred between Lissouba's Cocoye and Koléla's Ninjas causing the death of between 1,000 and 5,000 people. In 1994 President Lissouba and the two opposition leaders – Sassou Nguesso and Kolélas – signed an agreement providing for the disarmament of the militias and the formation of a coalition government. This reconciliatory process failed as Sassou Nguesso's political alliance refused to participate in the government. A similar pact signed in 1995 failed as Sassou Nguesso hindered the dissolution of his militia.

The civil war of June-October 1997 broke out despite the signing of a tentative cease-fire agreement on July 14, brokered by the International Mediation Committee headed by the President of Gabon, Omar Bongo, and the joint UN/OAU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Mohammad Sahnoun. The war came weeks before a new round of elections scheduled for July 27 but which, due to the violence, never took place. In October 1997 Sassou Nguesso's forces, assisted by Angolan government troops, won control of Brazzaville and the country's seaport city, Pointe Noire. Subsequently, Sassou Nguesso ousted Lissouba and was declared president.

[...]

After his military victory and inauguration as president, Sassou Nguesso installed a transitional government in November 1997. He declared himself committed to national reconciliation and revealed plans to secure peace and stability. In January 1998 he convened a forum consisting of 1,420 delegates representing most political parties, although Lissouba's political party (ERDDUN) refused to participate. The Forum approved the beginning of a three-year transition period, which should end in presidential and legislative elections in 2001. During this transition period, a new constitution should be written. A 75-member transitional council, elected by members of the Forum from lists compiled by the Forum and the government, would act as the transitional parliament.

The first stages of the plan seem to have been completed on schedule. In November 1998 President Sassou Nguesso inaugurated a constitutional commission charged with the preparation of a draft version of a new constitution. The final version was scheduled to be submitted to voters in a national referendum in 1999. However, the schedule extended over time, partly due to continued fighting. In August 2000, president Sassou-Nguesso announced plans to submit a draft constitution to the interim parliament by March 2001. Presidential and legislative elections seemed to have been postponed until after 2001.

In spite of reconciliatory efforts after the 1997 civil war, violence continued to erupt in Brazzaville and elsewhere in the country. During the autumn of 1998, Lissouba's and Kolélas' militias carried out guerrilla style sabotage attacks in southern Congo, mostly against civilians who were thought to be Sassou Nguesso loyalists from the north. Sassou Nguesso's security forces, for their part, carried out mopping-up operations in an effort to eliminate Lissouba loyalists. These actions reportedly lead to large-scale human rights violations. Human rights abuses led several international donors, including the European Union, to suspend all non-humanitarian aid in 1998.

Violence flared up again in December 1998 and early 1999, when the Cocoye militia of Lissouba seized control over the Moukoulou hydroelectric dam, cutting off power to Pointe-Noire. In the summer of 1999, when electricity supply to most regions had been recovered, the fighting concentrated on control of the railway connection between Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Clashes in Brazzaville lead to heavy artillery attacks by the national army against militiamen and citizens supposedly loyal to Kolélas in the southern districts of the city and in the Pool region. Thousands of people were killed in these attacks, which were described by foreign observers as 'ethnic cleansing'.

Sassou Nguesso's security forces were reportedly assisted in carrying out the counter-attacks by Angolan and Chadian troops. Sassou Nguesso was also said to rely on members of the former Hutu-dominated army of Rwanda, who fled to Congo Brazzaville after 1996. These Hutu-militiamen are being paid as mercenaries. The Ninjas of Kolélas and the militia under control of Lissouba were said to enjoy active support of the Angolan rebel movement, UNITA. In fact, the conflict in Congo Brazzaville has a significant regional dimension, as other states in the region have their eyes on the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda. Sassou Nguesso continues to be supported by the Angolan government, which not only backed him in the war of 1997, but still had troops deployed in the country in the spring of 2000.

The situation in Congo Brazzaville was further destabilised by the situation in neighbouring Congo DR (Congo-Kinshasa). Rebels who used to have their base in Congo-Kinshasa were forced to leave that country after the Kabila take-over, adding to the tension and increasing the number of armed people in Congo Brazzaville. Moreover, Rwandan and Ugandan troops were also said to be present in Kinshasa in June 1997, shortly after the Kabila take-over, and some of these troops reportedly joined the fighting in Brazzaville when clashes broke out there. The regional involvement, therefore, follows the logic of economic interests, as well as of political manoeuvring on the international level. Rwandan forces were said to be intent on reducing French influence in Central Africa, resulting in a Rwandan tendency to support those rebel forces in Congo Brazzaville that were seen as anti-French. Informal alliances developed between certain governments and rebel groups in the region. As a consequence, a shift in the balance of power in neighbouring countries could have significant effect on events in Congo Brazzaville. For instance, Angola's support to Sassou Nguesso has been jeopardised by the weakening of the Angolan government's position following the escalation in the civil war against UNITA." (EPCPT November 2000)

*For more information see November 2000 report of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation (EPCPT) entitled Congo Brazzaville: A Democratisation Process Scourged by Violence [External link].*

### **Republic of Congo has experienced increased stability since 2000 (2000-2001)**

- Fragile peace has held in Congo during 2001
- The government conducted a 'national dialogue' to draft a new constitution
- Congo River reopened to traffic in May 2001 after three years of closure
- Remaining instability centres around refugees from DRC

"Congo-Brazzaville's fragile peace continued to hold during the first nine months of 2001. 'Peace has been restored in villages where war once prevailed,' President Sassou-Nguesso stated in September [2001].

The government conducted a 'national dialogue' to draft a new constitution. Groups opposed to the president refused to participate. The national parliament adopted the new constitution in September. Citizens are scheduled to vote in a referendum on the new constitution in late 2001. The government announced plans to form a panel to investigate disappearances that occurred during the violence of the 1990s. Efforts to clear landmines continued in the capital, Brazzaville.

The country's economically important Congo River reopened to commercial traffic in May after regional violence forced its closure for nearly three years." (USCR 2 October 2001).

"A measure of stability returned to the country after cease-fire agreements between warring militia were signed at the end of 1999. Around half those militia were estimated to have been demobilized during 2000, with many being reintegrated into the army. However, a proposed national dialogue involving all sides to the conflict did not take place. Although most of those who had been internally displaced by the fighting were able to return to their homes, the country was hit by a new refugee crisis in the north as tens of thousands of civilians fled the war in neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)." (AI 2001)

### **Two major elements of reconstruction phase are demobilisation and a consitutional referendum (2001)**

- Efforts to demobilise militia fighters began with signing of peace agreement in late 1999
- Hundreds of weapons have been handed over, and the government has announced a reintegration programme for former militia members
- Some groups have refused to demobilize
- National Dialogue was officially launched in Brazzaville in March 2001
- Referendum on new constitution to take place by end 2001

#### ***Process of demobilizing some 25,000 militia fighters has been on-going since late 1999:***

"Following the signing of two cease-fire agreements in November and December 1999, the process of demobilizing an estimated total of 25,000 militia fighters began. These included members of the *Cocoyes* (loyal to former President Pascal Lissouba), the *Cobras* (loyal to President Dennis Sassou Nguesso), and the *Ninjas* (loyal to former Prime Minister Bernard Kolélas). All those who surrendered and handed in

their weapons were guaranteed an amnesty by the government, including those responsible for serious human rights abuses during the armed conflict.

In April [2000] in the northern town of Owando, 700 weapons were reportedly handed in by the militia known as the *Faucons* (Falcons), loyal to former Prime Minister Joachim Yhombi Opango. In July, 800 members of the *Cocoyes* were reportedly demobilized in the western town of Mossendjo. In December, the follow-up committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the cease-fire announced that 13,000 weapons had been handed in and that 12,000 militia fighters had been demobilized during 2000.

