Regional Security Complexes in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) and the Big Dilemma for the EAC Regional Force to the DRC Conflict

By

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Abstract

This article analyses the key topics and concepts that have fueled scholarly and policy discussions on the Regional Security Complexes (RSCs) in the Great Lakes Region. Following the 1993 Burundian civil strife and the 1994 Rwandan genocide that marked the beginning of decades of warfare, numerous regional and international endeavors have supported peacebuilding and stabilization in the Great Lakes Region. Large-scale refugee flows have been produced by conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over the years, while the conflict has deepened into the Congolese society and culminated into an intense regional conflict involving several nations (due to buffer zone effects of conflict). This article argues that the GLR of Africa conflict intricately affects the countries in the region and cannot be isolated or addressed independently without involving all the countries in the region. This paper uses desk review to examine the regional security complex in the GLR. The analysis of the R.S.C.s systematically outlines the internally triggered vulnerabilities in the Great Lakes Region, the state-to-state relations that create the region, the region's dealings with other regions, and the dealings between global and regional security structures. The paper contends that the Great Lakes Region must be recognized as a collection of states constantly distressed by one or more security external forces and, as such, ought to find a collective solution to the conflict in the DRC.

Key Words: *regional security complexes: great lakes region: conflict intervention*

Introduction

Africa has experienced multiple conflicts related to colonial and post-colonial legacies, leading to protracted conflicts in many countries. According to Clapham, "the post-colonial era in Africa is now, and only now, coming to an end." Apartheid and the Cold War came to an end, and with the erosion came two factors that influenced foreign policy considerably in Africa. Domestically, the neo-patrimonial postcolonial state's disintegration and the ongoing economic crisis—along with the ensuing pressure for reform—changed political forecasts (Khadiagala & Terrence, 2001).

Regional security dynamics have become more important since the international system lacks a focal conflict. Many states in the system are entangled in an immense web of symbiotic security issues. Nonetheless, as most states dread their neighbors more than distant powers, proximity is frequently linked to a sense of disquiet. Units within these complexes depend on one another for security in a far greater way than units outside of them (Tapan, 2021). The institutional structures and power dynamics across the continent have changed due to these global and national developments, which have also changed the environment in which foreign policy pronouncements are formulated. African leaders sometimes react by making shaky and flimsy attempts to restructure their political and economic structures; the pressures sometimes result in state collapse. Numerous states fall between these two extremes, and the future remains uncertain (Khadiagala & Terrence, 2001).

Africa faces many serious challenges in the twenty-first century: political instability is still pervasive and chronic; economic growth is typically weak and uneven; poverty is growing. Oliver et. al assert that "the continent has the lowest GNP per capita ($670, compared to the global average of $4,890)." Since 1960, there have been at least 80 violent changes in government in Africa. Notwithstanding the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), these realities pose considerably bigger hazards to human security than armed conflict in most African states. Africa is still underrepresented in the international arena for great power diplomacy. There is now a consensus that one major contributing element to this condition is war and ongoing political conflict (Furley & Roy, 2013, p. 15).

After the Cold War, different geographic blocs have taken a more prominent center stage in world politics. Despite pushing security boundaries in regional studies, Buzan and Weaver apply a "neo-realist structural framework" to analyze regional classifications. They contend that the "pressure

of local geographical proximity" in addition to the "anarchic structure and its balance-of-power repercussions" create regional security arrangements (Fawn, 2009, p. 191).

Despite being plagued by catastrophic conflicts, Africa's Great Lakes Region (GLR) has incredible potential for peace and prosperity. This region is rich in natural and cultural resources, from biodiversity to solid minerals and human abilities. The Great Lakes Region is home to some of the most ecologically diversified freshwater systems, subtropical rainforests, savannah grasslands, and temperate highlands, which have enormous economic gains, agricultural benefits, and offer great tourist sites. It also has a diversified population in terms of culture and language, as well as historical, religious, economic, political, and legal traditions that both internal and external forces have persistently altered. Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, and Tanzania make up the GLR. A thorough and comprehensive analysis must take into account the historical, sociopolitical, cultural, and economic geographies that cross and complicate these artificial borders (Omeje & Tricia, 2013).

