

**PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE PEACE
A CALL TO STRENGTHEN CANADA'S PEACE-MAKING CAPACITY**

**COUNTRY STUDY:
IS CANADA TURNING ITS BACK ON
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO?**

**DISCUSSION PAPER
BY
SURENDRINI WIJAYARATNE
PEACE AND CONFLICT POLICY ANALYST
CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**RESEARCH FOR THIS DISCUSSION PAPER WAS SUPPORTED BY THE
WALTER AND DUNCAN GORDON FOUNDATION**

NOVEMBER 2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 1 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 3 |
| | |
| 1.0 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| 1.1 Overview | 4 |
| | |
| 2.0 PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN SUPPORT | 5 |
| Recommendations | 6 |
| | |
| 3.0 THE GOMA PEACE PROCESS | 7 |
| 3.1 An Overview of Current Peace Efforts..... | 8 |
| 3.1.1 The Nairobi Communiqué..... | 8 |
| 3.1.2 The Goma Conference on Peace, Security and Development..... | 9 |
| 3.1.3 The Amani Program..... | 9 |
| 3.2 Engaging the CNDP | 10 |
| 3.3 The Participation of Civil Society and Women’s Groups | 11 |
| 3.4 Root Causes Missing in the Goma Conference | 12 |
| 3.5 Achievements at the Goma Peace Conference | 14 |
| | |
| 4.0 SEXUAL VIOLENCE..... | 14 |
| 4.1 The Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence..... | 15 |
| 4.2 Women’s Groups Working with Victims of Sexual Violence..... | 16 |
| 4.3 Sexual Violence and Armed Groups | 17 |
| 4.4 Sexual Violence and Perverse Incentives | 18 |
| | |
| 5.0 THE INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE..... | 18 |
| 5.1 The Nairobi Training Workshop for Women ¹⁹² | |
| 5.2 The Sun City Negotiations and the Women’s Caucus..... | 20 |
| | |
| 6.0 CONCLUSION..... | 22 |

**PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE PEACE:
A CALL TO STRENGTHEN CANADA'S PEACE-MAKING CAPACITY**

**COUNTRY STUDY:
IS CANADA TURNING ITS BACK ON
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO?**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Will the international community turn its back on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)? This question was asked repeatedly while researching peace processes in the DRC in July 2008. It is painfully clear, based on 37 interviews with diplomats, Congolese and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's groups, government officials and community and religious leaders, that the Congolese in eastern DRC are desperate for peace. Faced with on-going violence, 23 armed rebel groups in eastern DRC, and unresolved social tensions dating back to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Congolese have tried to rebuild their communities and their lives. Fifteen years after one of the world's worst tragedies in the African Great Lakes region, the Rwandan genocide, eastern DRC remains vulnerable and conflict-ridden.

Despite provisions in peace agreements to integrate rebel groups into the national army of the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC), one of the largest rebel groups, *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP), led by Laurent Nkunda, has not been integrated. With violence persisting in the east, progress made on democratic reforms and development in the rest of the country is fragile. Unless the international community, including Canada, remains engaged in the DRC, the country runs the risk of being subsumed by violence. The safety and security of civilians will be jeopardized. And the impact of the major investments, both human and financial, that Canada has already made to the DRC will be dramatically weakened.

Since November 2007, two major peace agreements have been signed to address the violence in eastern DR Congo. The Nairobi Communiqué, between the Rwandan and Congolese governments commits both countries to disarm, by force if necessary, the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR). The FDLR, operating out of eastern DR Congo, is made up of members of the *Interahamwe* paramilitary group, said to be responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and others opposed to the current Rwandan government of Paul Kagame. The Nairobi Communiqué also calls on both states to stop supporting any national and foreign rebel group operating in the DRC.

In January 2008, the Goma Conference on Peace, Security and Development resulted in the Act of Engagement. The Act was signed on January 23, 2008 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and 22 armed factions operating in the east. Some of the armed groups included in this Agreement are the CNDP, Coalition of Congolese Patriotic Resistance (PARECO), and various Mai Mai local defense militias. The Act of Engagement calls for a ceasefire, withdrawal of troops from key areas in the east and the creation of a United Nations "buffer zone". Rebels are granted amnesty for acts of insurgency or acts of war, but not for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Both the Nairobi Communiqué and the Act of Engagement were agreements between men from armed groups and mostly arrived at through “behind-the-scenes” negotiations. The broader Goma Conference, however, included a public dialogue with civil society, women’s groups and representative from local communities. Women and civil society organizations successfully put issues of sexual and gender-based violence and internally displaced and refugee women on the Conference agenda. However, women interviewed said that these issues were not sufficiently discussed and much more work needs to be done to ensure women’s issues are included in the implementation of the agreements.

