



RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE | USALAMA PROJECT
INSECURITY IN THE CITY
USAID | SOLUTIONS FOR PEACE AND RECOVERY

VIOLENT CITIES, VIOLENT SOCIETY

ANALYZING URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE
EASTERN CONGO

RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE
USALAMA PROJECT: INSECURITY IN THE CITY

Violent Cities, Violent Society
Analyzing urban violence in the
eastern Congo

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Published in 2019 by the Rift Valley Institute
159/163 Marlborough Road, London N19 4NF, United Kingdom
PO Box 52771 GPO, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

THE USALAMA PROJECT

The RVI Usalama Project is a field-based, partner-driven research initiative examining armed groups and their influence on society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government or the Rift Valley Institute.

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ISBN 978-1-907431-66-1

COVER: Congolese soldiers patrol to prevent civilians from protesting against the government's failure to stop killings and insecurity in the town of Butembo.

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Preface

The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been mired in violence for two decades and continues to be plagued by rampant insecurity. Yet, the drivers of this insecurity remain poorly understood. The Rift Valley Institute's Usalama Project (Usalama means 'safety' or 'security' in Swahili) is a field-based, partner-driven research initiative that aims to examine dynamics of conflict and violence and their effects on Congolese society.

The first phase of the Usalama Project (2012–2013) focused on 'understanding armed groups' while the second phase (2015–2016) investigated 'governance in conflict'. The third phase (2018–2019) explores 'insecurity in the city' and the role of state and non-state actors in the provision of security, and citizens' perceptions of, experiences with and responses to insecurity. The third phase was carried out in partnership with the Bukavu-based *Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits et la Sécurité Humaine* (GEC-SH). The project is guided by a series of questions: Who are the main agents of security and insecurity in the city? What are the drivers, logics and trends of urban insecurity? What are residents' perceptions of insecurity? And how do they deal with insecurity in their everyday lives?

The project takes a primarily qualitative approach, drawing on extensive fieldwork by both international and Congolese researchers. Fieldwork for the project took place between March and April 2019. Interviews are complimented by the author's previous research, and desk-based research with a variety of academic, government, media and NGO resources. Many of the interviews for this project were conducted on condition of anonymity. Therefore, identifying information is limited to a neutral indicator with a location and a date, e.g. Usalama Project III interview with police officer, Goma, 25 March 2019. In the course of the research, accounts of potentially disputed events were confirmed by multiple sources with first-hand knowledge of the events under discussion.

The 'Insecurity in the City' phase of the Usalama Project is part of the Solutions for Peace and Recovery Project (SPR), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Summary

Over the past two decades, urban violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has reached alarming levels. Yet it has rarely made it to the forefront of international policy and media attention. Violence in the eastern Congo tends to be analyzed through the lens of violent conflict, which is associated with clashes between armed groups that are mostly based in rural areas. This perspective also reflects particular assumptions about the drivers of violence; for instance, that they primarily relate to conflicts around land, local authority and identity.

Studying urban violence in the eastern Congo, however, demonstrates that these assumptions are partly inaccurate. By abandoning the lens of violent conflict, it becomes clear that much violence across rural and urban zones is driven by similar factors: Personalized conflict and revenue generation linked to aspirations for social mobility and status. These motives often overlap in killings and other harm to settle scores and regulate disputes or in violent crime targeted at people against whom others hold grudges.

Yet personalized conflict and the drive for status and income only contribute to violence because of two other factors: First, the acceptability of using violence to settle scores and advance one's social position; and second, the accessibility of violence, or the ease with which violence can be mobilized.

The acceptability of violence gives rise to two phenomena. The first is collective complicity, such as widespread collaboration in the sale of stolen goods. The second is proximate collaboration, in the form of informants who are close to the victim and provide information on their belongings and movements to facilitate crime.

The accessibility of violence depends in part on the availability of a violent labour force, consisting of gangs, career criminals, members of the security forces and street children, among others. That labour force, however, is only made accessible given that approaching it is easy and the risks of mobilizing and committing violence are low. This last dimension

is largely a result of the dynamics of anonymity and impunity, which render the chances of getting caught and being punished small. The ease with which one can approach violent actors, in turn, relates to proximity. Violent actors develop close ties with citizens through relations of protection and patronage and by sharing the same living space. This lowers the threshold for citizens to help these actors commit crime and to approach them for contract killings or other forms of violence to harm adversaries.

The specific configuration of factors that renders violence at once acceptable and accessible is shaped by past and present violent conflict. The acceptability and accessibility of violence have deeper historical roots, however. To a large extent, they are the product of coercion-based and often illegal modes of making do that developed under the presidency of Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–1997), many of which were pioneered by the security services.

That the drivers of much of the violence across rural and urban areas in the east are misdiagnosed stems from deeply ingrained distinctions between political, criminal and personal violence. Violence in rural areas is often seen to be political, given that it is committed by armed groups pursuing objectives related to social and political conflicts. In contrast, violence in urban areas is generally considered to be criminal, since it is supposed to be mostly aimed at revenue generation.

Yet much of the violence that occurs in rural areas, including that committed by armed groups, also has revenue generation as the primary objective. At the same time, urban violence has profound direct and indirect political dimensions. It is often the work of or facilitated by members of the state security forces or criminals that consistently escape justice. These phenomena reflect deep-running institutional cultures in the judicial and security apparatus that political authorities fail to address.

Not only is the distinction between political and criminal violence often less than clear-cut but a substantial part of the violence in both rural and urban areas is deeply personal. It is instigated or facilitated by people seeking revenge, to gain advantage over their rivals or to settle personal disputes. This personal dimension is often rendered invisible, as violence is framed in particular narratives of political or social conflict.

While the boundaries between criminal, political and personal violence are profoundly blurred, they significantly shape humanitarian, peacebuilding and peacekeeping interventions. Organizations active in these fields tend to work with an understanding of conflict-affected areas that is inscribed in notions of violence linked to armed group activity in rural zones. They generally do not focus on urban violence, nor do they examine violence that is considered to be personal, such as violent score settling.

To address violence and protect citizens in the eastern Congo, it is imperative that policymakers and NGOs overcome problematic categorizations of violence and focus on violence in all its manifestations. This should also lead to abandoning the urban–rural divide that currently shapes their priorities and zones of intervention.

Reducing violence requires addressing both its acceptability and its accessibility. To tackle its accessibility, it is important to reinforce control over the movement of personnel of the security forces. Moreover, in the face of dysfunctions in the justice and penitentiary systems, and the related limited effectiveness of retributive justice, alternative ways of dealing with offenders need to be devised.

Addressing the acceptability of violence requires first and foremost a better understanding of how violence has become normalized—how, why and for whom it has become acceptable to order, facilitate and execute violence in the pursuit of social status and mobility or to gain advantage over adversaries. A firmer analytical grasp of these questions should inform measures to address collective complicity, in particular the commercialization of stolen goods. It should also guide efforts to enlist former gang leaders and career criminals to help design programmes to engage with and raise awareness among youth.

Many of the standard solutions proposed to end violence in the eastern Congo have not worked. Meanwhile, violence has become endemic, which perpetuates further violence. To stop this vicious cycle, it is time to rethink the analytical bases of current approaches to stabilization, peacebuilding and civilian protection.

1. Introduction

In recent years, urban insecurity in the eastern Congo has drawn increasing attention from the media and civil society organizations. This development largely results from a perceived rise in more spectacular forms of violent crime in cities such as Goma and Bukavu, the capitals of North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, respectively.

This is not to say that attention being paid to urban insecurity is new. Congolese human rights organizations have systematically documented violent incidents in eastern Congolese cities for years, in particular in Butembo and Beni, in the northern half of North Kivu province, the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu, and in Uvira, in southern South Kivu. These organizations have also provided extensive analyses of urban insecurity and, via lobbying and advocacy, tried to put this issue on the policy agenda.¹

In a 2009 report, the Pole Institute (a Congolese think tank) concludes that violent crime has become banalized in big cities in the eastern Congo.² Similarly, a 2010 pamphlet on insecurity in Butembo states:

Human lives no longer have any worth in this city; targeted assassinations have become common currency ... local, provincial, national and international authorities are turning their back as if the lives of *bubolais* [inhabitants of Butembo] were not sacred, like any other human life.³

1 These organizations include: *Groupe d'associations de défense des droits de l'homme et de la paix* (GADHOP) in Beni and Lubero territories; *Centre indépendant de recherches et d'études stratégiques au Kivu* (CIRESKI) in Uvira; and *Héritiers de la justice* and *Synergie des associations des jeunes pour l'éducation civique, électorale et la promotion des droits de l'homme au Sud-Kivu* (SAJECEK) in Bukavu.

2 Pole Institute, 'Est de la République démocratique du Congo: Le crime banalisé!', *Regards Croisés* n°23, Goma: Pole Institute, April 2009.

3 Tembos Yotama and Sylvestre Somo Mwaka, 'Alerte cri d'alarme et de détresse de la population de la ville de Butembo', 14 July 2010, unpublished pamphlet on file with author.

Indeed, there is a widespread feeling of neglect and abandonment among urban inhabitants who are faced with elevated levels of crime and insecurity. A recent poll conducted in the eastern Congo finds that perceptions of security at night are lowest in urban areas, with only 2 per cent of inhabitants in Beni feeling safe to very safe walking alone at night, 8 per cent in Goma and 10 per cent in Bukavu. By contrast, feelings of night-time safety were reported by 50 per cent of respondents in Walikale and 53 per cent in Lubero, two territories in North Kivu well known for armed group activity.⁴

Yet the issue of urban security rarely receives the same level of media and policy attention as insecurity in rural areas. As one commentator observes, ‘The victims of ordinary, everyday violence, who are mowed down by the bullets of “unidentified men in uniform” do not benefit from the same mediatization as the victims of war crimes and the exactions committed by armed groups, which compete in committing atrocities against civilian populations.’⁵

The standard imagery of violence in the eastern Congo is that of armed groups clashing in rural zones, conducting raids on villages and raping women. International human rights organizations focusing on the eastern Congo mostly investigate such incidents of mass violence, although they also document political repression in cities. These shocking events also

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4 Patrick Vinck et al., ‘Voices from Congo’, Report #17, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Polls, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Harvard University and United Nations Development Programme, March 2019, 3.

5 Onesphore Sematumba, preface to ‘Le crime banalisé!’, by Pole Institute, *Regards Croisés* n°23, Goma: Pole Institute, April 2009, 2.

receive most international media attention.⁶

Primary attention to spectacular violence feeds into and results from particular assumptions about the drivers of violence. These assumptions generally relate to phenomena that are specific to rural contexts.⁷ For example, one current explanation ascribes violence in the eastern Congo predominantly to conflicts around local authority, land and territory, often between identity groups, which primarily play out in rural zones.⁸

This explanation can be contested as it assumes that such conflicts translate almost automatically into violence. Political and social conflict is, however, only one of the factors leading to the creation and persistence of armed groups; self-interested power struggles among elites are another and often more crucial factor.⁹ Moreover, much of the violence committed by armed groups against civilians targets members from their own in-group, rather than the group they say are their opponents. In fact, armed group violence is often heavily shaped by the interests of the group and its leaders, including control over their supporters and the need to generate revenue.¹⁰

6 Examples include the mass rapes in Minova in 2012; the Mutarule massacre in 2014; and the Beni massacres from 2013 till present; see for example, Human Rights Watch, 'Justice on trial: Lessons From the Minova Rape Case in the Democratic Republic of Congo', New York: Human Rights Watch, October 2015; Human Rights Watch, 'DR Congo: Army, UN Failed to Stop Massacre. Apparent Ethnic Attack Kills 30 Civilians', 2 July 2014, Accessed 5 August 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/02/dr-congo-army-un-failed-stop-massacre>; United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on International Humanitarian Law Violations Committed by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) Combatants in the Territory of Beni, North Kivu Province, Between 1 October and 31 December 2014, MONUSCO and UNOHCHR: New York, May 2015.

7 Karen Büscher, 'African cities and violent conflict: the urban dimension of conflict and post conflict dynamics in Central and Eastern Africa', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12/2 (2018).

8 For example, Séverine Autesserre. 'Local violence, national peace? Postwar "settlement" in the eastern DR Congo (2003–2006).' *African Studies Review* 49/3 (2006).