However, some groups reportedly refused to demobilize, including militia in the Niari region, traditionally a stronghold of the *Cocoyes*. Many of those who had been demobilized found themselves homeless and without the means to support themselves properly. In October, the government announced a reintegration program, part-funded by the UN, aimed at reintegrating 5,000 former militia members into civil society." (AI 2001 Annual report)

#### ***Referendum on new constitution to be held at end of 2001:***

"The 'All-Inclusive' National Dialogue has been officially launched in Brazzaville on 17 March 2001. The opening ceremony was held in the presence of the International Mediator, Gabonese President Omar Bongo, President Ange Félix Patassé of the Central African Republic, President Idriss Deby of Tchad and representatives of Angola, DRC, Cap Vert and Equatorial Guinea.

In his opening speech, the Gabonese President and international mediator, Omar Bongo, asked the opposition to not boycott the dialogue arguing that all necessary conditions were met for them to participate. President Sassou's speech was less provocative calling his peers to 'make peace (...), transcend and forgive' stressing that Congolese are tired of hatred and violence.

During the opening ceremony, the International Mediator, Omar Bongo announced the creation of a 'broad based' technical committee responsible for monitoring the dialogue. The Committee's composition was made public the same day and includes representatives of different groups and allegiances.

The decentralised debates on the constitutional draft and the peace convention started on Thursday 22nd March. In most regions, opposition parties were not largely represented, but the regional authorities were making special efforts to organize the debates with transparency. Governmental delegations were sent to each region and chaired the three-day sessions reviewing the constitutional draft article by article. Results of these discussions were then collected and synthesized to be debated during the National Convention on 11-13 April, 2001. It should be noted that on 31st March, the two principle opposition protagonists, Lissouba and Kolelas, had not yet manifested their will to participate at the Convention." (OCHA 16 April 2001)

"A referendum on a new constitution will be held before the end of the year and political leaders feel it will lay the foundation for a more stable democracy, AFP reported on Friday [5 October 2001].

A census of eligible voters, hundreds of thousands of whom were displaced by years of civil war, is due for completion by the end of October, government spokesman Francois Ibovi was quoted as saying. Opposition parties have accused the government of trying to manipulate electoral lists by conducting the census, a charge Ibovi rejects." (IRIN-CEA 8 October 2001)

#### **Republic of Congo stands as one of the poorest countries in Africa (2000)**

- Despite oil reserves, Congo is considered one of world's least developed countries

- With Human Development Index of 0.553, it ranks 135th out of 174 countries listed in UNDP report of 1999
- Congolese national debt reported at US\$6 billion

"With its 2.8 million inhabitants (1998) and despite its oil reserves, the Republic of the Congo is considered as one of the world's least developed countries and is classified as a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). With a Human Development Index of 0.553, it ranks 135th out of the 174 countries listed in the UNDP Human Development Report for 1999. On 31 March 2000, the World Bank put the Congolese national debt at US\$6 billion. The high level of debt has forced the Government to adopt a series of austerity measures over the past decade, with dramatic consequences on the living conditions of the population.

[...]

The Republic of Congo is characterized by a high rate of urbanization. More than 70 percent of the population lives on just 30 percent of the land in the south of the country, while 60 percent of Congolese dwell in the main centres (Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Dolisie and Nkayi). Agriculture employs less than 35 percent of the active population, involves a mere 2 percent of arable land and contributes to just 13 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP)." (WFP 19 September 2000)

# POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

## Global figures

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### **Divergent information on the actual number of IDPs; estimates range from "none" to 150,000 IDPs (2001)**

- U.S. State Department reports that all IDPs have returned home
- Amnesty International reports that almost all IDPs have returned home
- USCR reports in October 2001 that 150,000 persons remain internally displaced in Congo

"According to U.N. estimates, the 1998-1999 conflict displaced approximately 800,000 civilians; all IDPs returned to their homes during the year [2000]." (USDOS February 2001).

"Almost all of the estimated 800,000 people who were internally displaced by the armed conflicts of 1997 and 1998 were reported to have returned to their homes by the end of 2000. Many were in poor health after being forced to live in forests where food was scarce and medical care virtually non-existent. The homes of many had been looted in their absence." (AI 2001)

"Humanitarian agencies ended most emergency relief programs in early 2001 and switched to rehabilitation and development assistance. An estimated 150,000 internally displaced Congolese were able to support themselves and no longer required special emergency aid, relief agencies concluded." (USCR 2 October 2001)

### **Some 800,000 persons internally displaced at height of crisis (2000)**

"Of the 810,000 persons who were displaced since December 1998, 580,000 remain internally displaced, the majority in forested and other rural areas." (UN November 1999)

"A series of skirmishes between militias loyal to the former government and forces of the Government in power since the previous war erupted into a new conflict in December 1998. The fighting proved more devastating than any before, causing the mass destruction of infrastructure and the loss of a huge number of lives. Again, vast numbers of people – an estimated 810,000, or 30 percent of the population – were displaced internally and externally. According to UNHCR some 20,000 people fled over the borders into neighbouring countries." (WFP 19 September 2000)

"By the end of the war a third of the population - 800,000 people were displaced from Brazzaville, the Pool, Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou regions." (ICRC 2001)

### **New displacement of some 30,000 persons from Mindouli in May 2001 (June-October 2001)**

- Clashes between army soldiers and armed supporters of the exiled former minister led to temporary displacement of 30,000 persons

"In May 2001, isolated clashes between army soldiers and armed supporters of the exiled former prime minister, Bernard Kolelas, temporarily pushed an estimated 30,000 Congolese from their homes in Mindouli, located south of Brazzaville. No other significant population upheavals were reported during the January-September period." (USCR 2 October 2001)

"A serious security incident occurred in Mindouli (Pool region) 19-20 May. 600 former Ninja (militia) gathered in front of the Mindouli district office to protest the wounding of a Ninja by the army the previous day. 3,000 government forces were deployed in response. Two Ninjas and 5 civilians were killed in the reprisals, and much of the town was looted. The town was emptied of its more than 15,000 inhabitants. The situation is now under control, although not all of the population has yet returned." (UNCT 8 June 2001)

## **Geographical distribution**

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### **Major population displacements from Brazzaville and the southern provinces during 1998-1999 war (1999-2000)**

- 230,000 inhabitants of neighbourhoods of Brazzaville (including 200,000 from Bacongo and Makelekele) were displaced towards the North of the town
- 150,000 persons from Brazzaville went into hiding in the forests of the Pool region
- Towns of Dolisie (80,000) and Nkayi (60,000) were entirely emptied of their populations
- Most affected areas were Pool, Bouenza, Lekoumou and Niari

"Over the past few months, combatants on both sides have raped women and deliberately wounded civilians. As many as 40,000 of civilians living in the Bakongo and Makélé-kélé districts of the capital, Brazzaville, have fled their homes, and 150,000 more have gone into hiding in the forests in the Pool region. Others have sought refuge in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)." (AI 25 March 1999)

"Some 230,000 inhabitants of neighbourhoods of the capital city (including 200,000 from Bacongo and Makelekele), were displaced towards the North of the town, into the interior of Pool region, and into neighbouring DR Congo. Several towns, including Dolisie (80,000), and Nkayi (60,000) – the third and fourth largest in the country – were entirely emptied of their population, and completely looted and considered damaged. Four southern regions – Pool, Bouenza, Lekoumou and Niari – were most affected, together comprising most of the southern half of the country. The coastal region was largely exempt, except for the region's capital – Pointe Noire – which experienced an influx of at least 100,000 internally displaced persons." (UN November 1999).