In addition to the Act of Engagement, the Goma Conference also produced the Amani Program. The goal of the Amani Program is to implement the Goma agreements on disarmament and demobilization, inter-communal dialogue and good governance. The Amani Program is also tasked with upholding the cease-fire arrangements. Unfortunately, the CNDP is now boycotting the Amani Program and the cease-fire has not held. The implementation of the Amani Program also suffers from a lack of funding.

Levels of sexual violence in eastern DRC can only be described as extreme. 2, 200 rapes were recorded in June 2008 in North Kivu Province alone.¹ Canada has supported the United Nations Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence by generously contributing \$15 million over four years. However, representatives of civil society organizations working with victims of sexual violence are highly critical that the UN funds have not translated into direct victim assistance. International and local NGO staff said that high expectations for the UNFPA program and its failure to deliver results has led to disappointment on part of women’s groups who thought the program could respond to their needs.

Canada actively supported the 2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) and the subsequent political transition culminating in presidential elections in 2006. Canada was also a member of the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT).

The ICD was a major benchmark in Congolese history as the peace conference set the parameters for political transition after close to 40 years of dictatorship and military rule. Congolese women, working together across conflict lines, played a role in advocating for peace and for women’s rights issues to be included in the ICD negotiations. Women, despite the threat and the daily reality of sexual violence and other forms of violence against women, have been tireless in promoting and building peace. Women’s groups need the support of the international community, including Canada, to build on the work they are doing to bring peace to the DRC.

As part of Canada’s “whole-of-government” approach the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Department of National Defence (DND) are all involved in the DRC. However, Canada’s commitment to the DRC may be waning, particularly in the areas of diplomacy, peace-making and peace-building. The omission of the DRC in the Global Peace and Security Fund may point to a lack of political will by Canada to continue its support for peace-building in the DRC. Canada must not turn its back on the Democratic Republic of Congo.

¹ Data from the Congo Advocacy Coalition: Update on Protection of Civilians in Eastern Congo’s Peace Process (August 2008); accessed on September 24, 2008: <http://www.enoughproject.org/node/1006>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Canadian government must immediately exert its full diplomatic influence to call for an end to violence in eastern DRC by:
 - Advocating strongly with the governments of the DRC and Rwanda to uphold commitments made in the Nairobi Communiqué.
 - Calling on all armed groups that signed the Act of Engagement, especially the CNDP, to abide by the cease-fire agreement and immediately end all acts of violence, including sexual attacks, against civilians.
 - Funding the full implementation of the Amani Program in collaboration with other donors.
2. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Development (SCFAID) should review Canada's support across all government departments involved in the DRC since the 1990's to ensure all policies support the goal of peace in the DRC. SCFAID should:
 - Immediately consider how Canada could contribute additional peace operations support to MONUC's overstretched peacekeeping forces in the DRC.
 - Revisit the decision not to include the DRC in the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF) priority countries list.
 - Assess if Canada could do more to support peace processes in the DRC.
3. Developing a strategy in CIDA and DFAIT to support sexual violence programs in the DRC. A strategy would ensure that:
 - CIDA funds programs aimed at strengthening local capacity to work on issues of sexual violence.
 - Continued funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence is based explicitly on building local capacity.
 - Victim support is gender and culturally sensitive and includes collective approaches to healing.
 - Humanitarian access and cease-fire discussions include ending sexual attacks.
 - Men are included in sexual violence programming.
 - Support is given to programs aimed at broader violence against women issues.
4. DFAIT should examine how the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) sets its priorities for supporting peace processes including:
 - Reviewing and evaluating Canadian support to peace processes, in particular, Canada's participation as observers, chairs, and facilitators to peace talks.

**PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE PEACE:
A CALL TO STRENGTHEN CANADA’S PEACE-MAKING CAPACITY**

**COUNTRY STUDY:
IS CANADA TURNING ITS BACK ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO?**

1.0 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This research study on Canada’s support for peace processes was conducted over one year through a Global Youth Fellowship with the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and supported by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC). The research is qualitative consisting of semi-structured individual interviews and small focus groups held in July 2008 in Kinshasa, Goma, and Bukavu. This paper focuses on two peace processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo: the 2002-2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue, and, the 2007-2008 Goma Peace Process. Lessons identified, good practice, and recommendations are aimed at stimulating discussion on strengthening Canada’s peace-making capacity. This paper is the first in a series exploring peace processes and women’s participation in these processes.

The views presented in this paper are not a reflection of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.

1.1 Overview

The Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire) has been embroiled in a number of wars since 1993. The influx of Rwandan refugees, including *genocidaires*², into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) following the 1994 Rwandan genocide set the context for the 1993 to 1997 war. The next major war, 1998 to 2003, was characterized as a “power grab” by regional countries. Uganda, Rwanda and other regional forces supported rebel groups in the DRC, while Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe supported the Congolese government. The Final Act of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, signed in April 2003, brought this conflict to an end. The Final Act’s Global and Inclusive Agreement set the parameters for political transition and elections.