9 Judith Verweijen and Justine Brabant, 'Cows and guns. Cattle-related conflict and armed violence in South Kivu, DR Congo', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55/1 (2017).

10 Judith Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence? Discursive and coercive social practices of the Mai Mai in Fizi, eastern DR Congo', *African Studies Review* 58/2 (2015).

In addition to defending the community and other political reasons, one of the factors that drives people to join armed groups is income generation, which is linked to broader aspirations for social mobility, belonging and improved status.¹¹ These aspirations also inform the activities of the numerous armed bandits operating in rural areas, who engage in violent robbery and burglary.

That revenue generation shapes armed group violence and is one of the motives to join armed groups does not imply that it is the primary cause of armed mobilization, as some explanations for the war in the eastern Congo, which emphasize conflict minerals, allege. These explanations overlook the multitude of factors shaping the emergence and persistence of armed groups as well as the violence they commit. In addition, they neglect the multitude of armed groups' sources of revenue.¹²

To generate income, many armed groups in rural areas engage in violent crime, including ambushes, cattle looting and kidnappings. They may also impose taxation, for instance at markets, border posts, mining sites and roadblocks, and be involved in illegal logging, the charcoal business, illegal fishing and the cannabis trade.¹³ This economic involvement sometimes sparks violence with other armed actors; for instance,

11 Thomas Elbert et al., 'Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Insights From Former Combatants', Washington, DC: World Bank, 2013, 27–28.

12 Jason Stearns, Judith Verweijen and Maria Eriksson Baaz, 'The National Army and Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo: Untangling the Gordian Knot of Insecurity', London: Rift Valley Institute, 2013.

13 Steven Spittaels and Filip Hilgert, 'Mapping Conflict Motives: Eastern DRC', IPIS Mapping Report, Antwerp: International Peace Information Service, 2008; Steven van Damme, 'Commodities of War: Communities Speak Out on the True Cost of Conflict in Eastern DRC', Oxfam Briefing Paper 164, London: Oxfam International, 2014; and DRC Affinity Group, 'FDLR: Past, Present and Policies', New York: Social Science Research Council, Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, 2014.

when there is competition over illegal markets or the right to tax.¹⁴

Armed groups also engage in legal economic activities through civilian intermediaries. Examples are pre-financing trade and money exchange, and franchise-type agreements for operating small boutiques and motorcycle taxis. These activities can lead to violence too, including the punishment of civilians working with armed group money when they do not repay their debts, violate the terms of agreement or threaten to provide information to state security services.¹⁵

The violence in which armed groups in rural areas engage against civilians may also be informed by personal conflicts and disputes, either related to armed group members themselves or civilians who approach them to regulate personal disputes or settle scores, including killing their adversaries for payment. These conflicts include: economic disputes, such as conflicts over debts and the division of profits; conflicts over land, including over ownership or the boundaries of plots; and household and family disputes, often revolving around inheritance, children and love affairs. To arrange such interventions, individuals tend to solicit armed group members whom they know; for instance, (distant) relatives, former classmates or co-villagers.¹⁶ Research on the Congolese armed forces shows that, across rural and urban areas, army personnel are also approached to intervene in personal disputes with force, which constitutes an important source of violence.¹⁷

14 A recent example is the clashes between the armed group, *Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain* (APCLS, Allied Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo) and its splinter APCLS-*Rénové* (Renewed APCLS) around the mines in Kibanda and Rubonga in Masisi territory in 2018. See United Nations, Security Council, 'Midterm Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo'. 18 December 2018, S/2018/1133, 11.

15 Judith Verweijen, 'The Ambiguity of Militarization: The Complex Interaction Between the Congolese Armed Forces and Civilians in the Kivu Provinces, Eastern DR Congo', PhD dissertation, Utrecht University, Utrecht, 2015, 338–340; DRC Affinity Group, 'FDLR: Past, Present and Policies'.

16 Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence?'

17 Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen, 'Arbiters with guns: the ambiguity of military involvement in civilian disputes in the DR Congo', *Third World Quarterly* 35/5 (2014).

Thus much of the violence committed by armed actors in rural areas revolves around revenue generation, inscribed in a broader drive for social mobility and status, and settling personal scores and disputes, including those related to economic affairs. Similar logics inform urban violence, a large part of which also takes the form of murders, violent robbery and burglary. According to a recent poll, across rural and urban areas, banditry and fear of bandits combined emerges as the number one cause believed to create insecurity, ahead of armed groups and war.¹⁸

Nonetheless, there are also differences in patterns of violence in rural and urban areas. Large-scale massacres, the burning down and systematic looting of houses, and mass rape are forms of violence that rarely occur in urban areas, except for when there are armed group attacks. By contrast, violence related to demonstrations and public protests, as well as political repression, is more readily observed in urban areas.¹⁹

Despite these differences, much of the violence to which urban and rural inhabitants are exposed takes on similar forms and stems from similar factors. This report analyzes these factors, as well as their historical origins, focusing on the acceptability and the accessibility of violence.²⁰

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18 Vinck et al., 'Voices from Congo', 8.

19 See the spatial mapping of incidents since April 2017 of Kivu Security Tracker, <https://kivusecurity.org/map>.

20 This report on urban violence in the eastern Congo does not focus on sexual and gender-based violence in urban areas nor on violence related to political repression and manifestations. While these are widespread and important forms of violence in this region, their drivers and the processes through which they occur differ from the types of violence analyzed in this report. They therefore merit a separate discussion.

2. Normalization of violence

To understand how the use of violence for income generation and dispute regulation has become both relatively socially acceptable and widely accessible, it is necessary to analyze the evolution of the political economy in the Congo. A key development is the ways in which Congolese leadership has responded to steady economic contraction since the 1970s. Encouraged to generate their own income, the security services pioneered various forms of the coercive extraction of wealth from citizens that were later copied by a wider range of violent actors. Subsequently, the two Congo Wars (1996–1997 and 1998–2003) further normalized violence. They also tremendously enhanced its accessibility to the general population, as many people took up arms or collaborated with armed actors. Contemporary forms of urban violence have their roots in these developments.

The rise of *système-D* (1970s–1980s)

Having come to power through a *coup d'état* in 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko spent much of his first decade in power consolidating and centralizing state authority by reinforcing the administration and security services. To keep a grip on this expanding state machinery, he resorted to personalized control. Vast networks of patronage, ultimately depending on the personal discretion of President Mobutu, penetrated the security services and administration, intersecting with and at times thwarting the bureaucratic hierarchy.²¹

Appointments to core functions in the state apparatus occurred on the basis of personal loyalty to the president. To maintain that loyalty, appointees were granted considerable leeway in managing public resources. Thus, they developed a wide range of techniques to convert bureaucratic capital—‘any position of strategic influence in the civil

21 Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, 54–70.

service'—into commercial advantage, leading to favouritism and the private accumulation of public goods.²² Those in power were under pressure to grant access to resources to their own clients, who similarly expected something in return for their loyalty. To prevent office holders from gaining autonomy, Mobutu unexpectedly revoked appointments on a regular basis. Officials therefore had an incentive to enrich themselves as quickly as possible while in office, which encouraged power abuse and rapacious behaviour.²³

While there was sufficient income to fuel the machine of patronage, this system of administration and control worked reasonably well. In the early 1970s, however, the economy of Zaire (as the Congo was called then) was dealt a number of heavy blows from which it never recovered. The 1973 oil crisis and worldwide recession were followed by a drop in the global price of particular commodities, including copper, upon which the Zairian economy heavily depended. At the same time, the 1973 initiative to Zairianize foreign-owned businesses—implying their expropriation and redistribution as patronage assets—had devastating consequences on industrial and agricultural production.²⁴

Encouraged by international financial actors, the government resorted to large-scale foreign borrowing to finance a series of white elephants, or large-scale prestigious development projects with staggering budgets that generally fail to deliver. In response to mounting debts, international financial institutions pressured Zaire into stabilization programmes, which included cutting down on state spending.²⁵

Combined with galloping inflation, these developments led to a sharp

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 22 David Gould, 'Local administration in Zaïre and underdevelopment', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 15/3 (1977), 356.

23 Thomas Callaghy, *The State–Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, 180, 189.

24 Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*, 71–72.

25 Thomas Callaghy, 'The international community and Zaire's debt crisis', in *The Crisis in Zaire: Myths and Realities*, ed. George Nzongola-Ntalaja, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1986.

decline in public servant purchasing power.²⁶ In order to keep the administration and security services working despite their meager pay, Mobutu encouraged them to fend for themselves (*débrouillez-vous*). Ways to do so included pilferage, moonlighting, small-scale fraud, bribes, private use of public facilities, and imposing invented or inflated taxes, fees and fines.²⁷ To multiply revenue generation opportunities for state agents, Kinshasa spun a complex and asphyxiating web of rules, regulations and corresponding fees for even the most futile activities.²⁸

Superiors often tolerated and even encouraged forms of abuse by their subordinates, as long as they could also benefit—a principle that was known as *manger à la chaîne* (eating in a row, with eating signifying making money).²⁹ In the security services and parts of the administration, systems were developed whereby subordinates had to channel income derived from extortion and power abuse up to their superiors, a practice known as *rapportage* (reporting). Those not ‘harvesting’ the expected amounts would often be redeployed to less lucrative positions. This pressure created incentives for predatory behavior.³⁰

An important source of income for public servants became the blossoming informal economy, which was not officially regulated or recorded by the state. Nonetheless, state agents played key roles in this economy, including its illegal aspects. For instance, they turned a blind eye to fraud and falsified papers, and used their position to ensure that

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 26 Janet MacGaffey, ‘Historical, cultural and structural dimensions of Zaire’s unrecorded trade’, in *The Real Economy of Zaire: The Contribution of Smuggling and Other Unofficial Activities to National Wealth*, ed. Janet MacGaffey, London: James Currey, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.

27 Gould, ‘Local administration in Zaire’.

28 Theodore Trefon, ‘Public service provision in a failed state: looking beyond predation in the Democratic Republic of Congo’, *Review of African Political Economy* 36/119 (2009).

29 Rukarangira Wa Nkera and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, ‘Unrecorded trade in Southeast Shaba and across Zaire’s southern borders’, in *The Real Economy of Zaire*, ed. Janet MacGaffey, London: James Currey, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, 76.

30 Maria Eriksson Baaz and Ola Olsson, ‘Feeding the horse: unofficial economic activities within the police force in the DR Congo’, *African Security* 4/4 (2011).

perpetrators would not be apprehended.³¹ The involvement of government officials also sent a signal that such activities were in fact acceptable.

In the face of ongoing economic decline, and taking a cue from public servants, ever-broader segments of the population were forced to fend for themselves. In this way, *débrouillardise* became a way of living, a mentality and a system (*système-D* from *débrouillardise*) in which people survive by ‘hustling and peddling, wheeling and dealing, whoring and pimping, swapping and smuggling, trafficking and stealing, brokering and facilitating, in short, making the most of whatever opportunities arise’.³²

Violent *débrouillardise* (1980s–1990s)

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the economic situation in Zaire continued to worsen, forcing people to become increasingly inventive, cunning and unscrupulous in order to make ends meet. This gave life to the expression *nous vivons mystérieusement* (we live mysteriously).³³ Cities became hubs of *débrouillardise* as rural–urban migration intensified due to deteriorating conditions in rural areas. Crumbling road infrastructure, declining world market prices for agricultural commodities and growing pressures on land made rural life increasingly hard.³⁴ In the east, where all major cities are located close to an international border, the unrecorded economy further expanded as a result of the intensifying cross-border trade.³⁵

As hardship and despair grew, the struggle for survival and social mobility took on increasingly grim forms. Opportunism and the drive

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31 Janet MacGaffey, ‘Issues and methods in the study of African economies’, in *The Real Economy of Zaire*, ed. Janet MacGaffey, London: James Currey, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.

32 René Lemarchand, ‘The tunnel at the end of the light’, *Review of African Political Economy* 29/93, 94 (2002), 395.

33 Janet MacGaffey, *Entrepreneurs and Parasites: The Struggle for Indigenous Capitalism in Zaire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 116.

34 James Fairhead, ‘Paths of authority: roads, the state and the market in eastern Zaire’, *The European Journal of Development Research* 4/2 (1992).