### **IDPs in Brazzaville no longer reside in camps; still, many reportedly remain there without work (2001)**

- Four remaining IDP camps in Brazzaville were closed in April 2001
- IDPs still in Brazzaville no longer require life-sustaining assistance
- Still, many are from rural areas and are without work

"...; while the numbers of displaced requiring life-sustaining assistance have fallen dramatically, tens if not hundreds of thousands are not living where they lived before. The forced flight and looting caused people

to lose savings, assets, tools – in short, their capacity to withstand shocks and respond to changing circumstances. At least one study shows that significant numbers displaced from rural areas remain in Brazzaville without work (formal or informal), and are anxious to have work, credit and training. Many displaced suffer from trauma. There are many more female-headed households." (UNICEF 2001)

"In April [2000], the last of four sites for internally displaced persons in the capital closed and the last refugees from Congo-Brazzaville remaining in Congo-Kinshasa returned home with assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)." (USCR 2001)

"In the beginning of 2000, the ICRC (in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross) still gave assistance to IDPs in camps in Brazzaville. Due to the return of [most of the] IDPs, these camps were closed in April 2000..." (ICRC 21 November 2001)

# PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

## General

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### **MSF survey reveals details about flight of families in 1998-1999 (November 2000)**

- Of 191 displaced families surveyed by MSF in Brazzaville, 150 had been displaced from Brazzaville itself
- 41 families originated from Pool
- Median duration of flight was eight months

"A survey of mothers of malnourished children carried out in October 1999 in the MSF feeding centres in Brazzaville enabled us to retrace the movements of 191 displaced families, including 1033 people. Among these families, 150 (79%) had been displaced from Brazzaville since December 1998 when the fighting restarted. 41 (21%) originated from Pool and had sought shelter in Brazzaville because of the poor living conditions in Pool.

The median duration of flight was 8 months. 89 families (47%) returned to Brazzaville because of health problems (malnutrition and illness) and 60 (31%) after hearing that the situation in the capital had improved. 109 (57%) of the 191 families reported having been held in the region of Pool against their will, and 124 (65%) said that they had been robbed. In total, 92 (48%) families reported the death of at least one family member since December 1998. 139 people had died (13.5% of initial sample) of which 48 (35%) were children aged under 5 years. The main cause of death was malnutrition." (MSF 18 November 2000)

### **Many IDPs were forced to find refuge in the forests during height of crisis (October 2000)**

This year, it [UNDP] said, UN agencies in the ROC were able to deliver food when epidemics arose or when IDPs emerged from the forest after years of hiding." (IRIN 25 October 2001)

"At the height of the emergencies, 70% of the internally displaced persons (mainly children, women and aged persons coming out from the forests) were reported to be severely malnourished." (UNICEF 12 October 2000)

## **PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT**

### **General**

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#### **Women and children in flight were often the victims of rape during 1998-1999 conflict (November 2000)**

- 1600 women and girls seen in two Brazzaville hospitals between May-December 1999 said they had been raped
- Most rapes occurred on route linking Kinkala and Brazzaville

"Between May and December 1999, 1600 women and girls who were admitted to the hospitals of Makelekele and Talangai in Brazzaville said they had been raped. Most rapes occurred on the route linking Kinkala and Brazzaville, named the 'corridor of death' by the survivors. The signing of the peace agreement in November 1999 did not stop these crimes from occurring. In March 2000, 22 rape victims were treated at Makelekele hospital, aged between 3 and 40 years old (nine of the victims were under 15). 21 of the rapes were committed by armed men and 13 by at least two people. In one case, the number of rapists was eight." (MSF 18 November 2000)

#### **IDPs reportedly used as human shields during conflict (November 2000)**

"The conflict in Congo-Brazzaville, like those of Kosovo, Timor, or Sierra Leone has been characterised by repeated violence directed at the civilian population. The displaced, forced to flee their homes, found themselves trapped and used at times as human shields. The stories brought back of murders were numerous and rapes were committed on a massive scale and at times systematically." (MSF 18 November 2000)

## **SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)**

### **Health**

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#### **Health system remains in ruins (October 2001)**

"The country's health system remained in ruins – 60 percent of all health centres were closed, according to some reports. *Medecins Sans Frontieres* reported increased levels of potentially fatal sleeping sickness." (USCR 2 October 2001)

#### **MSF has reported sleeping sickness to be at epidemic proportions in parts of the country (2001)**

- Plateaux province bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo has been one of centres of epidemic

"MSF, which has been working in Congo-Brazzaville since 1997, started up the sleeping-sickness programme when it noticed signs that the deadly disease may have reached epidemic proportions in parts of the country. The health system is in ruins after years of civil war and there is no reliable epidemiological data.

'We felt that we should start an intervention in Plateaux, since we suspected that province to be one of the centres of the epidemic,' Sonya explained.

The Plateaux province borders the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the other side of the Congo River, which marks the border, MSF [and] other NGOs have been running sleeping-sickness programmes for several years and treating thousands of patients. The new MSF programme has already saved ten lives up till now and seems set to save many more." (MSF 29 June 2001)

#### **National polio vaccination campaign conducted in July-September 2001 (August-September 2001)**

- National Immunization Days took place during July, August and September 2001
- 628,698 children vaccinated in Republic of Congo
- Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF worked together to employ door-to-door strategy

"Tens of thousands of vaccination teams have fanned across central Africa, going door-to-door to protect millions of children against polio, in the first ever coordinated polio immunization campaign in the conflict-affected region. During several days in July, August and September, this massive effort will result in the protection of a targeted 16 million children against polio in Angola, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon. The "synchronized" National Immunization Days (NIDs) campaign is a major step in the global effort to eradicate the crippling disease, as Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are considered two of the few remaining bastions of the wild poliovirus.

President Joseph Kabila, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was joined in Kinshasa by the Minister of Health and other senior representatives of Congo, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Ebrahim Samba, WHO's Regional Director for Africa, Rima Salah, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, and Carlo Ravizza, past President of Rotary International, at a special ceremony launching the "synchronized" NIDs on 5 July.

Results from the first round of synchronized NIDs, carried out between 5 and 9 July, are encouraging.

[...]

- **Congo: 628,698** children vaccinated, surpassing the target population of 616,700." (UNICEF 7 August 2001)

"There were 23 polio cases last year. The Government continues to eradicate poliomyelitis, with support from WHO, CDC-Atlanta, Rotary, Italy and UNICEF. Polio coverage of 100% and 102% for vitamin A were achieved in 2000. The Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF jointly developed the current plan of three rounds of National Immunization Days, employing a door-to-door strategy to reach 600,000 children. The main challenges in eradicating polio from the country are access to interior rural areas and logistical limits such as fuel and vehicle shortages. In response to these constraints, UNICEF provided 30 motorcycles and emphasis was placed on reaching children in the difficult-to-reach areas, i.e. pigmy villages and other remote rural areas. Not a single case of polio has been reported so far this year and the coverage in the first round of the 2001 polio campaign against reached 100%. In addition to the vaccination efforts, UNICEF has also rehabilitated and re-equipped 58 integrated health centres throughout the country. Training and drugs were also provided to these health centres, financed by OFDA. This crucial activity needs to continue to cover all the 200 integrated health centres." (UNICEF 4 September 2001)

## Nutrition

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### **Malnutrition was one of most serious problems for IDPs during conflict in Republic of Congo (2000)**

- Death rate in Pool in 2000 was six times higher than normal in emergency
- Half of IDPs were malnourished in Pool
- Malnutrition was principle cause of death among IDPs
- Many women and children hiding in the forests were severely malnourished

"An ICRC survey [in 2000] recorded a death rate in the Pool six times higher than that normally considered an emergency. Half the displaced population was malnourished." (ICRC 2001)

"Malnutrition was the principal cause of death among the displaced. A third of children seen by doctors at the Centre Sportif in Brazzaville had global acute malnutrition. In total, more than 10,000 cases of acute malnutrition were treated in MSF's feeding centres. This figure does not take into account the medical activities of other aid organisations present in Congo in 1999." (MSF 18 November 2000)