The DRC has not experienced peace since gaining its independence in 1960. During the colonial era, the Belgian government built a governing structure that was more concerned with maximizing the use of national resources than meeting its people's needs (Kisangani, 2012). In 1970s and 1980s, DRC experienced violence and conflict due to mismanagement of resources under the leadership of Mobutu (DFID, 2008). Due to the poor post-colonial governance, DRC's economy, infrastructure, social fabric, and government capacity kept on deteriorating, and this left DRC off track against all the MDGs rendering it one of the poorest countries to date. The conflict in the DRC is one of the most complex in the continent, despite numerous interventions over the years, as it frequently links political, economic, institutional, social, and security concerns to a convoluted and interwoven web of complexities. With a set of nations whose principal matters of security are so intricately entwined with one another that they cannot be isolated or tackled autonomously, this article examines the regional security complex in the GLR. Analysis of the Regional Security Complexes (RSCs), outlining domestically bred weaknesses in the Great Lakes Region, ought to consider the dynamics of relations between different states of the region, persistent conflicts and regional and international security structures that protract the conflict.

Theoretical Framework

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)

The discussions in this article apply the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Ole Weaver and Barry Buzan advocated for this view. A regional security complex is a collection of "governments whose major national security challenges are so interconnected that they cannot be separated or addressed separately. It is evident that over time, back from the Westphalian system, and even beyond, states have always sought to collaborate strategically to attain optimum regional security (Cruden, 2011, p. 1). According to the hypothesis, a key element in the formation of regionally based clusters is security interdependence. A framework for analyzing and contrasting regional security across different regions is provided by RSCT" (Erokhin, Tianming, Xiuhua, 2018, p. 18).

Buzan (as cited in Lake & Patrick, 2010, p. 12) coined the phrase "regional security complex" to refer to a certain type of region bound together by security issues. The assemblage of states that make up a 'region' is distinguished by a 'regional security complex.' In modern international politics, a regional security complex is a collection of nations continuously impacted by one or more security externalities originating from a particular region. Members of such a complex are so interdependent on one another for security reasons that the decisions made by one member significantly affect the others. Geographic closeness is not a requirement for a nation to be a member of a complex, even though geography may tie most of its members to one another. Current regional security complexes frequently include one or more important members who are not physically located in the region where the complex is based. These members are typically authorities with the power to impel force over enormous distances (Lake & Patrick, 2010). In such instances, the aim is mutual obligation and seeking to bring an equilibrium to the always over-arching and anarchical international system. The tenets of this theory explain how to relate four levels of analysis and what to look for at each as follows:

 Firstly, the domestically created vulnerabilities of the states in the region. Is a nation powerful or fragile based on the continuity of the local symmetry and the relationship between the state and the nation? The type of security concerns a state has been determined by its particular vulnerability; in some cases, even when a state or group of states is not hostile, it can nonetheless pose an underlying risk.

Secondly, interactions between states, which help to define the region;

Thirdly, "complex" is characterized by essential internal relationships; hence the region's connection with neighboring regions is expected to be moderately restricted. A complex devoid of global powers, that is one with global power may have resilient interregional connections in one course of gross asymmetries. However, if significant alterations in the arrangements of security interdependence that describe complexes are ongoing, this level can become substantial;

Fourthly, the regional impact of global powers (the interaction of global and regional security institutions Buzan & Ole, 2003, p. 51).

According to Buzan et al., a "security complex" consists of components whose main "securitization, de-securitization," or both processes are interconnected. Therefore, it is unreasonable to assess or fix these security issues separately. According to Buzan et al., securitization may benefit internal and regional power consolidation in the short term. Still, over time, it results in the global parallel of "autism and paranoia." On an intrastate level, securitization suppresses civil society, establishes an oppressive and powerful state, ultimately causes the economy to collapse, raises military spending, and intensifies the security dilemma with neighbors who do not support the same philosophical project or who are not a part of the security complex. In Africa, civil wars and internal dynamics, such as refugee flows and the expulsion of foreigners, frequently impact regional security. In a way, weak points rather than strengths lead to security interactions in Africa, as seen when collapsing states destabilize the security of their neighbors.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design and undertook a qualitative investigation encompassing descriptive and analytical characteristics. It is founded on a widespread assessment of interrelated literature on regional security complexes and the big dilemma for the interventions in the GLR. The analysis relied on secondary data sources such as books and journals. The study, therefore, uses both analytical and descriptive approaches. The data collected through desk review helped evaluate the interrelated factors in the regional security complexes where DRC finds itself. The fact that the paper delves into the description of the complex factors in RSCT purports that the methodology has to be systematic. Based on this, DRC was taken as a case study for analysis.