35 MacGaffey, ‘Historical, cultural and structural dimensions of Zaire’s unrecorded trade’.

for short-term gains started to inform many social interactions. Consequently, for a growing number of people, fending for oneself became marked by dishonesty, scrupulousness, coercion and violence. For instance, they engaged in counterfeiting, smuggling, swindling, theft and robbery. Work in this context often took on the form of the *coop*, ironically referring to *coopération au développement* (development cooperation), implying ploys, scheming and lucrative deals 'contrary to regulations and the social norms that are theoretically in place'.³⁶ Certainly, *débrouillardise* continued to be regulated by a clear non-codified 'ethics of the informal' that indicated which behavior was immoral.³⁷ However, the boundaries of what was immoral were regularly stretched.

Growing opportunism and the push to turn everything into a money-making opportunity had profound effects on the social tissue of society. Neighbours turned into competitors, colleagues were distrusted and relations within families came under severe pressure. Youth became increasingly autonomous, looking after themselves in the face of parents unable to take care of them. Desperate parents encouraged their daughters to prostitute themselves or sent their children begging on the streets. Accusations of witchcraft, including against children, multiplied. Sexual relations became partly monetized, involving different arrangements such as payment or expecting regular gifts from partners.³⁸

Within this context, violence became an ever more attractive option to earn a living. In some cities, such as Bukavu, armed robberies and other

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36 Gauthier de Villers, 'Introduction', in *Manières de vivre: Économie de la 'débrouille' dans les villes du Congo/Zaire*, eds. Gauthier de Villers, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Laurent Monnier, Tervuren: Institut Africain-CEDAF, Paris: l'Harmattan, 2002, 12.

37 Isidore Ndaywel E Nziem, 'Le territoire médical à l'épreuve de l'informel: "survivre" comme infirmière aux cliniques universitaires de Kinshasa', in *Manières de vivre: Économie de la 'débrouille' dans les villes du Congo/Zaire*, eds. Gauthier de Villers, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Laurent Monnier, Tervuren: Institut Africain-CEDAF, Paris: l'Harmattan, 2002.

38 Falangani Pashi Mvondo, 'Paupérisation de familles petites-bourgeoises et transformations des valeurs en période de crise', in *Manières de vivre: Économie de la 'débrouille' dans les villes du Congo/Zaire*, eds. Gauthier de Villers, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Laurent Monnier, Tervuren: Institut Africain-CEDAF, Paris: l'Harmattan, 2002, 160.

forms of violent crime rose in the 1980s.³⁹ The Zairian security services undoubtedly pioneered some of these violent techniques of wealth extraction. They not only faced the pressures of *rapportage* but also of low and irregularly paid salaries, parts of which were embezzled by their superiors. Towards the end of the 1980s, it is estimated that soldiers from the *Forces armées zairoises* (FAZ, Zairian Armed Forces) derived no less than 90 per cent of their income from sources other than their salary.⁴⁰

Personnel from the FAZ and the *gendarmerie* (a military component with jurisdiction in civil law enforcement) displayed extraordinary creativity in making money on the side. They rented themselves out as private guards to companies or individuals, with the complicity of their superiors. The Zairian air force started to operate as a commercial airline, transporting passengers and goods on the side. Air force personnel also sold stolen kerosene and spare parts, systemically stripping the fleet until it was inoperable.⁴¹ Elsewhere, army barracks were gradually dismantled and voided of their contents, including arms and ammunition, which were sold to hunters.⁴² FAZ officers supposedly fighting an insurgency in southern Kivu even exchanged arms and ammunition for gold with the rebels.⁴³

The army was not, however, the primary target of the illegal appropriation of wealth by military personnel. It was mainly the wealth of civilians that was extracted. In the mid-1970s, *gendarmes* (members of the *gendarmerie*) were regularly put in jail for different types of misbehaviour, including 'rape, theft, assault, extortion, manslaughter and aiding

39 Godefroid Muzalia, 'Insécurité dans la ville de Bukavu au Sud-Kivu: perspectives historiques (1960–2018)', Bukavu: *Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits et la Sécurité Humaine*, forthcoming.

40 Peter Rosenblum, 'Constructing the authoritarian state: Zaire', *Third World Legal Studies* 9 (1990): 217.

41 Pierre Yambuya, *Zaire, l'abattoir: Un pilote de Mobutu parle*. Brussels and Antwerp: Editions EPO, 1991, 24–29.

42 Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 'Unrecorded trade in Southeast Shaba'.

43 Michael Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, 60.

convicts to escape'.⁴⁴ Soldiers also made unlawful arrests to appropriate fines, extorted citizens in the course of patrolling, often at night, and conducted violent *ratissage* (cordon and search) operations. These consisted of encircling entire neighbourhoods and then conducting house-to-house searches to see whether people had valid identity cards and had paid their taxes. These operations were a lucrative business, providing the opportunity to make a host of arrests and impose fines.

FAZ soldiers also made money by renting themselves out as private guns and enforcers for hire in local disputes. Citizens approached soldiers to ask them to harass others with whom they were in conflict. Such harassment could take on many forms, ranging from roughening them up a little to burning down their houses. High-ranking politicians and civilian officials similarly solicited army officers to enforce personal and business interests, sometimes in a violent manner.⁴⁵

This enforcement also involved a phenomenon called *traffic d'influence* (influence peddling), which continues to be a core mechanism of the Congo's political economy at present. In order to get something done by public servants—whether issuing a permit, hiring someone, releasing a prisoner, under-declaring goods or lowering imposed taxes and fines—it is necessary to mobilize powerful figures in the state apparatus. *Traffic d'influence* helps people massage the bureaucratic system in their favour. It enables them to protect themselves against the insecurity caused by a parasitic state, where the risk of sudden revocation of permits, arbitrary arrests, and unexpected taxes and fines is all too real. While all patrons can be used for *traffic d'influence*, those able to harness violence, for example by deploying soldiers, are particularly useful as enforcers. Therefore, economic operators, including those at the margins of the

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44 Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression*, 56.

45 Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression*, 56–59, 62; Rosenblum, 'Constructing the authoritarian state'.

law, often sought protection from army officers. This phenomenon vastly expanded during the two Congo Wars.⁴⁶

Urban militarization (1994–2003)

In 1994, hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees, mixed with government soldiers and militia members, arrived in camps close to major cities in eastern Zaire. This contributed to the militarization or urban environments. The two Congo Wars entailed a further militarization of the east across rural and urban areas. During the Second Congo War, most big cities in the Kivus were occupied by larger politico-military movements, in particular the Rwanda-backed *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy) and a splinter group, the Uganda-backed *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Kisangani/Mouvement de libération RCD-K/ML* (Congolese Rally for Democracy-Kisangani/Liberation Movement). In large parts of the Kivus, the countryside was littered with armed groups, which often waged guerilla war against the RCD but sometimes also fought between themselves. In the areas under their control, the RCD took over much of the existing administration, appointing people who were loyal to them.

In order to continue to peddle influence and do business, political and economic elites generally had to seek protection from military figures, including officers from militaries of neighbouring countries that supported the RCD rebellion. In this manner, a new breed of violent entrepreneurs emerged, who evolved out of or allied with established political-economic elites. These entrepreneurs made the most of the emerging war economy, in which the ability to manipulate force was an important determinant of economic success. Through their ties to state authorities and administrators, they were also able to influence

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 46 Judith Verweijen, 'Military business and the business of the military', *Review of African Political Economy* 40/135 (2013).

governance processes.⁴⁷

The influence of violent entrepreneurs was not limited to rural areas where much of the fighting took place. Political and economic power in cities such as Goma and Butembo was concentrated in the hands of a small group of business people, often referred to as *les barons* (the barons), who controlled key urban economic markets, such as fuel, transport and the import of manufactured goods. These entrepreneurs were closely linked to the RCD and its foreign backers, reflecting the growing regional interdependence between economic and military actors.⁴⁸

RCD-linked elites invested much of the money they had made in the war economy in construction and buying land and property in urban areas. Land values increased exponentially, and real estate and construction boomed in numerous cities in the east. In Goma, prices were further driven up by the growth of the humanitarian industry and the related demand for expat housing, offices and other facilities.⁴⁹

Attracted by these lucrative opportunities, military or military-backed elites sometimes pressured owners to sell coveted property at an unfavourable price or simply seized plots. They also appropriated state-owned land, occupied abandoned plots and forcibly redrew the boundaries of existing plots.⁵⁰ The result was a legacy of urban land conflicts, some of which continue until this day.

The presence of a kaleidoscope of armed groups and forces throughout the east also meant that significant segments of the population, in

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47 Timothy Raeymaekers, 'The Power of Protection. Governance and Transborder Trade on the Congo–Ugandan Frontier', PhD dissertation, Ghent University, Ghent, 2007, 112–114, 136–146; Karen Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation in the Eastern Congo Periphery' PhD dissertation, Ghent University, Ghent, 2011; Koen Vlassenroot, 'Reading the Congolese crisis', in *Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo*, eds. Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers, Ghent: Academia Press, 2004.

48 Karen Büscher, 'Urban governance beyond the state: practices of informal urban regulation in the city of Goma, eastern D.R. Congo', *Urban Forum* 23/4 (2012); Raeymaekers, 'Protection for Sale', 136–146.

49 Karen Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 127–130, 133–136.

50 Verweijen, 'The Ambiguity of Militarization', 164.

particular young men, took up arms. While the majority of recruits were from rural areas, youth from the cities enrolled, too. Regardless of their background, members of armed groups soon developed new militarized forms of social identification. They also discovered that arms were a shortcut to social mobility, status and power. To generate income and discourage or punish people associated with the enemy, many of the armed organizations fighting in the war engaged in looting, theft, ambushing and extortion at roadblocks. These violent activities allowed combatants to discover the power of the gun. This discovery, in turn, eroded their respect for established authorities in their communities and at the household level, such as customary chiefs, elders and their parents.⁵¹

During the Second Congo War, violence also became an increasingly important mode of social regulation, including of different types of conflicts and rivalries. The context of war provides people with an occasion to settle personal scores and disputes through the use of violence. First, there is an increased presence of wielders of violence, who people can harness to regulate conflicts. Second, wars bring conflict scripts, or stories of what the war is about, such as political grievances or a conflict between identity groups. People seize upon these narratives to harm personal opponents or competitors; for instance, by accusing them of collaborating with the opposing side.⁵²

Making use of new opportunities offered by the Second Congo War to gain an advantage over their rivals, people arranged, for instance, for the forceful occupation of disputed land, changes in contested administrative boundaries or the killing of personal adversaries. Those harmed by these practices often sought redress by means of violence, too, leading to the further militarization of disputes. The war also created scores of new disputes and feelings of revenge between people, as houses were

51 Luca Jourdan, 'Being at war, being young: violence and youth in North Kivu', in *Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo*, eds. Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers, Ghent: Academia Press, 2004; Vlassenroot, 'Reading the Congolese crisis'.

52 Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 14

attacked, belongings confiscated, shops burnt down and relatives killed.⁵³

The growing use of force to generate revenue and settle disputes also occurred in cities, where killings and robberies soared. This rise in insecurity was facilitated by the presence of large concentrations of military personnel and the enhanced circulation of arms. By leaving a legacy of conflicts, grievances and feelings of revenge, and by demonstrating how the use of weapons could be a shortcut to wealth, war-time urban violence bore the seeds for future violence.

Ongoing insecurity in the city (2003–present)

The Second Congo War formally ended with the adoption of a peace accord in 2003. Violence did not stop in the eastern Congo, however. The integration of former warring parties into a single national army, and disarming and demobilizing combatants, unfolded chaotically. Some former combatants moved to cities in the hope of finding opportunities for work and building new lives. They sometimes joined the urban violent labour force—composed of those engaging in violent crime and working as guns for hire.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, competition between former warring parties and allied foreign and Congolese elites continued, occasionally turning violent. The increasing grip that Kinshasa tried to have on areas in the east of the country, including cities, sparked further tensions.⁵⁵

The government that took office after the 2006 elections, which ended the transition period following the peace accord, did not manage to significantly improve urban security. In the post-transition era, and against an elevated baseline, violence in the big cities in the eastern Congo has waxed and waned, reflecting both general and context-specific

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53 Interviews civil society actors, Uvira, 12 March 2010; Butembo, 27 April 2010; and Bukavu, 10 November 2011.