"At the height of the emergencies, 70% of the internally displaced persons (mainly children, women and aged persons coming out from the forests) were reported to be severely malnourished." (UNICEF 12 October 2000)

## Water and sanitation

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### **Lack of access to drinking water noted by UNICEF (September 2001)**

- Available water sources are often contaminated
- Sanitation conditions are poor in both rural and urban settings

"While Congo has many water resources, there is a lack of access to safe drinking water in many areas. Available water sources are often contaminated and are major causes of communicable diseases. In general, the sanitation and hygiene conditions both in urban and rural areas are poor, and are given less priority attention by the people. In rural areas, the vast majority of the population has no toilets. In the Southern regions where populations have returned, one of the major challenges is ensuring access to safe drinking water supply and latrines as most of the facilities were destroyed during the war. This is important to protect the health of children and women and can have a major impact in reducing their mortality and morbidity. To date, UNICEF has:

- a) Constructed 16 large spring sources in co-operation with OXFAM UK, assisting 60,000 IDPs
- b) Constructed/rehabilitated 13 springs and 676 wells in Sibiti, Lekoumou Region with ACF
- c) Installed hand pumps in Bouenza, Niari and Lekoumou, with UNDP and ACF, for 30,000 people
- d) Constructed, together with CREPA (a regional NGO), water supply facilities and latrines in 9 primary schools in Brazzaville." (UNICEF 4 September 2001)

## ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### Issues of self-reliance

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#### **Remaining caseload of IDPs in Brazzaville no longer require life-sustaining assistance (2000)**

- Significant numbers of IDPs remain in Brazzaville without assistance, but also without work

"While the numbers of displaced requiring life-sustaining assistance have fallen dramatically, tens if not hundreds of thousands are not living where they lived before. The forced flight and looting caused people to lose savings, assets, tools – in short, their capacity to withstand shocks and respond to changing circumstances. At least one study shows that significant numbers of displaced from rural areas remain in Brazzaville without work (formal or informal), and are anxious to have work, credit and training. Many displaced suffer from trauma. There are many more female-headed households than before the war." (UN 20 November 2000)

# PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

## General

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### Mass return of IDPs took place during 2000 (2000-2001)

- Between 500,000 and 600,000 IDPs returned home in 2000
- Return happened with unprecedented speed and momentum
- Remaining four IDP camps in Brazzaville closed in April 2000
- 60% of returnees went back to their homes in urban centres
- Return took place in difficult conditions given large-scale destruction of socio-economic infrastructure

"Some 500,000 internally displaced Congolese also returned home [in 2000].

[...]

Humanitarian access dramatically improved. Hundreds of thousands of displaced persons had returned home by mid-year. In June [2000], the UN noted that 'the speed and momentum of these events is impressive. The year 2000 has become a tremendous opportunity – a chance to begin rebuilding a durable peace.'

[...]

The vast majority [of IDPs] returned home en masse in the first four months of year." (USCR 2001)

"In the beginning of 2000, the ICRC (in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross) still gave assistance to IDPs in camps in Brazzaville. Due to the return of the IDPs, these camps were closed in April 2000 and the humanitarian needs evolved from emergency to rehabilitation; direct emergency assistance (food distributions and feeding centers, mainly in Brazzaville and the Pool region) was replaced by rehabilitation programs such as seed and tools distributions, rehabilitation of health centers and the protection of water sources." (ICRC 21 November 2001)

"The cease-fire reached in November 1999 and the factions' compliance with during 2000 gave hope for recovery and reconciliation in Congo Brazzaville. More than 600,000 of 800,000 people displaced by the war had returned home by August 2000." (EPCPT November 2000)

"UNICEF assistance is now directed towards rehabilitation and development activities to support returned displaced persons. Humanitarian access has now been secured to all interior areas of the five southern war-affected regions (Brazzaville, Bouenza, Lekoumou, Niari and Pool), resulting in the return of over 700,000 (out of 810,000) displaced persons and refugees to their original home settlements. At this stage of this massive return, continued extension of humanitarian assistance is essential for their immediate resettlement and return to normal life." (UNICEF 12 October 2000)

"Many [IDPs and refugees] began to return after the signature of peace agreements in December 1999. On 30 April 2000 some 600,000 people were estimated to have returned to their home areas, most of them in urban centres (60 percent). Their resettlement is taking place in difficult conditions, however, given large-scale destruction of socio-economic infrastructure and looting of private property. But returnees are having to cope with food insecurity caused by the loss of their stocks and the absence of any agricultural production for two successive seasons. Attempts to revive food production in the affected regions are currently complicated by a lack of seeds, tools and other agricultural inputs.

With improved security in the country, United Nations agencies, NGOs and the Ministry for Humanitarian Activities have intensified joint missions in the newly accessible regions (70 percent of affected regions). What emerges from those evaluations is that more than 40 percent of returnees over the regions as a whole have lost their former socio-economic equilibrium. The level of vulnerability of these civilian victims of conflict calls for sustained humanitarian assistance in several sectors, including: health, nutrition, support to renewed food production, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and the social reintegration of young people." (WFP 19 September 2000)

### **Brazzaville Centre Sportif functioned as major transit centre during mass return (November 2000)**

- In total, 250,000 persons arrived at the Brazzaville Centre Sportif

"The first displaced returned to Brazzaville in May 1999, with more following up to February 2000. In total 250,000 people arrived at the Brazzaville Centre Sportif, which served as a transit centre at which the displaced were registered. A fifth of these people originated from Pool and had fled their homes in search of aid in the Congolese capital." (MSF 18 November 2000)

### **IDPs displaced from Mindouli in Spring 2001 return home (August 2001)**

"(f) Following an improvement of the security situation in Mindouli (Pool region), an estimated 10,000 residents who fled their homes in late April, started to return. Following reports of cases of malnutrition amongst the children, WFP undertook an assessment and delivered 50 tons of emergency food supplies to the area. WFP also assisted 325 children through the SFC and TFC managed by MSF." (WFP 10 August 2001)

### **Returnees continued process of reintegration and reconstruction during 2001 (October 2001)**

"Most citizens of Congo-Brazzaville continued the gradual process of reintegration and reconstruction during the first nine months of 2001." (USCR 2 October 2001)

# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

## General

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### **Relative stability returned to country by end of 2000 (2001)**

- Stability had returned to most parts of the country by end 2000
- With improved access, aid agencies were able to distribute seeds and tools in the southern provinces
- Some parts of the North continue to be plagued with access problems due to conflict in neighbouring DRC

"Stability had returned to most parts of the country by year's end [2000]. Parts of the north, however, were adversely affected as the war in neighboring Congo-Kinshasa continued to spill over the border and sent tens of thousands of refugees fleeing into Congo-Brazzaville.

[...]

Improved humanitarian access also increased agricultural assistance to war-affected areas in the south. Aid agencies distributed seeds and tools, and the World Food Program (WFP) continued to provide food supplements to some 120,000 people. 'Although the security situation...has improved significantly, many civilians have no access to food, and even when it is available in markets it is too expensive for many people to buy,' a WFP official stated.