Study Findings

Regional Security Complexes: The Vulnerabilities in the Great Lakes Region

Regional Security Complexes' (RSC) in modern world history may be neatly divided into different eras: "the modern era, which lasted from 1500 to 1945; the Cold War and decolonization, which lasted from 1945 to 1989; and the Post-Cold War era, which began in 1990" (Buzan & Ole, 2003, p.14). This narrative's main storyline is often revealed, and the periodization is consistent with most neorealist and globalist accounts. The initial international system operating worldwide is established during the first half of this millennium, and sovereign, territorial states in the mold of those found in Europe replace other political systems. Regionalism has been noted to be the most favorable means of tackling transnational security issues in the post-Cold War era, simply describing how different projects have been developed to enhance peace and security within various regions (Crude, 2011, p. 2). States become the main players in the security game as a result of these two processes, and as the international system expands to a global level, space is made available to establish unique regional security subsystems. Most governments view their close neighbors as the principal players in the security game (Buzan & Ole, 2003, p.14).

Intra-state risks are more prominent than inter-state challenges throughout Africa and much of the developing world. States rarely pose a direct threat to other states. Yet, cross-border destabilization can result from domestic instability in a weak state. A regional perspective must be used to assess security in developing countries (Fawn, 2009). It is widely believed that regional conflicts will continue to be a major source of concern for decision-makers, providing embarrassing and challenging issues for the administration of security while posing serious dangers to peace and security arrangements. "Regional" conflict brings to mind the larger topic of regions and regionalism, which was once vigorously studied but then withered away as a result of a decline in regional integration research, a neorealist-induced obsession with the global system, and skepticism about the significance of regions in international politics (Lake & Patrick, 2010).

Buzan and Weaver's definition of the region is pertinent to our examination of the wars in the DRC. They claim that the region:

> "refers to the level where states or other units link together sufficiently closely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other. The regional level is where the extremes of national and global security interplay, and where most of the action occurs… Each regional security complex is made up of the fears and aspirations of the separate units (which in turn partly derive from domestic features and fractures). Both the security of the separate units and the process of global power intervention can be grasped only through understanding the regional security dynamics" (Gebrewold, 2016, p. 39).

The African Great Lakes region has been thoroughly examined by scholars and experts on African conflicts, who have concentrated on diverse social-political and economic issues facing the region, conflict trends and impact on the population. Conflicts in the region are distinguished by their particularly complex nature, diversity, and casualties; the complex roles played by outside actors; the effects of conflict on political, social, economic, demographic, and development landscapes; and the frequently precarious nature and politics of conflict intervention, resolution, and peacebuilding in the region. Disputes in this region are multifaceted in terms of their vertical and institutional articulation, as well as their spatial and sectoral distribution (Omeje & Tricia, 2013).

Disputes in the GLR are characterized by a complex interplay of localized revolt, competing regional interests, and the international community's diminished ability (or willingness) to prevent humanitarian tragedies. These causes are all relevant to the emergence of the regionalized conflict in the African GLR. The 1993 Burundian civil war and the 1994 Rwandan genocide marked the beginning of a decade of warfare. Both conflicts in the DRC produced large-scale refugee flows. Over a few years, the conflict deepened in Congolese society and culminated in a massive regional conflict involving seven nations (Dokken, 2008).