54 Judith Verweijen, Christoph Vogel and Josaphat Musamba, 'Rebels and the City: Urban Dimensions of Armed Mobilization in the Eastern Congo', London: Rift Valley Institute, 2019.

55 Raeymaekers, 'The Power of Protection', 160–170; Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 209–210.

political, military and economic developments.

Large-scale military operations and reorganizations, such as the *Kimia II* and *Amani Leo* operations between 2009 and 2012, led to rises in insecurity in most cities.⁵⁶ The army command was reshuffled and new urban-based operational headquarters created, in part to accommodate the integration of the rebel movement *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP, National Congress for the Defence of the People). These developments sparked massive movements of troops, rotations of office and in-fighting in the army. Given that Congolese army officers tend to be important players in political-economic networks, the arrival of new commanders can destabilize existing power configurations, leading to insecurity.⁵⁷

Different commanders also have different norms and approaches for controlling troops and conducting revenue-generating activities, which can lead to further changes in the urban security landscape. For instance, some commanders orchestrate for some of their networks in the army to be secretly involved in violent crime. Others, by contrast, find these practices morally unacceptable, punishing soldiers who engage in them.⁵⁸ Rotations of commanders can also lead to a rise in insecurity when outgoing commanders are malicious. In the city of Uvira, for example, there were a spate of armed robberies the weeks before the commander of the 104th sector left. According to observers, the perpetrators were army soldiers, allegedly instructed to harvest as much as possible before the commander departed.⁵⁹

Military operations also shape urban security by sparking rural–urban

56 *Kimia* (Swahili, Silence) II is the name for Kivus-wide military operations that were conducted between March and December 2009. *Amani Leo* (Swahili, Peace Today) refers to a series of military operations conducted in the Kivus between January 2010 and April 2012.

57 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 84–85.

58 Juvénel Twaibu, 'Comprendre les vols à mains armés à Uvira', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 9 July 2019. Accessed 2 August 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/comprendre-les-vols-a-main-armee-et-le-cambriolage-a-uvira>; Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 300–306.

59 Interviews with civil society actors, Uvira, 12 May 2015.

displacement, rebel incursions into cities, and increased activity from recruitment and support networks of the armed groups under attack. These dynamics were strongly visible in Goma during the peak of the CNDP rebellion in 2007 and 2008.⁶⁰ The city of Beni, in northern North Kivu province, has been deeply affected by periodic massacres that have taken place in its surroundings since 2013, including in the Rwangoma neighbourhood on the outskirts of town. These massacres occurred in a context of military operations and an increase in troops of the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), which contributed to intensified competition for power, with detrimental effects on security in the area.⁶¹

Political developments are another factor affecting fluctuations in urban insecurity. A clear example is electoral competition, as was visible during the run-up to the elections in 2006, 2011 and 2018. To earn favour with urban constituencies, some candidates tried to address urban violence; for instance, by liaising with youth groups involved in neighbourhood policing.⁶² It is also alleged that in order to discredit those in power, political competitors may foster insecurity by ordering violent attacks to show that the incumbents are unable to manage the situation.⁶³

The departure of old and the arrival of new urban and provincial officials, such as city mayors or provincial ministers, tends to herald further fluctuations in security. Similar to army commanders, political officials come with different norms, priorities, visions and approaches

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60 Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 209-210.

61 Congo Research Group/Groupe d'Etudes sur le Congo, 'Mass Killings in Beni Territory: Political Violence, Cover ups and Cooptation', Investigative report No. 2, New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University, September 2017, 11.

62 Judith Verweijen, Michel Thill, and Maarten Hendriks, 'Ambiguous Order: Youth Groups and Urban Policing in the Eastern Congo', Usalama III project, London: Rift Valley Institute, 2019.

63 Usalama III Project interview with civil society actors, Goma, 18 March 2019.

to addressing insecurity.⁶⁴ Moreover, as elites are embedded in different patronage networks and need to provide favours to their clients, rotations of office may spark broader power competitions. In order to survive and get ahead in the Congo, economic operators need good contacts among officials. A change in officials may imply a reshuffling of the economic playing field, which can contribute to a rise in violence; for example, contract killings targeting high-level business people and politicians. These killings may be informed by overlapping motives, including personalized economic disputes and conflicts between competing power networks, such as old and new elites, which sometimes also have an identity dimension.⁶⁵

A classic case is the assassination of the wealthy businessman, Albert Prigogine Ngezayo, in March 2008 in Goma, who was sprayed with bullets fired from a 4x4 close to his house. While those who ordered his murder were never identified with certainty, one of the most widespread explanations points to a rival businessman with whom he was in conflict over a plot of land bordering Lake Kivu. Belonging to the new elite, this businessman allegedly saw violence as justified to get rid of old elites and take over the city.⁶⁶

Another category of targets for contract killings is human rights defenders and journalists. Well-known examples include the prominent human rights defender Pascal Kabungulu and the journalist Serge Maheshe, murdered in Bukavu in 2005 and 2007, respectively. Again, the reason for their killings is contested. Kabungulu had received death threats from a high-ranking army officer whose illegal involvement in mineral extraction he had exposed.⁶⁷ Maheshe's case was tried twice but the trials were marred by irregularities and failed to establish a motive

64 For example, see: Maarten Hendriks, 'The politics of everyday policing in Goma: The case of the Anti-gang', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12/2 (2018).

65 Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 177–179.

66 Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 179–181.

67 Judith Melby, 'Pascal Kabungulu Kibembi. Quiet but determined campaigner for human rights in the Congo', *The Guardian*, 24 August 2005. Accessed 24 July 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2005/aug/24/guardianobituaries.congo>.

for his killing. Meanwhile, a lead pointing to the implication of an army officer who was alleged to be upset with Maheshe's reporting on particular atrocities was deliberately ignored.⁶⁸

Contract killings also target less high-profile figures. In principle, anyone can fall victim to these acts, whether they work in legal or illegal sectors, and whether they have significant means or are relatively poor. The instigators and exact reasons for these killings often remain unclear and become the object of much speculation.⁶⁹ Frequently cited reasons for contract killings include: Commercial disputes and rivalries, such as competition around particular markets, tenders and contracts, or conflicts related to failed economic deals or agreements that are not respected; political competition, including around positions of local authority and influence more generally; conflicts around land and real estate; family conflicts, related to inheritance, marriage, and children; and personal enmity, sometimes linked to grievances about past violence inflicted on family members or to appropriate property.

In the city of Uvira, contract killings are also mobilized to eliminate suspected witches, who are often women embroiled in family disputes.⁷⁰ Indeed, in many cases, multiple motives may be at play, as is common in acts of violence.⁷¹ Whatever the motive, the relatively large scale upon which hired guns are approached indicates that using violence to get rid of adversaries has become accepted among broad segments of the population and that violence is quite accessible, being easy both to commit and mobilize.⁷²

68 Reporters Without Borders, 'Ten years of deliberate impunity in radio journalist's murder', 13 June 2017, Paris: Reports Without Borders. Accessed 24 July 2019, <https://rsf.org/en/news/ten-years-deliberate-impunity-radio-journalists-murder>.

69 Maarten Hendriks and Karen Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma: Experiences, Actors and Responses', London: Rift Valley Institute, 2019, 39–40.

70 Judith Verweijen, 'The disconcerting popularity of popular in/justice in Fizi/Uvira, eastern DR Congo', *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 22/3 (2015).

71 Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, 24–25.

72 Alexis Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer: Protection, insécurité et criminalité dans la ville de Goma, Nord Kivu', Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2014 (unpublished), 22.

3. Acceptability of violence

*The war becomes a routine. Due to the ease with which people kill and kill each other, death also becomes a routine. Rape becomes a routine. It's difficult to escape this routine when one grows up in this place. For us youth, it is definitely a catastrophe.*⁷³

These words, spoken by a young woman in Goma, highlight the normalization of violence. For entire generations growing up in the Congo, violence is simply a feature of everyday life. Most people know at least one relative, neighbour, classmate or fellow churchgoer who has fallen victim to violence. The most gruesome images of the victims of violence circulate widely on WhatsApp. That is not to say violence is applauded. Violent acts, such as killings and armed burglary, are widely denounced. At the same time, there are plenty of people willing to engage in or orchestrate violence, and reap its benefits.

Collective complicity

When asked why violence is so widespread, most Congolese point to the desperate poverty in which the majority of the population lives. Life in poverty is full of hardship and humiliation, from eviction due to unpaid rent to the unnecessary deaths of loved ones as a result of lack of money for medical treatment. Violence can be a way out of this misery. Moreover, money provides status and a form of social respectability. As in many other societies, class and status are salient in the Congo. They are partly demarcated through lavish spending and ostentatious consumption, in

73 Büscher, 'Conflict, State Failure and Urban Transformation', 214.

particular of luxury goods.⁷⁴ Therefore, engaging in violence is not only about making money. It is also about improving social status and creating images of success for those who use violence. Gender norms also play a role, as men continue to be seen as the providers for their families, which underpins their dominance over women.⁷⁵

The overwhelming majority of those living in poverty do not resort to violence. Only a small percentage of people become part of the violent labour force, depending on factors such as individual dispositions, peer groups and life trajectory. Nonetheless, poverty does partly explain why there is ‘collective complicity’⁷⁶ in the reproduction of the violent economy. To a significant extent, violent crime is a lucrative activity because it is easy to sell stolen goods on pirate markets, where nobody asks questions about their origins. Moreover, these markets are often protected by soldiers, with their wives sometimes selling the goods. The presence of soldiers both stifles inquiry and creates the impression that these practices are acceptable.⁷⁷ Involvement in the violent economy is further normalized by widespread participation, which also creates a sense of disadvantage if people do not seize the opportunity for advantageous deals.

Collective complicity is further manifest in the fact that some of the biggest criminals and gang leaders are well known in the neighbourhood. People know where these violent actors live and how they get their money, yet they pretend to be agnostic about the origins of their wealth and influence towards state security services and authorities.⁷⁸

74 Jean-François Bayart, *L'État en Afrique. La politique du ventre* (2nd edition), Paris: Fayard, 2006, 295–297; Filip De Boeck, ‘Domesticating diamonds and dollars: Identity, expenditure and sharing in southwestern Zaire (1984–1997)’, *Development and Change* 29/4 (1998).

75 Desiree Lwambo, “‘Before the war, I was a man’: men and masculinities in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo”, *Gender and Development* 21/1 (2013).

76 Michel Thill, *A System of Insecurity: Understanding Urban Violence and Crime in Bukavu*, London: Rift Valley Institute, 2019, 41.

77 Bouvy, ‘Nous n’avons que nos yeux pour pleurer’, 24.

78 Bouvy, ‘Nous n’avons que nos yeux pour pleurer’, 23.

Others deliberately shield known criminals from the state security services, for instance by warning them or helping them hide. These underworld figures generally have money and therefore make good clients. They are also important local economic players and have many connections, sometimes with politicians.⁷⁹ Crucially, they are able to organize and wield force, which makes them attractive as protection providers. Maintaining good connections with violent actors may spare an individual from becoming a victim or be useful for wielding violence against adversaries.

Certainly not all poor people aid or abet violent crime. Many are strongly opposed to these practices.⁸⁰ It is often in particularly desperate situations, through successions of unfortunate events, that facilitating and benefiting from violent crime becomes appealing. The majority of Congolese have no buffer to deal with unexpected events, such as illness and deaths in the family. Such events often imply not being able to work, hence foregoing opportunities to make money, while having to pay for healthcare and funerals. To find money for these payments, people are forced to sell their belongings and borrow money against usurious interest rates—sometimes as high as 50 per cent—a system called *Banque Lambert* after the Belgian bank in the colonial era.⁸¹ In this way, they become trapped in cycles of debt, borrowing in the short term to pay off other debts. Under the oppressive weight of towering debts, moral considerations may shift and violent ways to obtain money become acceptable.⁸²

Moral shifts may also take place among those who are already confronted with adverse circumstances and fall victim to crime, such as having their money or merchandise stolen. There are few working

79 Thill, 'A System of Insecurity', 41. Interview with police officers, Uvira, 15 July 2015.

80 Thill, 'A System of Insecurity', 42.

81 Radio Okapi, 'Banque Lambert: un système d'emprunt au taux d'intérêt prohibitif', Radio Okapi, 28 June 2016. Accessed 5 July 2019, <https://www.radiookapi.net/2016/06/29/actualite/societe/banque-lambert-un-systeme-demprunt-au-taux-dinteret-prohibitif>.