By October [2000], all areas of Congo-Brazzaville were accessible to humanitarian agencies except parts of the north where insecurity linked to the war in Congo-Kinshasa prevailed." (USCR 2001)

### **Access to areas previously cut off to humanitarian agencies occurred in parallel with return en mass (September 2000)**

- Improved security allowed for joint missions by UN agencies, NGOs and the Ministry for Humanitarian Activities in 2000
- WFP reported renewed access in 70 percent of areas affected by the conflict of 1998-1999 in September 2000

With improved security in the country, United Nations agencies, NGOs and the Ministry for Humanitarian Activities have intensified joint missions in the newly accessible regions (70 percent of affected regions). What emerges from those evaluations is that more than 40 percent of returnees over the regions as a whole have lost their former socio-economic equilibrium. The level of vulnerability of these civilian victims of conflict calls for sustained humanitarian assistance in several sectors, including: health, nutrition, support to renewed food production, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and the social reintegration of young people." (WFP 19 September 2000)

# NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

## National response

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### **Government has launched various initiatives to improve economy and reduce poverty (2000-2001)**

- Government drew up Interim Post-Conflict Programme (PIPC) covering period 2000-2002 (2000)
- Government created a Ministry for Humanitarian Activities (2000)
- Agriculture Minister launched 2.5 billion CFA franc (1 US dollar = 700 FCFA) food security programme (2001)
- Government formulated poverty eradication strategy for examination by IMF (2001)

#### ***Interim Post-Conflict Programme and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs:***

In response to the country's current crisis, the Government has drawn up an 'Interim Post-Conflict Programme' (PIPC) covering the period 2000-2002. The three-year programme aims to move out of the current situation of crisis management into a phase of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Accent is placed on profound economic reform, the re-establishment of basic social services and the reduction of poverty. Given its limited financial resources, however, the Government is finding difficulty in implementing the programme. Aware of the gravity of the situation, it has appealed to the international community to help in the achievement of socio-economic recovery.

As part of its crisis management efforts, the Government has created a Ministry for Humanitarian Activities which is working closely with humanitarian organizations in registering displaced persons and settling them on provisional sites. The Ministry is also promoting the return of refugee populations and their socio-economic reintegration into their home districts. It made a huge contribution to targeting beneficiaries for WFP assistance and to the monitoring and evaluation of food distributed in the various sites." (WFP 19 September 2000)

#### ***Food security programme:***

"Congolese Agriculture minister Celestin Gongarad Nkoua has launched a 2.5 billion CFA franc (1 US dollar = 700 FCFA) food security programme that would improve and diversify food production in the country, the state radio reported.

It said the project also aims at increasing basic food production in a sustainable way through water management using light systems." (PANA 20 June 2001)

#### ***Poverty eradication strategy:***

"The Congo government has formulated a poverty eradication strategy for examination by an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission expected in Brazzaville 26 October [2001], according to Finance Ministry officials.

The Director of International Economic Relations at the Ministry, Raphael Mokoko, said the programme's broad outline has been approved by the IMF management.

He said the programme takes into account contributions of financial partners and NGOs involved in national development, adding that government has set up a national poverty eradication Committee.

Congo Brazzaville has been listed among the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) since 1999.

Its external debt is said to be among the highest in the world in terms of per capita." (PANA 22 October 2001)

"The poverty situation which the majority of the population of Congo, face today has nothing to do with fate, said William Paton, Resident Representative of the UN Development Programme.

Speaking on the 2002-2003 poverty reduction support programme of the United Nations, Paton said it was possible for the people of Congo to free themselves from poverty by 2015, the Congolese Information Agency reported Tuesday [23 October 2001].

The plan aims at supporting efforts by the government and the people to consolidate national peace while fighting poverty until 2015." (PANA 23 October 2001).

## **International funding**

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### **IMF offers grant for government reconstruction and economic recovery programme (January 2001)**

"On January 11 [2001], the IMF officially approved the government's reconstruction and economic recovery program, to be partly financed by a credit of US\$14 million in emergency post-conflict assistance for RoC, previously approved on 17 December 2000." (UNCT 16 January 2001)

### **World Bank approves two credits and makes post-conflict loan to Congo (July-October 2001)**

- One credit in amount of US\$37.5 million made for Post-Conflict Economic Rehabilitation Project
- One credit in amount of US\$5 million made for Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration
- Bulk of World Bank post-conflict loan of US\$40 million used to pay debt arrears to insitution; remainder to finance small-scale projects for demobilized soldiers

"Two credits were approved for the Republic of Congo – the US\$37.5 million Post-Conflict Economic Rehabilitation project and the US\$5 million Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration project. They are on standard IDA terms: interest-free, to be repaid over 40 years, with a 10 years grace period.

The Post-Conflict Economic Rehabilitation Project, part of the Bank's Transitional Support Strategy (TSS) for the country, will assist in the transition from war to peace by providing urgently needed quick disbursing funds for the Government's 2000-2002 Interim Post-Conflict program. Specifically, it will pursue and deepen structural reforms in the transition towards a market economy and build foundations for increased transparency, improved governance and accountability in public resources management.

The Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project will help demobilize and reintegrate about 10,000 ex-combatants into civilian life, while providing basic service rehabilitation and necessary social and economic infrastructure that will allow communities to return to peace-time activities. It will provide

reintegration options to ex-combatants who have joined the ranks of the unemployed after the cease-fire agreement, help rehabilitate physical and social infrastructure and support the move to macroeconomic stability. The rehabilitation needs of the country – basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, electricity, water and telecommunications – are immense." (World Bank 31 July 2001)

"World Bank experts are in Brazzaville discussing with the Congolese authorities about the execution of the post-conflict loan aimed, a source of the Ministry of finance said Monday [22 October 2001].

According to the source, the loan will be used to enhance administrative and institutional capacities and assist authorities to resettle former civil war combatants.

The World Bank has given Congo a total of 40 million US dollars out of which 30 million US dollars was used to pay the country's debt arrears to the institution.

Besides reinforcing administrative and institutional capacities, the remaining 10 million US dollars will also be used to finance small-scale projects operated by former militiamen on both sides of the political divide who surrendered their weapons to the authorities." (PANA 22 October 2001)

### **ECHO offers 41.3 million Euro for anti-poverty and democratisation activities in Congo (May 2001)**

- Money to go to poverty eradication, democratisation and human rights projects

"La Commission européenne et le gouvernement de la République du Congo ont signé aujourd'hui à Brazzaville un programme de coopération d'un montant de €41.3 millions. L'allocation de ces fonds non-remboursables provient du 8e Fonds européen de développement (FED). La signature de ce Programme indicatif national pour la République du Congo (Brazzaville) a été retardée par les conflits internes que le pays a vécus entre 1997 et 1999. Le Commissaire européen chargé du développement et de l'aide humanitaire, M. Poul Nielson, a déclaré que « La décision de signer ce programme témoigne de la volonté de la Commission d'apporter son soutien au processus de développement et de démocratisation dans le pays. Les fonds sont destinés à la réalisation d'objectifs prioritaires tels que la lutte contre la pauvreté, la démocratisation, la promotion des droits de l'homme et l'Etat de droit ».

Ces fonds seront destinés à la réalisation des objectifs dans plusieurs domaines. Les reliquats des programmes de coopération antérieurs aux conflits devront permettre, à court terme, la mise en oeuvre d'un appui aux projets dans le domaine social, à l'élaboration d'un plan national des transports et au financement d'une étude qui permettra par la suite la réhabilitation de la route Brazzaville-Kinkala. La Commission a également initié le travail d'identification d'un programme dans le domaine de la promotion des droits de l'homme et de l'état de droit, complémentaire à ceux des autres bailleurs de fonds actifs dans ce domaine." (ECHO 17 May 2001)

### **USAID funded various reintegration and reconstruction programmes in 2000 (January 2001)**

- BHR/OFDA funded five grants in health and food security sectors
- WFP, FAO, UNICEF, ACF, CRS, and IRC were some of the aid organisations that received U.S. money in 2000
- USAID to continue to provide agricultural support to Congolese in 2001
-

"The reintegration of IDPs, returnees, and demobilized youths including former militia combatants is a priority for the Government of the ROC and the international community to support a durable peace....  
[...]