Ever since, conflict in one nation has tended to disperse and intensify, endangering regional security. Conflict is quite likely when knowledge about prejudices about one ethnic population travels from one state to another. For instance, conflict based on one or more forms of cultural diversity is highly likely to arise if new knowledge about ethnic groups in one state is genuine or untrue. Intentional or accidental spillover, irredentism, or border conflicts could occur from an ethnic group's alliance with transnational kin groups (Landis & Rosita, 2012), p.393). The DRC conflict involves many different identity groups and is immensely complex because it crosses

borders. Conflicts in the Great Lakes tend to have "mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a wider region, providing for more protracted and obdurate conflicts," regardless of where the conflict arises (Landis & Rosita, 2012, p.393).

Perhaps, in the GLR, ethnic and political exclusion may be the most difficult barrier of all. This is particularly relevant to the fragile state structures of Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC. It will be crucial to probe the circumstances of these leaders' ascent to power, their ethnic identities, and how recent domestic events have affected their perceptions of foreign actors before moving to their foreign policy objectives and how they are influencing the region's geopolitics. Former Congolese President Laurent Kabila, Yoweri Museveni, and Paul Kagame all rose to power on the wave of rural uprisings that had outside assistance, with a lot of help from one another (Khadiagala & Terrence, 2001).

The genocide in Rwanda left the Tutsi minorities in Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern Congo with a fear of possible repeat of genocide. The failure to recognize the pervasiveness of this fear is largely responsible for the mutual miscommunication that has arisen between Kigali and the international community in the wake of the massacre (Khadiagala & Terrence, 2001). The term 'externally driven' is frequently used in governance discussions in Africa. In terms of security, this relates to African security as a function of global governance, as a 'victim' of external networks preying on weak governance, and as a recipient of significant bilateral support. This is partly related to the critical influence of international aid in many parts of the continent and the financial support provided to African governments by the international community (Breslin & Stuart, 2013). The next part of this paper will offer an understanding of the relations between different actors in the GLR.

State-to-State Relations and the Transnational Aspect of the War in DRC

Although non-state dangers are now included in the study of international security, theories describing how these new security risks are created still adhere to the classic international relations theory's state-centric presumptions. The departure from an emphasis on the national and long-established security threats undermines the common belief that regional economic integration enhances regional security, even while economic alliances in Africa are believed to promote peace (Fawn, 2009).

Because of their great interdependence and current vulnerability to emerging security threats, these divisions face an operational environment that fosters more uncertainty. Particularly, regional interdependence inside an "*insecurity complex* coupled with *laissez-faire* (or market) economic regional integration" (Fawn, 2009, p. 190) can be destabilizing since it results in uneven growth rates that consequently generate or intensify novel security challenges. In other words, depending on whether a certain form of regional economic integration is pursued inside an insecurity complex or a security community, it will have a varied impact on the neighborhood.

One explanation for troublesome conflicts in the GLR and the DRC in particular, is the question of a diversity of participants and diverse interests. Besides the effortlessly visible internal parties to the fight, numerous other characters exist, both at the forefront and contextually. Although having the best intentions, organizations like the Red Cross, UNHCR, and World Food Programme (WFP) frequently fall foul of strong economic or political interests in their operating regions. The issue is that these actors are typically investigated as either peace facilitators or catastrophe relief groups; they are seldom ever regarded as an 'industry' with interests that can obstruct peacemaking efforts (Baregu, 2011, p. 15).

It is worthy to note that the DRC is a territory of great interest because of its geostrategic importance, and enormous riches. Due to such, recurrent intra- and inter-state conflicts and wars have plagued the country. Having the world's most important natural resource reserves for both mineral and gas, DRC stands at a critical position globally. International actors and neighboring states cannot hesitate to take advantage of the DRC's situation for the sake of their own interests, thus wishing for stability and peace in the DRC might not favor their endeavors. For instance, the political environment is the main reason why there is oil and gas conflict in the DRC, an instance whereby international companies are seeking to position themselves in the sector in best ways possible for maximum gains (Channel Research, Belgium, 2011, p. 105). Additionally, ethnic and geopolitical competition among the DRC's neighbors has claimed approximately six million lives since 1996 and displacing over five million Congolese, making the conflict in Eastern DRC the deadliest in the world history (Parens, 2022. Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and the DRC are the main actors in fueling this ethnic and geopolitical competition. This conflict then, has been the main cause of poverty cycle and militarization in DRC. To curb this regional conflict, Kenya, the US and concerned international actors should work towards peaceful resolution since the effects might be dire and spill over to the whole of Central and East Africa in the near future. If the effects of

this conflict get out of hand, the Chinese, Russian, or other interested extremist involvement in this region's affairs to suit their interest won't be avoided (Parens, 2022).