82 Usalama III Project interview with civil society actors, Goma, 19 March 2019.

insurance schemes in the Congo and they remain inaccessible to most.⁸³ At the same time, because few people have extensive savings, they sometimes sell goods that have not yet been fully paid for.⁸⁴ Others borrow money for their business from banks, microcredit organizations or private lenders.⁸⁵ When losing their goods and money, people are no longer able to repay these loans. Consequently, those who used their property as collateral for a loan may lose it, while others get arrested at the instigation of their creditors.⁸⁶

In this way, a single crime can drive people out of business and into a desperate situation. In such circumstances, the threshold to partake in economies of violence becomes lower. Faced with such injustice, it is tempting to participate in the market of stolen goods, provide information to burglars or orchestrate an attack on a lender to avoid repaying the debt. The latter measure appears to be at the root of some of the attacks on *cambistes* (money-changers), which has become a frequent form of urban violence. Some people borrow huge sums from *cambistes* but when they cannot repay the debt, or no longer agree with the conditions, they may arrange for someone to attack their creditor.⁸⁷

Participation in the violent economy becomes especially appealing when people are faced with the prospect of a loss of social status. As elsewhere, the Congo is a society in which keeping up appearances is

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83 Mia Thom et al., 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Making Access Possible, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Report', Cape Town, Centre for Financial Regulation and Inclusion, 2016, 151–154.

84 Raeymaekers, 'Protection for Sale', 51

85 Interview with traders, Baraka, 17 March 2011; Misisi, 27 December 2012; and Uvira, 31 October 2014.

86 Alain Mukombe Misege, 'Insécurité des marchands vespéraux dans la ville de Goma', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 20 May 2019. Accessed 5 July 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/insecurite-des-marchands-vesperaux-dans-la-ville-de-goma>.

87 Francine Mudunga, 'Travail à haut risque: le change de monnaie, source d'insécurité dans la ville de Bukavu', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 28 May 2019. Accessed 5 July 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/travail-a-haut-risque-le-change-de-monnaie-source-d%E2%80%99insecurite-dans-la-ville-de-bukavu>.

important.⁸⁸ Amid overwhelming poverty, the occasion to distinguish oneself from the impoverished masses is readily seized upon. Once that status is attained, it is necessary to live up to it, which requires engaging in particular consumption patterns, modes of dressing, forms of sociability and practices of largesse.⁸⁹ Inability to maintain these standards will reveal that a person has fallen in social status, leading to a loss of face. To avoid such humiliation, people try to maintain the illusion of being relatively well-off for as long as possible. For some, getting involved in violent forms of revenue generation becomes another option.⁹⁰

Proximate collaboration

The easiest way to benefit from revenue generation through the use of violence is not to execute it but to help organize it. For example, an individual can provide information to criminals about potential targets or convince caretakers or relatives to collaborate in kidnapping children. What is striking about much of the urban violence in the eastern Congo is the proximity of it, with neighbours, acquaintances and sometimes even relatives being involved.⁹¹ Rotating credit and savings organizations known as *likelemba* have to regularly change their treasurers and keep their schedules of payment secret, as members who receive their share can fall victim to banditry shortly afterwards.⁹² Those who sell items of high value are sometimes targeted on their way home.⁹³ In Goma, children are kidnapped with the collaboration of the family household

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88 Jeroen Cuvelier, 'Work and masculinity in Katanga's artisanal mines', *Africa Spectrum* 49/2 (2014).

89 Bayart, *L'État en Afrique*, 296–297 ; Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, 100–137;

90 The author wishes to express gratitude to Samuel Keith Muhindo for providing this insight around the loss of status.

91 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 24.

92 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 59.

93 Interview with civil society actors, Bukavu, 20 October 2011.

personnel or friends, whom children know and therefore trust.⁹⁴ While those who execute the violence are often men, those who help organize and order it are often women.

Harming those someone knows is not only about money. It is also about jealousies, personal rivalries and grudges, and *règlement de comptes* (settling scores). People seek to create setbacks for their rivals and to take revenge on those they believe have harmed or disadvantaged them; for instance, by taking part of their land parcel, embezzling their money or making false promises. To settle these scores, people may deploy guns for hire, as discussed above. Alternatively, they may tip off those executing violent crime to target the person in question or solicit members of the security services to intimidate, arrest and beat them or destroy their property.⁹⁵ Similar to contract killings, the grudges that motivate people to instigate these types of violence relate to long-running disputes; for example, around land and family affairs, or economic competition and transactions, including debts.

One reason why such conflicts may rise to the surface is because dispute resolution in the eastern Congo is an arduous affair. There is often no clear process for managing conflict due to the existence of divergent rules, norms and laws, and the involvement of a multitude of competing state and non-state authorities.⁹⁶ This cacophony is particularly clear in urban land governance, where a host of different institutions regulate access to and ownership of land. The result is land tenure insecurity and complications in conflict resolution, as people seek arbitration from different authorities, including when they are dissatisfied with the

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 94 Passy Mubalama, 'Kidnapping à Goma: "Les enfants, une nouvelle cible des ravisseurs"', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 29 April 2019. Accessed 5 July 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/kidnapping-a-goma>.

95 Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 'Arbiters with guns'.

96 Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 'Arbiters with guns'.

outcome of previous decisions.⁹⁷ Consequently, conflicts over land often linger.

Contested and competing authority also prohibits the smooth resolution of economic conflicts. Disputes in the informal economy are particularly difficult to solve because it is often unclear who has authority over the case and what rules apply. Specifically when it concerns illegal activities, conflict parties can be drawn to approach wielders of force to find a solution, which may involve violence.⁹⁸ Given the importance of illegal activities to the urban economy in the eastern Congo, including the thriving trade in cannabis and other drugs, as well as prostitution, disputes in illegal sectors appear to be a significant source of urban violence.⁹⁹

Wielders of force also enact violence in economic disputes in which they are direct stakeholders. Many people collaborate economically with officers from the FARDC and the *Police nationale congolaise* (PNC, Congolese National Police). For instance, similar to civilian business people, these officers own motorcycles that are rented out to motor-taxi drivers for regular transport services.¹⁰⁰

In some cities in the east, economic operators also collaborate with armed groups, including by working with their money. In Goma, for example, some people are involved in the charcoal trade, which is controlled by armed groups based in neighbouring Virunga National Park.¹⁰¹ Armed groups also pay civilian middlepersons based in cities to organize the delivery of food and other supplies to surrounding rural

97 Kasper Hoffmann, Mariève Pouliot and Godefroid Muzalia, 'Constructed Anarchy, Conflict, Governance and Precarious Property Rights in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo', Congo Research Brief 1, New York: Social Science Research Council, March 2019.

98 Raeymaekers, 'Protection for Sale', 17–18; see also see also Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, 226–227.

99 See examples in Thill, 'A System of Insecurity'; Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma'.

100 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 163.

101 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 35–36.

areas.¹⁰² If these violent actors believe that their civilian collaborators have not respected the terms of the agreement—for example, by selling their goods for a lower price, delivering goods of a bad quality or embezzling part of the money—they may kill them as punishment and to set an example for others.¹⁰³

Conflicts in the formal economic sphere are challenging to solve, too. Soliciting help from the police or state justice system is generally not an appealing option. In order for the police to take on a case, various fees need to be paid, including transportation costs. Moving a case through the justice system also requires a considerable amount of resources and can take a long period of time.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the outcomes of these procedures are very uncertain. There is a risk that adversaries will mobilize their *parapluies* (umbrellas, referring to an individual's protectors or patrons) to influence the process to their advantage, such as by having the police release the suspect or the judge close the case. Powerful protectors may also block the enforcement of a sentence, which then merely becomes a meaningless piece of paper.¹⁰⁵ In general, the part of the sentence relating to the restitution of disputed or stolen objects, or the payment of damages, is rarely executed.¹⁰⁶ In many cases, defendants have already sold them and spent all their money on the court case or for having livable conditions for their jail term, which requires informal payments to the prison administration.

Given the difficulties of resolving conflicts and redressing grievances, people sometimes prefer to approach armed actors to settle their cases.

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102 Verweijen, Vogel and Musamba, 'Rebels and the City'.

103 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 338–340; see also Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 36.

104 Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 'Arbiters with guns'.

105 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 40–41.

106 For non-payment of damages see Nynke Douma, Dorothea Hilhorst and Jocelyne Matabaro, 'Getting the Balance Right?: Sexual Violence Response in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Comparison Between 2011 and 2014', Report 9, London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium and Justice and Security Research Programme, January 2016, 34, 40.

They can also choose this option simply to take revenge. A police officer explains:

Civilians often address the military with their problems, like debts, even family conflicts... Civilians incite the military to commit acts against the law... The reason for soliciting this interference [by the military] are the bad intentions of people. They believe that at the level of the military, they can have a fast solution. They want to accelerate the course [*précipiter l'étape*] because justice normally takes time.¹⁰⁷

When people fall victim to the violent practices orchestrated by their opponents, they remain understandably angry. The resulting desire for revenge may ultimately push them to seek retribution, leading to cycles of revenge and retribution. Hence, instead of resolving conflicts, violence only aggravates them.

Aside from perpetuating more violence, proximate violence (violence arranged by those close to the victim) leads to endemic distrust. It prompts people to constantly be on the alert in their interactions with friends, colleagues and neighbours, and to avoid sharing information about business deals or travel plans.¹⁰⁸ It also leads people to be careful about what they say on the phone in public or even in their own house. Generalized distrust feeds into forms of paranoia, whereby people see in every act that is (potentially) detrimental to them the hand of their adversary.¹⁰⁹ These feelings are all the more dangerous when violence is not only seen as acceptable but also relatively accessible.

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107 Cited in Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 181.

108 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 40.

109 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 32, 188.

4. Accessibility of violence

In every Congolese city in the east, armed actors abound, all seeking to generate revenue, and sometimes having few qualms about engaging in, facilitating or tolerating violence to do so. It is not, however, the mere availability of a violent labour force that renders violence accessible. Accessibility is also about the physical and social proximity of armed actors, who live in the same neighbourhoods as other citizens and maintain protection and patronage relations with them. In addition, the accessibility of violence is about the low risks of getting caught or facing serious consequences. That risks are low is the result of at least two factors. First, there are dynamics of anonymity created by the presence of a multitude of armed actors. Second, low risk stems from generalized impunity, relating to inhibitions to denounce those who commit violent crime and the poor functioning of the state security, justice and penitentiary systems.

The availability of violent labour

Perpetrators of urban violence generally include a mixture of street children, gangs, career criminals (including those who escaped from prison and those who have deserted or demobilized from armed groups and the army), members of the security services (in particular the army and the police) and, in some cities, armed actors connected to armed groups. Each of these categories of violent actors has different operating modes, forms of identification and institutional cultures. Gangs often have a particular way of life, vocabulary and strong sense of social belonging.¹¹⁰

110 Maarten Hendriks, “My life is like a movie”: Making a fiction film as a route to knowledge production on gang political performances in Goma, DR Congo’, *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* (2019). Accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/JEA/article/view/6695/5950>.

Street children—in many cases abandoned by parents unable to care for them—also have their own group culture and identity.¹¹¹

In contrast, some career criminals tend to blend in as ordinary citizens, despite often being known and feared in their neighbourhoods.¹¹² A part of those for whom violent crime is their main source of revenue are former combatants already conditioned to using violence. A high percentage of ex-soldiers have been exposed to traumatic events, such as being physically assaulted and observing or executing massacres. As a result, many are believed to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and some also display signs of aggression.¹¹³ For this group, engaging in violent crime can become a practical occupation, requiring specific skill sets and forms of knowledge.¹¹⁴

The security forces are a heterogeneous group, with vast differences between and within different agencies and departments, in particular between officers and the rank and file. Although diverse, all members are ultimately part of the same organization, the FARDC or the PNC, and are therefore shaped by its institutional culture, formal and informal norms, and leadership, including systems of supervision and control.