BHR/OFDA funded five grants to the Republic of the Congo in FY 2000 in the health and food security sectors. Action Contre la Faim (ACF) received more than \$750,000 to provide therapeutic feeding to 3,500 severely malnourished residents, health services to approximately 74,000 people, and provide seeds and tools in the Pool region. BHR/OFDA provided more than \$1.3 million in FY 2000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to assist 400,000 war-affected children and adults and restore health and clinical services and support agriculture in the Pool Region. BHR/OFDA is currently evaluating a proposed extension of the CRS grant for FY 2001. The U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) received more than \$400,000 to distribute agricultural inputs and support coordination of emergency agricultural operations for 17,250 beneficiaries, and BHR/OFDA is evaluating a proposed extension for this program in FY 2001. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) received \$500,000 for nutritional surveillance and vaccination programs and for the provision of basic health care equipment and drugs to assist 200,000 people in the health sectors of the Pool, Lekoumou, Bouenza, and Niari regions. BHR/OFDA provided more than \$880,000 to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to implement a health rehabilitation project for 160,000 residents of the Dolosie region. In FY 2001, BHR/OFDA will continue to respond to the health needs of the population and to assist the Congolese in restoring their livelihoods especially in the agricultural sector.

In FY 2000, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) provided 7,400 MT of Section 416(b) food commodities (corn soy milk blend, rice, and soy oil) to the World Food Program (WFP) with a total donation value of more than \$5.7 million. The Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provided \$1,115,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), \$81,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and \$239,975 to IRC for their emergency programs to assist Angolan and Congolese refugees in camps in the ROC. State/PRM also provided \$50 million to UNHCR and \$42.4 million to the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) for their Africa-wide programs, a portion of which was used in the ROC, and more than \$1 million to UNHCR, UNOCHA, and IFRC to support regional refugee-related programs, including those in the ROC. Further regional contributions to UNHCR to assist new Congolese refugees in neighboring countries or Angolan refugees in the ROC are currently being determined." (USAID 29 January 2001)

### **France signs funding agreement for 620 million FCFA (approx. \$US 865,000) (February 2001)**

"On 2 February [2001], France signed a funding agreement with the Government of Congo amounting to 620 million FCFA (approx. \$US 865,000) for its project 'Support to the modernization and reinforcement of Congolese Civil Service capacities.'" (OCHA 28 February 2001)

## **Selected UN activities**

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### **UN Country Team released UN Plan 2001-2002 following end of war (November 2000)**

- Plan was meant to bridge the gap between remaining humanitarian needs and future development requirements
- Goal was to support the population in the consolidation of peace and in the reduction of poverty
- Re-starting productive activities and supporting people in efforts to earn a livelihood were fundamental challenges

**"Congo's decade of political violence has worsened a trend of stagnated development,** dating from the mid-1980's. The massive displacement caused by the last of three civil wars in 1998-1999 led to epidemic levels of malnutrition. Directly or indirectly, up to 50,000 lost their lives.

**Peace, however, has been restored.** Talks throughout 1999 and an amnesty in August led to the signing of a cease-fire. The Government has started a process of political reform, to include a constitutional referendum in 2001.

**While life-saving emergency needs are down, the civil wars have left a wake of poverty.** The forced flight, the destruction and the looting caused people to lose savings, assets, tools—in short, their capacity to withstand shocks and respond to changing circumstances. Poverty levels already stood at 70 percent in urban areas prior to the latest round of violence. Today, poverty is a near universal phenomenon in Congo. Congo's human development index has not improved since 1985.

**In response, the UN Country Team in Congo has drafted this UN Plan, 2001-2002.** It bridges the "gap", reviewing remaining (and new) humanitarian needs, but also taking a snapshot of the Congo's development situation, presenting an analysis for medium-term recovery and long-term development.

**The UN goal during this period is to support the population in the consolidation of peace and in the reduction of poverty,** especially through: i) reviving productive and income-generating activities; ii) re-establishing basic social services and infrastructure; iii) meeting emergency needs and establishing early-warning systems; and iv) supporting efforts to promote democracy and human rights.

**Re-starting productive activities—supporting people in their efforts to earn a livelihood—is a fundamental challenge.** Activities focus in particular on women, youth and the formerly displaced with training, credit, seeds and tools. During the recovery period, labour-intensive infrastructure projects will help reintegrate those looking for employment and assist to re-monetise the economy. The agricultural economy is severely underdeveloped in Congo, which is a net importer of food. Less than two percent of arable land is cultivated. The rural transport system is dysfunctional. The informal economy needs to be recognized and supported as a principal source of livelihoods.

**Social services have decayed throughout the 1990's, neglected, looted and destroyed.** In education, enrollment rates are down. In health, maternal health indicators have worsened. The massive displacement into forests has engendered the re-emergence of diseases previously controlled or eradicated. For most of the objectives and indicators established at global UN conferences, the Congo has made no progress or has worsened its situation.

**Although there are virtually no remaining concentrations of displaced requiring life-sustaining assistance, extended humanitarian needs remain,** particularly for vulnerable populations. In addition, as the scenario of renewed violence cannot be completely ruled out, efforts will be made to improve early warning and increase capacity for response to new emergencies.

**All of these issues are linked to governance.** The management of Congo's oil wealth, amounting to one third of measured GNP (depending upon the global price), is a political as well as technocratic affair. Legal frameworks—and their enforcement through an effective judicial system—and social policies define the context within which Congolese struggle against poverty. Women's rights need to be enacted, not just proclaimed. Stability is a necessary condition to develop intra-regional commerce and encourage investment, whether internal or external.

**While Congolese struggle to overcome the effects of the war, a new humanitarian crisis is unfolding along the banks of the Ubangui and Congo rivers.** Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, amounting already to more than 100,000, are fleeing continuing violence and instability. So far, most of

those refugees have fled into northern Congo, but this could spread southward should zones of instability enlarge within the DRC." (UN November 2000)

For more details on the UN Plan 2001-2002, see original document [\[External link\]](#).

### **UN activities curtailed due to lack of funding (October 2001)**

- As of 1 August 2001, only 34.4% of funding requirements had been funded
- UN agencies do not have enough resources to respond to new emergencies
- UN agencies are working together to initiate joint actions in face of poor donor contributions
- Ten UN agencies in Congo will expand activities when funding arrives

"A lack of funding has meant missed opportunities in the UN's drive to aid the Republic of Congo to recover from a devastating decade-long civil war, even though successes have been recorded in some areas of activity, the UN Development Programme reported in its 2001 mid-term review for the country. As of 1 August, the UNDP said, 34.4 percent of the requirements outlined in its plan had been funded. While in rehabilitated schools attendance increases have averaged 30 percent, 1,714 schools still need remodeling and re-equipment.

The UNDP also said it had distributed 'the totality of its available stock of condoms' and that due to the lack of money many planned AIDS awareness activities had not been implemented. A recent UN-commissioned study on AIDS in the country put the HIV prevalence rate at 14 percent in some localities and the cash crunch for activities in this area may have 'devastating impacts'. In addition, the shortage of funds hinders the UN's capability to respond rapidly and effectively in emergencies. This year, it said, UN agencies in the ROC were able to deliver food when epidemics arose or when IDPs emerged from the forest after years of hiding. 'Yet, without sufficient resources they are not currently in a position to respond to new emergencies,' the UNDP reported.

Given these limitations, UN agencies have been working together and with NGOs 'to multiply the impact of the limited resources at their disposal'. It said that every month new joint actions are identified and implemented. The FAO and UNDP have teamed up to help war-affected agricultural communities rebound from war; UNICEF and the UN Population Fund have rehabilitated 40 primary schools and 75 health centres, with WFP food for work programmes; FAO provided seeds and tools for distribution by the UNHCR to 5,000 families, including refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In addition, UNESCO and UNDP organised a soccer tournament in Brazzaville as a message of peace to over 30,000 youth and women.