Strategic elite alliances, regional (formal and informal) economic and trade networks, a continual flow of refugees, and the high number of mercenaries traveling between the nations, all contribute to the interconnectedness of the conflicts in the GLR. Warfare in the DRC is not an anomaly and fits into this nuanced picture. The country's abundance of natural resources, which makes it more desirable to transnational players than the majority of other countries, makes it unique with respect to other nations. Investors do not appear to shy away from the nation even during civil wars (Dokken, 2008).

Even more worrisome are the other actors who are invisible yet quite strong. While some covertly support peace, Baregu (2011) asserts that the majority almost always works to undermine it. These actors include the intelligence and security services (CIA, M16, Regional Security Organizations), secret service agencies, private military and security firms, drug traffickers, arms dealers, and money launderers working in the criminal justice system's murky and ambiguous corners. International financial institutions, weak nations, warlords, and plunderers—individuals and groups that prolong and profit from poverty—all collaborate in intricate interdependencies.

International corporations vying for concessions and exploration rights in the DRC continue to find the country quite alluring. The mining prospects for copper, cobalt, gold, and diamonds are particularly intriguing. Investors disregard territorial integrity or national sovereignty. They get into agreements with whoever controls the resources, whether the government, invading forces, or warlords. Crime networks that include money launderers, gun dealers, and drug traffickers are another category of transnational actors in the DRC. These networks have formed arrangements with both state and warlord players to loot Congo's natural riches, obviously taking advantage of the troubles in the Country (Dokken, 2008).

Several examples demonstrate how criminal networks can arm themselves to control natural resources. The function of the region is a crucial factor in the operation of regional security assemblages. Both benefits and drawbacks result from this. The issue of resources and outside engagement also raises some concerns about the use of private security contractors as actors in security assemblages intended to preserve resources and the involvement of African nations in intra-African wars. In particular, the case of the DRC stands out since, at one point or another, troops from Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Uganda, and Zambia were stationed there. Most of the

time, they were "guarding" strategic assets, and even after withdrawal, there was still some engagement with auxiliary troops financed and backed by particular governments. Even actors formerly employed by the government play roles in several security assemblages and lead double lives as part of many security complexes. For instance, the International Criminal Court (ICC) at some point had brought criminal charges against Jean-Pierre Bemba (Breslin & Stuart, 2013) who was perceived as funding militia in the Eastern DRC.

Several modern insurgencies involve governments against rebel groups that cross international borders, seek refuge in neighboring states, and get funding from competing governments. When transnational rebels reside in another country, the war ceases to be entirely internal and inevitably involves regional governments. As security forces cannot operate on foreign soil, conventional counterinsurgency techniques can only do so to neutralize the threat. This can alter the nature of the conflict and trigger an escalation involving nearby states. Cross-border militancy can exacerbate regional strains and perhaps ignite a full-fledged civil war between governments. For instance, a burgeoning Hutu insurgency based in the DRC presented significant difficulties for the new Tutsi-led authority in Rwanda following the 1994 genocide in that country. Rwanda invaded the DRC twice as a result of the Hutu rebel force's presence in the DRC: first to overthrow President Mobutu Sese Seko and install what it believed to be a friendly rule, and second to overthrow the Laurent Kabila government that he had helped put in place (Salehyan, 2010).

Past Security Interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The conflict in the DRC is a standard example of a protracted conflict with catastrophic events that are putting the will of sub-regional players and the entire international community to the test. Any signs of achievement are frequently swiftly erased, which results in evident group discontent. Even when the global community tries to ignore it, the issue keeps resurfacing with fresh difficulties. The GLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regions are impacted by negative events most frequently in the Eastern DRC. Overlooking the issue is no longer an alternative. This conflict is predominantly unusual since the international community continually tries new peace initiatives of involvement hoping that they might work, despite the lack of a real, long-term solution in sight (Namangale, n.d.). Simply, it can be noted that the peace agreements are stop gap measures seeking for long term solutions among neighboring states of the DRC and

international actors since there is no notable improvement in DRC's security regardless of the numerous signed agreements.

