Information on available state protection

In September 2017 the *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* states that:

“In the DRC, the nexus between political and sectarian violence by armed militias is a key feature of political instability. This occurs in a climate of endemic corruption, weak or nonexistent institutions, and lack of trust between citizens and government” *(Africa Center for Strategic Studies (25 September 2017) A Medley of Armed Groups Play on Congo's Crisis).*

A publication issued in September 2017 by the *United Nations Security Council* points out that:

“Since 2016, the overall security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated as conflict patterns have shifted and new hotspots have emerged around the country. Disputes over access to resources and land, intercommunal conflicts, ethnic grievances, poor governance, eroding State authority and legitimacy, the absence of the rule of law and a worsening socioeconomic situation remain key drivers of conflict in the country” *(United Nations Security Council (29 September 2017) Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, p.4).*

In October 2017 *Bond* states:

“Over half of its 26 provinces are affected by armed violence, disease, and natural disasters, all within a volatile regional context and amid historically low levels of funding...Eastern DRC for example hosts over 70 armed groups, causing high levels of vulnerability and displacement, high rates of sexual and gender-based violence and recruitment of child soldiers...Often described as a protracted conflict, the instability is a result of series of acute crises around local customary power, international disputes, ethnic division, and resources (land, timber, minerals), exacerbated by poor governance” *(Bond (18 October 2017) State of the world's emergencies - A briefing for UK parliamentarians [Democratic Republic of the Congo excerpt]).*

A publication issued in November 2017 by *Human Rights Watch* states:

“Since August 2016, violence involving Congolese security forces, government-backed militias, and local armed groups left up to 5,000 people dead in the country’s southern Kasai region. In addition, dozens of armed groups remained active in eastern Congo’s North Kivu and South Kivu provinces and many continued to attack civilians. Many of their commanders have been implicated in war crimes, including ethnic massacres, killing of civilians, rape, forced recruitment of children, and pillage” *(Human Rights Watch (1 November 2017) DR Congo: Human Rights Watch Submission to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights).*
In November 2017 the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect notes:

“Armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continue to utilize instability and the weakness of state authority in various parts of the country to attack security forces and perpetrate crimes against civilians” (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (15 November 2017) Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)).

A report published by the Guardian in November 2017 notes:

“Violence and ethnic and political unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have propelled the country to the same level of crisis as Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Cholera is raging at a rate never before seen in DRC and nearly 4 million people have been displaced from their homes by fighting, a quarter of them from the conflict-hit Kasai region alone. The UN refugee agency, the UNHCR, which revealed last month that the situation had been declared a “level-three emergency”, the highest grade of crisis, has warned that those numbers are likely to rise in the coming weeks” (Guardian (16 November 2017) Congo crisis on a par with Iraq, Syria and Yemen - and getting worse by the day; UN warns that conflict, cholera and internal tumult have forced 4 million people and counting from their homes, with aid increasingly hard to deliver).

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