While under-funded, the UN reported, it had achieved significant successes: these include the country-wide polio eradication campaign, the reintegration and vocational training of at least 7,000 ex-combatants and the collection of at least 10,000 weapons, as well as the provision of non-food aid to 87,000 refugees from the DRC.

'The 10 UN agencies active in ROC are convinced that additional funding will allow them to extend activities further in the rural areas,' it reported." (IRIN 25 October 2001)

### **WFP has provided food, seeds and tools to war-affected since onset of conflict (September 2000-August 2001)**

- Insecurity and lack of access prevented assistance from reaching 80,000 of the 200,000 beneficiaries in end 1999 (September 2000)

- Latest distributions have been conducted under auspices of food-for-work and seeds protection programmes (August 2001)

***Regarding EMOP 6265:***

"Despite the closure of its office in the Republic of the Congo in 1996, WFP intervened with some 5,000 tons of food through Regional Emergency Operation 5624.00 targeted to war-affected populations in June 1997. That assistance was followed by EMOP 6109.00 approved in May 1999 in favour of 200,000 people affected by the 1998-1999 conflict. The operation provided for 10,242 tons of commodities to be delivered at a cost of US\$7,056,138. It was originally due to begin in July 1999 but effectively only started in October, largely because of the late arrival of commodities in the country, which in turn stemmed from delays in donors' contributions. Insecurity and the inaccessibility of certain regions targeted by the operation prevented assistance from reaching 80,000 of the 200,000 intended beneficiaries. This justified the extension of the operation to April 2000, followed by the approval of a second phase (EMOP 6109.01) covering the period from May 2000 to January 2001." (WFP 19 September 2000)

***Regarding EMOP 6109.01:***

"10. Cette opération a pour objectif d'améliorer et de maintenir l'état nutritionnel de 120.000 personnes dont l'équilibre socio-économique a été rompu par la guerre, en leur fournissant une assistance alimentaire pendant neuf mois et en soutenant leur réinsertion socio-économique à travers l'appui à des microréalizations sous forme de vivres-contre-travail (VCT) et la fourniture des rations de protection de semences. Plus spécifiquement, l'opération vise à réduire la prévalance de la malnutrition globale, révélée par la dernière enquête nutritionnelle dans les régions cibles, en passant du taux moyen de 10 pour cent et 20 pour cent respectivement à Brazzaville et à l'intérieur du pays, à un taux de 5 pour cent (taux de malnutrition avant la guerre).

11. L'assistance alimentaire sera fournie à :

·41.670 personnes déplacées sous forme de ration générale. Les bénéficiaires de cette ration sont ciblés parmi les groupes vulnérables à savoir les femmes enceintes et mères allaitantes, les enfants de moins de cinq ans, les enfants non accompagnés, les personnes invalides et malades chroniques.

18.330 personnes à haut risque nutritionnel (modérément et gravement malnourries), sous forme de ration supplémentaire et thérapeutique.

30.000 personnes (6.000 participants aux travaux recevront des rations familiales) dans le cadre de la réinsertion socio-économique.

30.000 personnes(rations familiales pour 6.000 actifs agricoles) dans le cadre du programme de protection des semences." (WFP 2000)

***From August 2001 Emergency Update:***

"(b) WFO delivered 575 tons of food to 70,000 beneficiaries in the regions of Cuvette, Pool, Lekoumou, Bouenza and Niari, from mid-June to the end of July. Food as mainly allocated to food-for-work projects and seeds protection programmes, but also to emergency feeding programmes. WFP in collaboration with FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture and CARITAS completed the distribution of food, seeds and tools to over 12,500 families under the seeds protection programme in the Pool, Lokoumou, Bouenza and Niari regions. The next seeds protection programme is scheduled to commence in late September." (WFP 10 August 2001)

***From WFP report on expected needs in 2002:***

"In 2001, WFP provided food assistance to approximately 180,000 persons, primarily in the southern sections of the country. Malnutrition and mortality rates continue to improve. In this context, WFP's objective in RoC is to continue emergency relief assistance to newly returned people, combined

with a steadily growing emphasis on reintegration and rehabilitation, 'linking relief and development'. " (WFP 2001)

### **UNICEF priorities in 2000-2001 centred on consolidation of peace and poverty reduction (2001)**

- UNICEF activities aimed to revive production, re-establish infrastructure, respond to emergency needs and support for democracy

#### ***In 2000-2001:***

"UNICEF has 25 staff operating in the Republic of Congo. Support the population in the consolidation of peace and in the reduction of poverty, especially through:

Reviving productive and income generating activities  
Re-establishing basic social services and infrastructures  
Meeting emergency needs and establishing early warning systems  
Supporting efforts to promote democracy and human rights

This is to be achieved by ensuring that the basic health and nutritional needs of internally displaced women and children are met upon their return and in accessible areas of displacement; that access of internally displaced and war-affected children to basic education is ensured; that the reintegration of unaccompanied and traumatised children through the provision of care and counselling is facilitated; and through improvement of the living conditions of internally displaced persons sites, and the provision of care and counselling is facilitated; and through improvement of the living conditions of internally displaced persons sites, and the provision of assistance for reinstallation upon return and in accessible areas of displacement." (UNICEF 2001)

### **FAO donates seeds and tools to Congolese to increase agricultural production (October 2001)**

- FAO made donation of seeds and tools to 1,000 farmers in West Basin region of northern Congo
- FAO made donation of seeds and tools to people of Djambala and Lekana in the Plateaux region

The UN food agency, FAO, has donated seeds of food crops and ploughing tools to 1,000 farmers in the districts of Ewo, Okoyo, Mbama, Etoumbi, Kellé and Mbomo in the West-Basin region of northern Congo, the agriculture ministry in Kinshasa said Monday.

Congo's West-Basin region, which covers 26,600 square km, has 60,000 inhabitants, including 28,000 farmers, who actively grow coffee, rice, cassava, groundnuts, maize and sesame.

The donation comprises 10 tonnes of groundnut seeds, 5.2 tonnes of maize, 1,000 hoes and 1,000 machetes.

More than 300 commercial gardeners in Ewo district received 288 watering cans, 31 wheelbarrows, 64 spades and 96 rakes, the ministry said.

The regional director of agriculture and livestock in the West- Basin, Jean Bosco Tsila described the donation as a lifesaver for producers who were disturbed by the devastation of the June 1997 war plus recent floods in the region." (PANA 19 November 2001)

"The UN Food agency, FAO has donated seeds and gardening tools to citizens of Djambala and Lekana in Congo's central Plateaux region, the agriculture and livestock ministry said Tuesday [24 October 2001] in Brazzaville.

The donation includes ploughing tools, 610 sachets of type KCK cabbage seeds, 350 bags of sweet pepper seeds, 610 sacs of tomato seeds, 610 sacs of purple eggplants seeds, 1,220 sacs of pepper seeds, 64 bags of groundnuts, 26 bags of millet, 9 bags of soya beans seeds, 652 hoes, 649 machetes, 195 rakes, 215 spades, and 694 watering cans.

The regional director of agriculture and livestock, Daniel Ondongo described the donation as 'extremely precious for the people of Djambala and Lekana to help them increase agricultural production.'

Meanwhile, 97 young commercial gardeners from Mindouli, another Congolese city situated some 150km south of Brazzaville, have undertaken to set up a cooperative to increase their agricultural production in order to fight against hunger." (PANA 24 October 2001)

### **WHO reopens Africa regional office in Brazzaville (October 2001)**

- WHO opened Africa regional office in Brazzaville after forced relocation to Harare four years ago

"The WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) in Brazzaville, re-opened Wednesday [3 October 2001] almost four years after civil disturbances in Congo forced the relocation of the Organisation's personnel to Harare, Zimbabwe.