When Laurent Kabila's army overthrew the then Mobutu regime in 1998, the DRC was accepted into the regional organization SADC. Ever since, SADC and the DRC have largely collaborated in their interactions. Even though the DRC belongs to a number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), SADC actions have helped to uphold peace and security in the country. Angola, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and other nations have all participated in SADC's war interventions in the DRC, as well as having coalitions inside Southern Africa and the regional bloc (ACCORD, 2016).

According to Day (2022), massive amounts of the United Nation's budget, roughly $7 billion for peacekeeping missions, have been diverted to state-building; in the DRC, for instance, the UN peace operation costs more than $1 billion annually, and it is accompanied by hundreds of millions of dollars in bilateral development assistance to governance institutions throughout the nation. Day (2022) further adds that fixing failing or unstable states has taken thirty years, and astonishingly little has been accomplished as a result. Countries like the DRC continue to be mired in the violent conflict despite hundreds of billions of dollars in foreign aid, ongoing UN peace operations, and direct assistance for decades and have shown they are unable to establish the kinds of legitimate, effective institutions that international interveners had envisioned. Some research indicates that international interventions may sometimes have the opposite effect of what they intended, weakening the very state institutions they were meant to strengthen by fostering increased reliance on outside assistance or supporting authoritarian regimes who do the same. At worst, state creation can turn out to be the problem rather than the solution for a failing state.

The largest financial support offered by Belgium, the EU, the US, Canada, Japan, and South Africa to ensure adequate representation of interested parties at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) also proved ineffective. The ICD did not become the definitive peace deal until extensive efforts from different actors such as SADC's persistent pressure, backing from South Africa, the United Nations, European Union, the USA, and the international community, as well as the Pretoria peace accord established between the Rwandan and Congolese governments. The efforts that resulted in this final peace agreement reached in Pretoria on July 30, 2002, and finally endorsed by all parties

as an all-inclusive agreement in Sun City on April 2, 2003, involved a large number of participants, including governments with armies in the Congo, such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, and Uganda (Justenhoven, Ehrhart, Verlag, 2008).

A classic example of an armed struggle is the Ituri War. It linked regional political fighting between governments in the GLR to larger processes of political reconfiguration in the Congo. In addition to these political considerations, the warring parties were frequently suspected of having only economic objectives. During the Ugandan army's control of the region from 1998 to 2003, the Ituri conflict grew in the shadow of the Congo War. The neighboring nation sponsored the creation of armed organizations in Congo that were used in battles with the Congolese government and to manage the conquered territory with its Rwandan friends. Since then, Ituri has seen fighting between a dozen local armed groups, some of which were ethnically driven. In addition to Ugandan incitement, other factors that contributed to their development included a number of long-standing, local, and national disagreements that became more extreme during the Congo wars and the rise in political violence (Veit, 2010).

Fighting increased in the eastern districts under the authority of the Rwandan-RCD, which has its headquarters in Goma, despite the peace accord signed in Pretoria on July 30, 2002. The United Nations Mission in the Congo (MONUC), the largest UN peacekeeping force, could not stop the development of new armed groups or the rise in bloodshed (Justenhoven, Ehrhart, Verlag, 2008). The international community interfered heavily in Ituri after a peace treaty that put an official end to the Congo conflicts in 2003. The United Nations Mission in the Congo (MONUC), which had been going on since 1999, only started operating in Ituri in 2003. From June to September 2003, the European Union dispatched forces to ruthlessly subdue Bunia, the district's capital, because it was unable to stop the rising bloodshed between militias at the time. After this incident, a more powerful MONUC force retook control. Following that, the Ituri brigade of the UN, which had several thousand soldiers, was given the authority to uphold peace under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Since then, MONUC has fought to establish its authority over the armed groups in Ituri. Following MONUC's (with its appendages with MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade) example, numerous other foreign organizations and NGOs made Ituri a region of intense intervention (Veit, 2010).