In most cities in the eastern Congo, there is a high concentration of army personnel. In part, this is related to the presence of military camps (for instance, Camp Saïo in Bukavu and Camp Katindo in Goma) or army bases on the outskirts of cities (such as Rwangoma in Beni or Kitakandya in Butembo). In addition, many cities host the headquarters of military regions, along with operational and naval sectors. Cities are often also home to military justice institutions and personnel from other military

111 For example, see: Camille Dugrand, “‘Prendre la rue’: les parcours citoyens des shégués de Kinshasa”, *Politique Africaine* 2 (2013); Olivier Kahola Tabu and Benjamin Rubbers, ‘Entre collaboration et confrontation: l’ambivalence des rapports entre pouvoirs publics et enfants de la rue à Lubumbashi (RDC)’, *Autrepart* 3 (2008).

112 Interview with civil society actors, Uvira, 15 July 2015.

113 Thomas Elbert et al., ‘Sexual and Gender-based Violence’, 32, 40.

114 For example, see: Marielle Debos, ‘Living by the gun in Chad: armed violence as a practical occupation’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 49/3 (2011). While Debos talks about being a combatant as a profession, her observations also apply to those who make a living primarily through violent crime.

agencies, such as the Republican Guard, the air force and military intelligence officers. Furthermore, there are often large amounts of military personnel that are *en dispo* (implying without a current function) or on sick or family leave. Thus, any given city has a wide range of military personnel who work under different command structures.¹¹⁵ To a lesser extent, the same applies to the PNC, which also has different branches, such as the *roulage* (traffic police) and the *Groupe mobile d'intervention* (GMI, Mobile Intervention Group).

Similar to the police, the majority of military personnel rent or own houses in civilian neighbourhoods. As such, they live among civilians, often with their spouses and children, and for higher-ranking officers, their bodyguards.¹¹⁶ Frequent social interaction with civilians also occurs in military camps that are situated in civilian neighbourhoods without being fully enclosed, such as Camp Katindo in Goma.¹¹⁷ The resulting social integration provides security personnel with detailed knowledge of who lives in their neighbourhood, what their profession is and what belongings they have. It also allows them to get acquainted with gangs, criminals and street children.

Living in civilian neighbourhoods implies that military personnel are scattered and far away from their commanders. Furthermore, both soldiers and police engage in economic and leisure activities throughout the city, frequenting shops and markets, and visiting *ngandas* (bars), restaurants and nightclubs. During these activities, they sometimes wear their uniform and carry a weapon, blurring the line between on and off duty. These circumstances render control over the movements of security personnel difficult. Moreover, some army commanders require their subordinates only to report periodically, meaning they have little knowledge of the whereabouts of their soldiers.¹¹⁸

Control over military personnel is also a task of the *police militaire*

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115 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 188.

116 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 101–102

117 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 31.

118 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 104, 301–302

(PM, military police), deployed in different neighbourhoods to monitor their activities. A general complaint about the PM is that they are easy to corrupt and unprofessional. Military personnel without authentic *feuilles de route* (travel documents) or authorizations for leave can simply pay off a PM officer to not be reported.¹¹⁹ This renders it relatively easy for army deserters to stay under the radar. The FARDC has a high desertion rate and urban areas can be attractive for deserters, given that strangers are less conspicuous than in rural areas and there tend to be more opportunities for revenue generation.¹²⁰

While control over their activities is limited, both FARDC and PNC personnel are under constant pressure to generate revenue. They generally have to pay for basic necessities themselves, including food, rent and healthcare. In part, this is the result of their superiors embezzling funds that are earmarked for rations and healthcare. Soldiers and police personnel also do not receive social and family benefits, such as reduced school fees for their children. At the same time, their salaries are too low to maintain even a small family. Moreover, salaries are often delayed, forcing them to take out loans at high interest rates.¹²¹ Aside from struggling to maintain their standard of living, soldiers and police in some agencies, such as the traffic police or military intelligence, are under pressure to generate revenue as part of *rapportage*. This system involves lower-ranking personnel transmitting money extracted from citizens to their superiors. Although part of the money is used for operating costs, such as fuel, the rest is kept by superiors.¹²²

To generate revenue, many soldiers and police personnel make money

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119 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 248

120 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 279, 188–189.

121 Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen, 'Fighting Behind the Frontlines: Army Wives in the Eastern DRC', Central Africa Report No.5, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2016.

122 For example, see: Michel Thill, 'Police at work in Bukavu: negotiating revenue-generation in urban pirate markets', in *Negotiating Public Services in the Congo*, eds. Tom De Herdt and Kristof Titeca, London: Zed Books, 2019; and Judith Verweijen, 'Military business'.

through non-violent economic activities, such as having motorcycle taxis or engaging in small-scale trade. Others, however, use violent means to generate income.¹²³ Involvement in violent crime is facilitated by limited supervision by commanders, which sometimes seems a calculated policy. In other cases, commanders are aware that their subordinates engage in these activities but simply turn a blind eye or condone their activities in exchange for some of the revenue.¹²⁴ Tolerance is easier than confronting security personnel, and ensures they stay committed to carrying out their official duties despite poor working conditions and delays in payment. Accepting the involvement of subordinates in violent crime also helps shield commanders from internal revolts. Commanders are much wealthier than their soldiers, which in part is due to embezzling funds. This creates resentment that can feed into subordination.¹²⁵ Allegedly, in some cases, superiors do not merely tolerate violent crime but are actively involved in organizing it, instructing some of their subordinates to participate.¹²⁶ In sum, there are different levels of involvement and complicity of commanders, rendering it difficult to attribute responsibility, a situation from which security personnel obviously benefit.

Aside from direct and indirect involvement in violent crime, the army contributes to the availability of an urban violent labour force by being a source of arms and ammunition. There is no secure stockpile management in the FARDC and many military camps have no armories or other storage facilities. FARDC soldiers generally keep their arms in their houses. In 2015, a process was initiated to register and mark arms in the possession of the FARDC but progress has been slow and

123 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 101–103, 134–142.

124 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 142.

125 This is also documented for other types of abuses against civilians. See Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*, London and New York: Zed Books, 2013, 76; See also Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 311.

126 These observations stem from multiple interviews with well-informed sources, including FARDC officers. For instance, interview with FARDC officer, Minembwe, 24 December 2010; Uvira, 27 October 2011; and Minembwe 7 December 2011. One of these cases concerned the commander of the 104th sector in Uvira referred to above.

uneven. By 2018, only arms in Kinshasa and Bas Congo had been marked. These weaknesses in storage and national inventory practices enable the continued diversion of arms from FARDC stockpiles. FARDC weapons also enter into circulation by being seized during armed group attacks on military camps and arms depots or on the battlefield. Thus, it is not surprising that a significant number of arms and ammunition held by armed groups comes from national stockpiles.¹²⁷

Diversion by army personnel contributes to the circular movement of arms. Arms brought in by armed groups that surrender or that are found in urban areas through cordon and search operations sometimes end up in FARDC stockpiles, rather than being destroyed, and then re-enter circulation. There is also a wide circulation of arms outside of the army. For instance, when armed groups surrender, they tend to hand over only a small portion of their stockpiles. Arms and ammunition are also smuggled across borders; for instance, from Burundi into Uvira territory.¹²⁸

The widespread circulation of arms and ammunition affects security in both rural and urban areas. In 2013 and 2014 in the city of Uvira, there was a surge of armed robberies involving the use of grenades, which were suspected to have been brought from Burundi.¹²⁹ Moreover, the large number of circulating weapons and ammunition keeps their prices low. In some cities, such as Uvira, AK-47s are sold for as little as USD 30–40,

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127 United Nations, Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo', 2 December 2011, S/2011/738, 141–145, United Nations, Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo', 4 June 2018, S/2018/531, 32, 36.

128 United Nations, Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo', 2 December 2011, S/2011/738, 141, 143; United Nations, Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo', 4 June 2018, S/2018/531, 35; United Nations, Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo', 10 August 2017, S/2017/672, 30.

129 For example, see: Centre indépendant des recherches et d'études stratégiques au Kivu (CIRESKI), 'La semaine du 01 au 08 août 2014 chez CIRESKI', Uvira: CIRESKI, 2014 (unpublished); interviews with civil society actors, Uvira, 16 June 201

while in Goma they currently go for USD 100 or more.¹³⁰

Anonymity and impunity

The presence of a high number of armed actors has a range of significant effects on the accessibility of violence. First, the large offering of violent services lowers the price, in particular for contract killings. While the price varies depending on the person targeted—high profile assassinations are the most expensive—in 2014 it is estimated that a low-profile contract killing in Goma costs only around USD 190. This includes USD 100 for labour and transportation, and USD 15 per bullet used, with one contract killing generally using six bullets.¹³¹ While this is still a considerable sum in the eastern Congo, for those frustrated, angry and consumed by revenge, or at times anticipating advantages related to their rival being eliminated, it is not difficult to find the money.

A second effect of the presence of a large number of armed actors is that this fosters collaboration between different groups, in local parlance often described by the legal term *association des malfaiteurs* (association of wrongdoers). Such collaboration allows for optimizing the use of each actor's skills, capabilities and knowledge to create divisions of labour, which increases the efficiency of violent operations. Certainly, different groups at times clash and compete, as they each try to stake out their claims to specific neighbourhoods or markets.¹³² Nonetheless, there is a high degree of collaboration between these disparate actors, either on an ad hoc basis or of a relatively durable nature.¹³³ These coalitions take on many forms. One arrangement is street children stealing goods and providing a share to police personnel or soldiers, who in return ensure they have space to operate while also protecting them from harassment

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130 Consultation of Congolese experts on armed groups and security dynamics via WhatsApp, 25 July 2019.

131 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 22

132 For example, see: Thill, 'Police at work in Bukavu'.

133 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 158.

from other state services.¹³⁴ Another form consists of collaboration between the police and thieves targeting women who illegally sell goods on the streets around a market. The police may tell these unauthorized vendors they are not permitted to operate and then knock over their products, creating an opportunity that allows nearby thieves to steal the goods.¹³⁵ Yet another form is that some police or army officers, in collaboration with prison guards, allegedly let prisoners out at night to carry out violent robberies so they can then share the profits.¹³⁶

State security personnel are also reported to provide arms and ammunition to criminals in exchange for a part of their booty.¹³⁷ This way of working is advantageous as it allows state security personnel to benefit without having to carry out the dirty work—and risk getting caught. In general, military and police protection is crucial for ensuring that perpetrators are not apprehended. Security personnel may deliberately not intervene, intervene too late or facilitate the release of perpetrators from prison by putting pressure on the police and courts.¹³⁸ State security personnel often also help with the sale of stolen goods, including through their wives, who sell them on pirate markets.¹³⁹

Collaboration between state security personnel and gangs and criminals is not limited to violent crime. State security personnel also liaise with these actors to establish their authority and exercise control more broadly, including (paradoxically) the execution of security tasks. Indeed, to engage in policing, the police needs knowledge of criminality. They

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134 Thill, 'A System of Insecurity', 36.

135 Alice Mugoli, 'Vendre à perte? L'insécurité des femmes vendeuses de Bukavu', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 13 May 2019. Accessed 5 July 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/l'insecurite-des-femmes-vendeuses-de-bukavu>.

136 Juvénal Twaibu, 'Comprendre les vols à mains armés à Uvira', Usalama blog, Rift Valley Institute, 9 July 2019. Accessed 24 July 2019, <http://riftvalley.net/news/comprendre-les-vols-a-main-armee-et-le-cambriolage-a-uvira>.

137 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 31.

138 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 40–41

139 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 24.

also sometimes deploy gangs to break up political protests.¹⁴⁰ The state security services cracking down on some criminal activities, in turn, raises the incentive for violent actors to seek protection from them, which reinforces their position in the illegal sphere. There is thus an intricate interplay between the role of security personnel in providing both security and insecurity.

A third effect of the presence of a large number of different armed actors is the dynamic of anonymity. The multitude of potential perpetrators makes it challenging to identify those responsible for particular acts of violence. As a result, and similar to rural areas, the main perpetrators of much urban violence are *hommes armés non-autrement identifiés* (unidentified armed people).¹⁴¹ After each violent incident, people start discussing the identity of the perpetrator(s) and the rationale behind the attack. These discussions generally focus on a number of identity markers, including clothing, language, mode of operation and targets.