The first group of 15 returning AFRO staff, led by the Regional Director, Ebrahim Malick Samba, had arrived in the Congolese capital Tuesday to a rousing welcome by senior government officials and hundreds of city residents, who thronged the airport and AFRO's offices to receive the contingent." (PANA 3 October 2001)

### **OCHA closes office in Congo-Brazzaville in June 2001 (September 2001)**

"By end June [2001], OCHA had closed its humanitarian assistance operations and co-ordination role in Congo. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has resumed assistance for the reintegration of ex-combatants and militias and the World Bank is reopening its office in the country to resume its assistance for rehabilitation and economic recovery." (UNICEF 4 September 2001)

## **Selected ICRC activities**

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### **ICRC has been instrumental in aiding IDPs and war-affected in general since outbreak of violence (2000-2001)**

- ICRC conducted major health assistance programme in Niari and the Pool
- ICRC rehabilitated health facilities
- Food security initiatives help 13,000 vulnerable families in 2000
- With closure of four remaining IDP camps in Brazzaville in April 2000, ICRC ended targeted assistance to IDPs

- ICRC continued with general rehabilitation assistance to war-affected populations in general

"The ICRC continued its programmes to protect civilians, reunite families, visit detainees and promote humanitarian law, but with the ending of the conflict short-term rehabilitation, especially in the health sector, became a priority. A major health assistance programme was developed in Niari and the Pool, where help was given to 18 health centres serving a population of 180,000. Buildings were renovated and equipment, medicines and clean water supplies were provided in each case. Three ICRC health teams, based in major towns, provided regular back-up training in diagnosis, treatment and the management of the facilities. On average the health facilities treated over 5,000 patients a month. By December 2000, the ICRC had completed the rehabilitation programme and handed over control to the local authorities.

[...]

The ICRC's food security initiatives in 2000 targeted 13,000 vulnerable families in the Pool region. Distribution of tools and seed were followed by regular visits to give advice and monitor progress. A trial income-generation project involved the distribution of chickens, for egg production, to particularly vulnerable single-parent families. By the end of the year the project was making good progress in stabilizing the lives of the families involved." (ICRC 2001).

In the beginning of 2000, the ICRC (in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross) still gave assistance to IDPs in camps in Brazzaville. Due to the return of the IDPs, these camps were closed in April 2000 and the humanitarian needs evolved from emergency to rehabilitation; direct emergency assistance (food distributions and feeding centers, mainly in Brazzaville and the Pool region) was replaced by rehabilitation programs such as seed and tools distributions, rehabilitation of health centers and the protection of water sources." (ICRC 21 November 2001)

*For more on ICRC activities, see ICRC 2000 Annual Report [\[External link\]](#).*

## **Selected NGO activities**

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### **MSF conducts sleeping sickness programme in Plateaux region (November 2001)**

- MSF began providing assistance to Congolese populations in February 1999
- MSF worked in the northern and southern districts of Brazzaville as well as Brazzaville Centre Sportif transit centre during emergency
- MSF later started work in Pool, Kinkala and in Mindouli
- MSF began a sleeping sickness programme in the Plateaux region in 2001

"Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) began providing assistance to the populations in February 1999, first in the northern districts of Brazzaville, and then, when the displaced began to return in May, in the southern districts that were secured by government forces. Four therapeutic feeding centres were set up and medical screening and medical referral was carried out by MSF in the Centre Sportif.

In October 1999, 10 months after the onset of violence, aid agencies were able to access the south of the country. MSF began working in Pool – in Kinkala in November 1999, then in Mindouli in February 2000. We have collated the findings of qualitative and quantitative assessments to assess the health consequences of the war on the displaced population and the residents of Pool." (MSF 18 November 2001)

"With the MSF sleeping sickness programme now fully functioning in the Plateaux province of Congo-Brazzaville, the initial results indicate a very high prevalence of the disease. The project was first established in April this year [2001] and was fully functioning by mid-June.

Human African trypanosomiasis, better known as sleeping sickness, is a fatal neurological disease if left untreated. But even the current cure can kill.

'Up to now we have actively screened 1,570 people in Gombona town and surroundings', says country coordinator Sonja van Osch. 'There we found an overall prevalence of 6,5%. This is terribly high'.

MSF, which has been working in Congo-Brazzaville since 1997, started up the sleeping-sickness programme when it noticed signs that the deadly disease may have reached epidemic proportions in parts of the country. The health system is in ruins after years of civil war and there is no reliable epidemiological data.

'We felt that we should start an intervention in Plateaux, since we suspected that province to be one of the centres of the epidemic,' Sonya explained.

The Plateaux province borders the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the other side of the Congo River, which marks the border, MSF [and] other NGOs have been running sleeping-sickness programmes for several years and treating thousands of patients. The new MSF programme has already saved ten lives up till now and seems set to save many more.

'Once the active screening got started in the provinces, people got word from it and came to the referral hospital themselves', Sonya says. "This passive screening will form a significant addition to the outreach we do ourselves. People come from all over. Even foreigners who happen to be in the area come to our mobile clinics because they have heard about our programmes, even as far away as Cameroon or the Central-African Republic." (MSF 2001)

### **ACF has worked to support nutrition, food security, and water and sanitation schemes in Congo (2001)**

- ACF started mission in Congo in June 1999 with emergency nutrition activities
- ACF now conducts primary health activities in Mouyoundzi
- ACF also supports the rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructures in Brazzaville, Sibiti and Mouyoundzi
- ACF has conducted study on food security in southern regions of Congo

"ACF issued an exhaustive report on vulnerability and food security for the southern regions of the Congo (South Pool, Bouenza, Lekoumou and Niari). The survey aimed at determining the vulnerability of populations which are geographically, economically or politically isolated. It had two main goals: 1) get a thorough knowledge of the surveyed regions; 2) allow ACF and other organization to provide appropriate food security programmes. Finally recommendations are made for each identified vulnerability group (High-Medium-Low) based on a 'difficulties encountered/conceivable solutions table.' (OCHA 31 January 2001)

"DOMAINES D'ACTION

#### **Programme médical:**

Programme de soins de santé primaire dans la région de Mouyoundzi; relance des activités de l'hôpital, des dispensaires: soutien au programme élargi de vaccination.

**Programme d'eau et assainissement:**

-Programme de réhabilitation et d'accès à l'eau potable à Brazzaville, Sibiti et Mouyoundzi: construction de sources d'eau alternatives (puits, captages, ...), éducation à l'hygiène, chloration de puits

-Programme de réhabilitation et d'accès à l'eau potable dans les hôpitaux de Sibiti.

[...]

Action contre la Faim a ouvert sa mission en juin 1999 au Brazzaville sur un positionnement 'urgence nutritionnelle', au départ sur Brazzaville puis sur Boko et Mindouli au fur et à mesure de l'ouverture de l'espace humanitaire. Acutellement, l'urgence passée, l'association centre ses activités sur des programmes de réhabilitation mais reste très attentive à la situation dans le Nord, en raison de l'afflux de réfugiés congolais (RDC)." (ACF 2001)

**IRC focuses on rehabilitation of health structures and assisting street children among other activities (May 2001)**

"The IRC Republic of Congo has its head office in Brazzaville as well as operational bases in Dolisie, Loukoulela and Betou. The IRC works closely with the government, United Nations agencies and local non-governmental organizations. The IRC's programs focus on rehabilitating health structures destroyed by the war, assisting street children in urban centers, providing shelter, water, sanitation, and health care to refugee populations, providing education and schooling facilities to refugee and local children, and protecting and ensuring the well-being of vulnerable members of the refugee and local populations, including female victims of sexual and gender based violence." (IRC 11 May 2001)

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