In most cases, the move to restore peace and security in the DRC is caused by hidden interests that motivate the conflict in the region. This makes it harder for agreements to take any effect.

Examples of these agreements are; the Lusaka Agreement of 1999, Sun City (South Africa, 2002), Ituri 2006, AND Goma 2008. Additionally, impunity is a major barrier to peace realization in the DRC since it makes negotiations harder. Prevailing power dynamics inside the DRC, neighboring states, and individual UN Security Council members in regards to the GLR conflict therefore, are great considerations in managing past failures and trailblazing a new path for sustainable peace in the region (Mureithi, 2014, p. 60).

Conclusion

The DRC is a territory of great interest because of its geostrategic importance, enormous riches, and recurrent intra- and inter-state conflicts and wars that have plagued the area. It is true that the DRC and its neighbors play a crucial role in any peace process since without stability and peace in the Congo, neither peace in central Africa nor the GLR can be feasible. The EAC Regional Force's entry into the DRC is still an extremely precarious operation. Given the dynamics and the precarious position in the GLR, which has the potential to undo the gains made recently, this study is timely.

In practically every attempt to bring about peace, failures and issues arise. Still, in the history of intrastate battles, those encountered throughout the process of bringing about peace in the DRC are exceptional. Journalists and academics have been unable to explain why Congo's bloodshed has persisted despite peace efforts. Unlike many other peace processes across the world, the Congolese peace process was heavily supported and facilitated from the beginning in 1998 by a number of "individuals, organizations, and states" with extensive knowledge and experience in resolving disputes through peaceful negotiations. Facilitators have worked to incorporate prominent combatants, leaders of nonviolent political parties, and members of diverse socioeconomic groups in the peace process since 1998. Yet, when the ultimate peace accord in 2003 was reached and the world's largest UN peacekeeping force was deployed, not only did the violence not end, but it worsened as new rebel factions emerged in the country's eastern areas (Justenhoven, Ehrhart, Verlag, 2008).

It is against this background 'hat the biggest dilemma for the author of this paper is whether the EAC Regional Force will make any difference in a region with such complexities in terms of security. The precise nature of the regional force's mandate has been inconsistent since the EAC forces were deployed. The success of the EAC's first deployment will depend on the successful

transfer of responsibility to the government's Military Forces for the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC). Due to unfinished security sector reforms, the FARDC continues to be just as politicized, divided, and inefficient as before. Experts contend that, given this fact, a short-term improvement appears unlikely as long as the EAC Regional Force is in place (Wekesa, n.d.).

Recommendations

Great Lakes Region's conflicts should be handled locally because they collectively form what can be considered a conflict formation or system. A conflict formation is a collection of conflicts connected in such a way that they mutually feed off and fuel one another. These disputes cross international lines and are typically initiated by the same parties acting in their self-interest. This implies that any attempt to address any of them must consider this reality and adopt dynamic, extra-territorial techniques. Failing to recognize this fact has invariably led to solutions that are incomplete, ineffective, and unsustainable (Baregu, 2011).

Problems such as the "struggle for control of political power and unresolved civil rights over land ownership, greed for resources and economic benefits and lack of proper mechanisms to monitor and enforce the agreement have been cited as the bases for the collapse of the peace efforts to avert violence in the Congo (Justenhoven, Ehrhart, Verlag, 2008). It will be crucial to understand that, just as the RSCT asserts, the DRC is currently confronting numerous underlying and interconnected obstacles as the EAC Regional Force takes shape. According to reports, the M23 is not the only rebel organization engaged in hostilities in the area. In the Eastern DRC, more than 120 armed groups are active. When attempting to comprehend the goals of each group, this offers a challenging position. All groups are also motivated by the need to survive. In conclusion, and according to scholars such as Wekesa (n.d.), the primary goal of the EAC Regional Force and its deployment in the DRC remains the biggest unanswered question. If the EAC fails to specify its goals or how its intervention will differ from previous ones, then its presence in the DRC might as well be seen as just another mission with personal agendas.

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