These identity markers, however, are intentionally manipulated by perpetrators in order to sow confusion. Army uniforms circulate widely outside of the army, as they are sold from stocks and kept by deserters. Moreover, perpetrators deliberately speak different languages during attacks in order to mask their identity.¹⁴² Thus, gangs, criminals and rebels may speak Lingala to pretend the army was involved, or army personnel may speak Swahili to make it seem the perpetrator was from the eastern Congo. In addition, perpetrators try to create ambiguity about who was targeted and why. For instance, during contract killings, goods are stolen or people killed who were not the primary target in order to cover up the motive.¹⁴³

The difficulties in identifying perpetrators give rise to speculation and blame games, whereby different groups are attributed responsibility, reflecting the various beliefs and interests of those discussing

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 140 For example, see: Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 41–43.

141 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 187–189.

142 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 187–188.

143 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 27.

the crime.¹⁴⁴ Groups sympathizing with the opposition may be inclined to believe narratives that put all the blame on state security actors, as they are convinced their engagement in crime is a system orchestrated in Kinshasa. In cities close to areas where armed groups operate, violence tends to be ascribed to these groups.¹⁴⁵ Such stories can also be manipulated to cover up the involvement of state security personnel. To the extent that belief in the veracity of particular explanations for crime shapes people's behaviour and attitudes, such manipulation can have dangerous consequences—fueling further conflict, distrust and antagonism. It is rare, however, for one story to become dominant, as different groups hold on to their different versions. This works to the advantage of all perpetrators, lowering the risks of being identified and getting caught.¹⁴⁶

Even when perpetrators are caught, they seldom face the consequences of their violent acts. It is lucrative for the police to liberate suspects for a fee, instead of transferring them to the office of the prosecutor.¹⁴⁷ When police officers or other powerful actors protect the suspect in question, the latter may also be liberated, even after the case is referred to the justice system. A lack of sufficient evidence is another reason why suspects are often liberated. In many cases, however, they are simply released because there are no plaintiffs or witnesses.¹⁴⁸

People in the Congo generally distrust the justice system, having little understanding of the procedures and little faith that the process will be fair. They also find it too expensive, as they are expected to make various unofficial contributions to motivate police and justice personnel to work on the case. Many people also fear denouncing the perpetrators, as they know the latter will not stay in prison for long (due to corruption or prison breaks) and then may return to seek revenge on them. Finally, for

144 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 32, 184.

145 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 36–39.

146 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 202–203.

147 Thill, 'A System of Insecurity', 37.

148 Bouvy, 'Nous n'avons que nos yeux pour pleurer', 34–35.

the victim, the advantages of a formal process are often limited, as stolen goods are rarely returned and reparations are seldom paid.¹⁴⁹

The limited chances of perpetrators being caught or facing serious repercussions enhances both the availability and the accessibility of violence. On the one hand, this lowers the threshold for people to engage in violent activities, causing more of them to do so. On the other hand, it makes it more attractive for people to solicit violence, in particular contract killings, since the instigator will likely remain unidentified.

The proximity of violent labour

Aside from low risk, a key factor rendering violence accessible is the proximity of violent labour. When people know armed actors personally, or have good relations with people who do, it becomes easier to approach them to ask for a violent intervention to settle scores or regulate disputes. Violence may either be solicited as a payable service or take place in the framework of existing social ties.¹⁵⁰

There are a number of conditions that explain why proximate relations between violent and non-violent actors are so widespread in cities in the eastern Congo. To start, the fact that security personnel live in civilian neighbourhoods, in particular with their families, often offers opportunities for them to become well acquainted with civilians. Neighbours frequently interact, especially in densely populated quarters. They look after each other's children, borrow and lend household items, and fetch water together. In addition, some security personnel live in the same area for a long time because there is no consistent rotation policy in parts of the security services.¹⁵¹ These conditions promote deep familiarity with civilians, which incentivizes the latter to solicit security personnel to

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 149 Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen, "La mère des armées n'est pas encore morte". Des pratiques de justice (in)formelle dans les Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo", *Politique Africaine* 129 (130).

150 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 43.

151 Bodyguards at the private property of some high-ranking officers, sometimes suspected of being involved in crime in the neighbourhood, may also stay there for a long time.

intervene in their personal conflicts, including in a violent manner.¹⁵²

Another condition that fosters close relations between armed actors and civilians is that a substantial part of the urban population depends on illegal and illicit activities for their livelihood. This includes involvement in the trade in stolen goods, cross-border smuggling, selling drugs and prohibited (often strong) alcoholic drinks (generally known as *sapilo*) and running *maisons de tolérance* (brothels), which also tend to be hubs for drug consumption and criminal deals. An even larger group of civilians depends on activities that are technically illegal, as people do not have the required authorizations, but that are generally not seen as illicit. This category includes selling goods on the street without permission, running unlicensed *ngandas* and the trade in charcoal from illegally logged wood, for instance, from Virunga National Park.¹⁵³

In all these cases, economic operators need protection in order to run their business, as state agents can arrest them and halt their activities at any moment on the grounds that they are breaking the law. It thus becomes imperative to maintain good relations with particular army or police officers, or influential underworld figures. Much like Mafia groups, these wielders of force generally impose requirements for protection money to allow these economic activities to continue. They may also resolve disputes or enforce the terms of economic agreements; for instance, the repayment of debt.¹⁵⁴

A final condition that fosters close relations between violent and non-violent actors is the generalized condition of insecurity in cities. Inhabitants run a high risk of becoming a victim of violent crime or of *tracasseries* (harassment) by state agents, including state security personnel. The latter may arrest people, impose fines or revoke permits and land titles. To shield themselves against such insecurity or to seek

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152 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 294–300.

153 For examples see Thill, 'A System of Insecurity' and Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma'.

154 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 152, 155–158.

redress in case it happens, Congolese citizens need powerful protectors.¹⁵⁵

Protection relations between armed and unarmed actors set several self-reinforcing dynamics in motion that render violence endemic. First, these relations make it attractive for people to solicit violent interventions to address their grievances and settle disputes and scores. The result is more insecurity, which in turn prompts people to seek protection from violent actors to shield themselves against that insecurity. Since insecurity thus ultimately underpins their power position, protection providers, including security personnel, ultimately have little incentive to bring security.¹⁵⁶

A second self-reinforcing dynamic relates to the intricate relationship between illegal markets and protection providers. The more wielders of force who protect illegal activities, the greater the incentives for people to engage in these markets, since it is relatively easy and cheap to obtain the required protection. At the same time, the more people who depend on illegal activities for their livelihood, the higher the demand for protection. High demand, in turn, contributes to a large number of protection providers.¹⁵⁷

A third self-reinforcing dynamic is that widespread protection relations with armed actors lead to the entrenchment of distrust. These relations incentivize people to cut dishonest deals, aware that those who are disadvantaged will be wary of seeking redress. They may therefore not pay back debts or not deliver everything that they promised they would. Dishonest deals, in turn, also prompt disadvantaged parties to solicit protection from armed actors, which then similarly creates incentives for them to engage in dishonest practices. As a result, distrust becomes

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155 Verweijen, 'Military business'.

156 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 44–46. Compare with Charles Tilly, 'War making and state making as organized crime', in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Pete Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 171.

157 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 152; Compare with Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 32.

self-perpetuating.¹⁵⁸

These three self-reinforcing dynamics also underlie much of the insecurity and violence against civilians in rural areas. Armed and unarmed actors in these areas are closely linked through protection relations, as people seek to shield themselves against insecurity, secure their livelihoods and settle disputes. Here, too, these relations engender further insecurity and violence.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, these dynamics seem to go largely undetected by policymakers and organizations involved in peacebuilding and civilian protection.

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 158 Verweijen, 'Ambiguity of Militarization', 330, Compare with Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 27.

159 Judith Verweijen, 'Stable Instability: Political Settlements and Armed Groups in the Congo', London: Rift Valley Institute, 2016, 55–58.

5. Conclusions and policy considerations

Despite reaching worrying levels since the Second Congo War, urban violence in the eastern Congo is largely neglected by international analysts and practitioners. While violence in rural areas gets much more attention, it is not always correctly diagnosed or understood. This is the result of a number of analytical biases, which need to be overcome to devise policies that adequately address violence.

Organizations engaged in peacebuilding and civilian protection often are mandated to work on areas affected by violent conflict. They conceptualize these as rural areas marked by the presence of armed groups and forces. The violence committed by these actors is generally seen as political in nature—linked to political or social conflict, such as anti-government insurgencies or inter-communal violence. In contrast, urban violence is largely considered criminal in nature as it is focused on revenue generation.

Neither the category of criminal nor political violence adequately captures the phenomenon of private violence—contract killings and targeted violent crime executed in relation to score settling and personal conflicts. In reality, personal violence is not separate from political violence but heavily informs it. People often instigate armed actors to commit acts of violence that help them solve their own problems. Yet this violence is perceived and presented in terms of dominant (political and social) conflict narratives, rendering the private drivers of violence invisible.¹⁶⁰

Criminal violence is equally entwined with personal violence but how the latter shapes the former remains little understood.¹⁶¹ For example, the phenomenon of contract killings, despite their ubiquity in many different

160 Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, 14.

161 Stathis Kalyvas, 'How civil wars help explain organized crime—and how they do not', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59/8 (2015).

contexts, remains under-researched.¹⁶² Limited attention is also paid to how personalized motives—jealousy, rivalries and revenge—may play a role in the production of other forms of criminal violence, such as armed burglary and robbery. Nonetheless, these motives shape violent crime in important ways in eastern Congolese cities, leading those close to the victim to collaborate in violent incidents.

The distinction between political and criminal violence tends to downplay the criminal dimension of political violence and the political dimension of criminal violence.¹⁶³ While the drive for revenue generation is not necessarily the main or sole cause of the mobilization and persistence of armed groups in the eastern Congo, it informs much of the violence they commit. Armed groups engage in violent crime and violence to maintain control over revenue-generating opportunities and civilian economic collaborators. Grasping the logic of revenue generation is therefore crucial to understand patterns of armed group violence.

At the same time, a substantial part of the violence deemed criminal has important political dimensions. The most obvious manifestation of this is the widespread involvement of state security actors. Soldiers and police are at the centre of urban violence—either organizing, facilitating or executing it—sometimes with the approval of or at the instigation of their superiors. High-level civilian officials are also alleged to sometimes protect groups involved in crime and order contract killings.¹⁶⁴

These political aspects indicate that the workings of the political order, along with political transformations, are crucial to understanding the shape and intensity of urban violence. In Central America, the changing role of state security forces, the position of which has shifted due to transitions from authoritarian rule and civil war, is an important factor

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 162 For example, see: Mark Shaw and Kim Thomas, ‘The commercialization of assassination: “Hits” and contract killing in South Africa, 2000–2015’, *African Affairs* 116/465 (2017).

163 Kalyvas, ‘How civil wars help explain organized crime’.

164 Usalama III Project interview with civil society actors, Goma, 18 and 19 March 2019.

in the escalation of violent crime.¹⁶⁵ Similar developments seem to be at play in the eastern Congo, where the direct and indirect involvement of state security personnel is a key source of urban violence.

The boundaries between criminal, political and personal violence are porous. At times, such distinctions entirely collapse. These categorizations nonetheless significantly shape the work of humanitarians, peacekeepers and peacebuilders. While peacekeepers from the *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo* (MONUSCO, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) mostly address armed groups and focus on the protection of civilians in rural areas, peacebuilders tend to concentrate on addressing inter-communal and land conflicts, also mostly in rural areas. Almost no international interveners focus on violence considered to be criminal or personal. By implication, they do not address violence in urban areas.

This is not to say that all humanitarian, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts should directly focus on urban violence. Diplomats, including those who represent bilateral and multilateral donors, MONUSCO and international and national NGOs all have different capacities and orientations. Each of these actors nonetheless has a duty to base their policies and programmes on adequate analyses of violence, and should support initiatives that address the types of violence that most affect people. To achieve these aims, they should take the following considerations into account.

Focus on violence in all its manifestations

Spectacular forms of violence in the eastern Congo—particularly massacres and mass rape—have received most international attention, resulting in the relative neglect of other types of violence, such as armed burglary, robbery and murder. Cumulatively, these forms of violence might affect

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 165 For example, see: José Miguel Cruz, 'Criminal violence and democratization in Central America: The survival of the violent state', *Latin American Politics and Society* 53/4 (2011).

more people on a more consistent basis. These incidents generally are not reported by international media. Many are also not included in the most widely used violent incident databases, such as the Armed Conflict and Event Location Database (ACLED). ACLED only includes incidents committed by violent actors with a political purpose, who use violence for political means.¹⁶⁶ In principle, it therefore excludes violent incidents of which the political content cannot be established.¹⁶⁷ Studying these incidents, however, is crucial to develop a better grasp on the patterns and drivers of violence in the eastern Congo.

MONUSCO, along with organizations working in the domain of civilian protection and peacebuilding, should increase support to human rights and civil society organizations engaged in efforts to document, analyze and understand incidents of violence, including in urban zones. To understand why violence against civilians occurs, it is crucial to collect data on the motives behind and objectives of violence. More analysis is also needed on frequently occurring forms of violence. While kidnappings have started to receive growing attention,¹⁶⁸ armed burglary and contract killings remain little researched.

A stronger focus on violence, rather than conflict, may mean that some organizations have to alter or broaden their focus. For example, peacebuilding NGOs active in the eastern Congo generally concentrate

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166 Clionadh Raleigh and Cairiona Dowd, *Armed Conflict and Event Location Database (ACLED)*, Codebook 2017, 4.

167 Note, however, that ACLED occasionally includes incidents of which the political content cannot be established, including incidents it copies from Kivu Security Tracker. The latter does include violence committed by perpetrators who may not have obvious political objectives. See: Kivu Security Tracker, <https://kivusecurity.org/reports>.

168 For example, see: Kivu Security Tracker, 'Held for Ransom: Kidnappings in the Kivus', Situation Report, May 2018, New York: Congo Research Group/Groupe d'Etudes sur le Congo and Human Rights Watch, Center for International Cooperation, New York University, 2018. Accessed 1 August 2019, <https://kivusecurity.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/reports/14/Situation%20report%20ICCN%20attack%20-%20FINAL%20May%2028-%20EN.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, 'DR Congo: Kidnappings Skyrocket in East: Create Special Police Unit to Address Threat', New York: Human Rights Watch, 16 December 2015. Accessed 5 July 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/16/dr-congo-kidnappings-skyrocket-east>.

on resolving and mitigating land conflicts and inter-community tensions. However, since these conflicts are not the principal drivers of violence, these activities reduce overall violence only to a limited extent. Thus peacebuilding organizations should broaden their scope to include studying and tackling conflicts that significantly contribute to violence, such as disputes over debts. Civilian protection actors may also need to rethink their approach. Many of these actors focus on armed groups. Yet unidentified armed people killing and brutalizing citizens are in many cases bands of outlaws, implying these actors also should be addressed.

Lastly, civilian protection and human rights organizations need to intensify efforts to document the involvement of state security services in systematic violent crime. Officers orchestrating armed robbery and burglary on a large scale should be treated on par with those responsible for atrocities during military operations and clashes.

Address the accessibility of violence

A major cause of the escalation of urban violence in the eastern Congo is the availability of a large violent labour force, which can be easily solicited by those with violent intentions. The diversity of violent actors creates a dynamic of anonymity that compounds the identification of perpetrators. Nevertheless, a significant number of these actors seems to consist of members of the state security services. The fact that police and soldiers live intermingled with civilians, with their weapons to hand, contributes to this situation.

Within the remit of security sector reform, the Congolese authorities should prioritize controlling the whereabouts of security personnel. This should include: Dislocating military personnel from civilian neighbourhoods and concentrating them in separate parts of the city; prohibiting them from leaving that designated area with their weapons when not on duty; demanding that the houses owned by officers are guarded by unarmed private security personnel instead of armed body guards; and imposing regular reporting obligations on personnel that is without function or on leave. Reinforcing efforts at stockpile management, including the marking and registration of arms is also important. Donors

supporting security sector reform efforts should make their support conditional upon addressing these long-standing problems within the management of the armed forces.

Another factor that renders violence accessible is the problem of punishment. Standard proposals to combat impunity emphasize retributive justice and include reforming and improving the justice and penitentiary systems.¹⁶⁹ These reforms will take a long time to come to fruition. At the same time, citizens in urban areas are impatient to see crime being addressed, and the frequent return of known perpetrators to the same neighbourhoods contributes to forms of mob justice.¹⁷⁰

Donors committed to addressing impunity could consider supporting alternative plans for retributive justice that can be implemented at a shorter term. For instance, perpetrators could be asked to carry out community service in the neighbourhoods where they committed crime or other acts of violence. They should also be given positive incentives to do this, such as vocational training.

Address the acceptability of violence

Ultimately, reducing violence in the eastern Congo, whether in rural or urban areas, requires a better understanding of how violence has become normalized. One area that seems particularly important to analyze and address is personal violence. Given the legacies of past violence and the general difficulties of dispute resolution, it is easy to understand why many people have grudges, jealousies and revenge feelings. Little insight exists, however, as to when and why they decide to translate these feelings into actual violence against their adversaries.

Mapping what type of disputes feed into violence and how, and what

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169 For example, see: Amnesty International, 'The Time for Justice is Now: New Strategy Needed in the Democratic Republic of Congo', AFR 62/006/2011, London: Amnesty International, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 'Justice on Trial. Lessons from the Minova Rape Case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', New York: Human Rights Watch, October 2015.

170 Hendriks and Büscher, 'Insecurity in Goma', 56–58; Thill, 'A System of Insecurity', 43–44.

institutions, such as professional associations and community leaders, could prevent these disputes from turning violent, would be a worthwhile exercise. The same applies to conflicts in illegal sectors, which are particularly difficult to resolve. Those who earn their livelihoods in these sectors likely have ideas about how conflicts can be regulated there without violence. They should be consulted in a comprehensive and inclusive manner.

The acceptability of violence also evokes the question of collective complicity in the violent economy, including the readiness to market or buy stolen goods. The Congolese authorities should prevent state security personnel (military, police) from protecting these markets (thereby conveying a public impression that they are somehow tolerated), which would help reduce the moral acceptability of these practices. In consultation with urban inhabitants, civil society groups and leaders with moral standing in neighbourhoods could devise ways to raise awareness about the necessity to resist complicity with violence and criminality, including via radio programmes.

Finally, addressing violence implies engaging those who (potentially) commit violent acts, in particular disadvantaged youth. To develop initiatives to prevent youth from perpetrating violent crime, the life trajectories of those who ended up in the violent labour force should be studied. While there are scores of studies of ex-combatants in the eastern Congo, there is little scholarly work that focuses on those committing violent crime, in particular youth in urban areas.¹⁷¹ There have also been few efforts to engage former gang leaders and career criminals in thinking about ways to discourage others from following in their footsteps. Since addressing violence requires understanding how those who commit it ended up in that place, it is necessary to listen to and include them in creating viable alternatives.

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171 Notable exceptions are Hendriks, 'The politics of everyday policing' and 'My life is like a movie'.

Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases

ACLED	Armed Conflict and Event Location Database
<i>Amani Leo</i>	Peace Today (Swahili); a series of military operations in the Kivus conducted between 2010 and 2012
<i>association des malfaiteurs</i>	coalitions between violent actors involved in crime; (lit., ‘association of wrongdoers’, Fr.)
<i>cambistes</i>	moneychangers
<i>coop</i>	mutually beneficial arrangements and scheming between violent and dishonest actors (from ‘coopération au développement’, Fr., development cooperation)
CNDP	<i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i> (CNDP, National Congress for the Defence of the People)
<i>débrouillardise</i>	to fend for one self-ism
<i>en dispo</i>	without a current function (in relation to army personnel)
<i>feuille de route</i>	document authorizing travel
<i>hommes armés</i> <i>non-autrement identifiés</i>	non-identified armed persons; a frequent category or perpetrators of violence in eastern Congo
FARDC	<i>Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo</i> (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
FAZ	<i>Forces armées zairoises</i> (Zairian Armed Forces)
<i>gendarmérie</i>	military component with jurisdiction in civil law enforcement
GMI	<i>Groupe mobile d’intervention</i> (Mobile Intervention Group), a branch of the Congolese police

<i>Kimia II</i>	Silence (Swahili) name for Kivus-wide military offensive conducted between March and December 2009
<i>likelemba</i>	(Lingala) rotating credit and savings organizations
<i>maison de tolérance</i>	brothel (lit., ‘house of tolerance’; Fr.)
MONUSCO	<i>Mission de l’Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en RD Congo</i> (United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of the DR Congo)
<i>nganda</i>	bar (Swahili)
<i>parapluie</i>	powerful political protector or patron
PM	<i>Police militaire</i> (Military Police)
PNC	<i>Police nationale congolaise</i> (Congolesse National Police)
<i>rapportage</i>	a practice within Congolesse state institutions whereby subordinates are obligated to generate revenue for their hierarchies; (lit. ‘reporting’; Fr.)
<i>ratissage</i>	cordon and search operations
<i>règlement des comptes</i>	score settling
<i>roulage</i>	traffic police
RCD	<i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie</i> (RCD, Congolesse Rally for Democracy)
<i>sapilo</i>	(Swahili) generic term for types of hard liquor
<i>système-D</i>	a way of life, or system, in which people survive by making the most of whatever opportunities arise, by whatever means are available to them (from <i>système</i> and <i>débrouillardise</i> ; lit., ‘system of fending for one self-ism’; Fr.)
<i>traffik d’influence</i>	influence peddling
<i>tracasseries</i>	harassment, generally by Congolesse state actors

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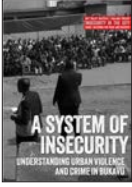
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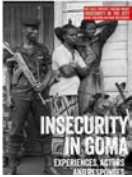
A System of Insecurity: Understanding Urban Violence and Crime in Bukavu

This report examines the role of state and non-state actors in the provision of security, and citizens' perceptions of, experiences with and responses to insecurity in Bukavu.



Ambiguous Order: Youth groups and urban policing in the Congo

This briefing examines the structure, operations and social function of youth policing groups in Bukavu, Goma and Uvira.



Insecurity in Goma: Experiences, Actors and Responses

This report maps out the dynamics and experiences of, and responses to, urban insecurity in Goma, and makes the case for national and international policymakers to engage seriously with the urban dimension of insecurity in the eastern Congo.



Nord-Kivu: Contexte historique du conflit dans la province du Nord-Kivu, à l'est du Congo

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Comprendre la prolifération des groupes armés dans l'est du Congo

Ce briefing examine les principaux mécanismes qui sous-tendent la prolifération des groupes armés dans l'est du Congo pour venir à bout de cette problématique.



The national army and armed groups in the eastern Congo: Untangling the Gordian knot of insecurity

The final report of phase I of the Usalama Project presents conclusions from 18 months of field research on the national army and armed groups in the eastern DRC focussing on armed mobilization in North and South Kivu, the FARDC and a critical review of past and current efforts in the field of demobilization and army reform.



The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo

This briefing examines the mixed approach of MONUSCO towards the implementation of the I4S and suggests that it would be appropriate for the UN mission and its partners to continue to advance this framework.

OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE EASTERN CONGO HAS REACHED ALARMING LEVELS, HOWEVER, IT HAS RARELY MADE IT TO THE FOREFRONT OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND MEDIA ATTENTION. VIOLENT CITIES, VIOLENT SOCIETIES ANALYZES URBAN VIOLENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE ACCEPTABILITY OF USING VIOLENCE AND THE ACCESSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE, OR THE EASE WITH WHICH VIOLENCE CAN BE MOBILIZED. REDUCING VIOLENCE REQUIRES ADDRESSING BOTH OF THESE FACTORS. SPECIFICALLY BY REINFORCING CONTROL OVER THE MOVEMENT OF SECURITY PERSONNEL, DEVISING NEW WAYS TO DEAL WITH OFFENDERS, UNDERSTANDING HOW VIOLENCE HAS BECOME NORMALIZED AND ENGAGING WITH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE TO HELP DESIGN PROGRAMMES TO ENGAGE WITH AND RAISE AWARENESS AMONG YOUTH.



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ISBN 978-1-907431-66-1



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