The wars left a profound legacy of destruction. According to the International Rescue Committee (2008), 5.4 million Congolese died, directly or indirectly, from armed conflicts and humanitarian crisis during the 1998 to 2007 period. Since 2003, the DRC has gone through some dramatic changes, including elections and a constitutional referendum. However, the signing of peace agreements and a nascent transition to democracy has not yet brought peace to the country.

2 *Genocidaires*: Those responsible for, or implicated in, perpetrating the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which an estimated 800 000 Tutsi’s and moderate Hutu’s were killed. Genocide is defined as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.” For more see the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm.

Violence, driven by land conflicts, ethnic tensions and the exploitation of natural resources, continues to wreak destruction on the lives of women, men, boys and girls, living in eastern DR Congo. According to the United Nations (UN), 1.1 million people remain displaced in North and South Kivu Provinces. Levels of sexual violence can only be described as extreme, with 2, 200 rapes recorded in June 2008 in North Kivu Province alone. The humanitarian challenge is made worse by attacks on aid agencies, with 36 attacks reported in North Kivu since January 2008, resulting in injuries to 15 aid workers.³

Violence in the east persists despite two recent peace agreements. The first agreement, the Nairobi Communiqué, signed between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Government of Rwanda in November 2007, focused on demobilizing the Rwandan (predominantly Hutu) rebel group known as the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR). The FDLR, operating out of eastern DR Congo, is made up of members of the *Interahamwe* paramilitary group, said to be responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and others opposed to the current Rwandan government of Paul Kagame. The second peace agreement, The Act of Engagement, was signed in January 2008 in Goma, North Kivu, between the Congolese government and 22 Congolese armed groups. Some of the armed groups included in this Agreement are the *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP), Coalition of Congolese Patriotic Resistance (PARECO) and various Mai Mai local defense militias. The FDLR was not included in the Goma Peace Conference and therefore not party to the Act of Engagement. Despite the peace agreements, violence continues unabated with at least 200 civilians killed, 150 000 people displaced, ongoing sexual violence, and according to MONUC representatives, close to 200 ceasefire violations since January 2008.⁴

2.0 PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN SUPPORT

Canada actively supported the 2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue and subsequent political transition which culminated in presidential elections in 2006. Canada was also a member of the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT) and co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region which supports the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Canada has provided over \$50 million in humanitarian and longer-term development assistance to the DRC since April 2006⁵ and has been a lead donor to the UN Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence contributing \$15 million over four years. More recently, Canada financially supported the Goma Peace Process and the Amani Program. Eleven Canadian military officers are attached to MONUC, the UN Peacekeeping Mission.

Clearly, Canada has contributed financial, human, and political resources to supporting peace in the DRC. Unfortunately, representatives of local civil society organizations in the DRC and Canadian NGOs say that Canadian support, both financial and political, is decreasing. This reduced support is particularly felt in peace-making efforts where Canadian diplomats once

³ Data from the Congo Advocacy Coalition: Update on Protection of Civilians in Eastern Congo's Peace Process (August 2008): accessed on September 24, 2008: <http://www.enoughproject.org/node/1006>

⁴ *Ibid* (excluding MONUC ceasefire violations data).

⁵ Press release accessed on June 17, 2008: http://w01.international.gc.ca/MinPub/Publication.aspx?isRedirect=True&Language=E&publication_id=385792&docnumber=19.

played an active and committed role in the CIAT and as co-Chairs of the Groups of Friends of the ICGLR. Canadian diplomats do not appear to be active in current initiatives like the Goma Peace Process. According to interviewees, Canadian programming also suffers from a lack of visibility due, mainly, to the inability of Embassy staff to communicate publicly without prior approval from Ottawa. Some representatives from civil society, familiar with Canada's role in the DRC since the 1990's, interpret the lack of visibility as indicative of a lack of interest by the Canadian government in the DRC and Great Lakes Region of Africa.

As part of Canada's "whole-of-government" approach, the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) are all active in the DRC. Interviewees, familiar with Canadian policy, said that DFAIT assistance is declining as the need for support for peace efforts, peace-building and stabilization is increasing. The changing priorities and allocations within the International Assistance Envelope (IAE) for Peace and Security funds combined with the concentration of funds in fewer countries, both at DFAIT and CIDA, has resulted in fewer funds available for peace-building and increased competition for country-specific support. The DRC is no longer on the list of countries for engagement under the Canada's Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF). The GPSF omission means that programming funds are limited to CIDA's development and humanitarian aid program, or to DND support to MONUC. Since the DRC is not on the list of GPSF priority countries, it is all the more difficult to get funding from DFAIT's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START). Since START is the main funder for policing and security sector reform, access to justice programs, and specific peace-building programming not related to other development efforts, Canada's support for these programming areas in the DRC is, sadly, lacking.

As violence persists in eastern DRC, and as the rest of the country works toward fully implementing the provisions agreed to in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), Canada must ensure that it remains committed to the DRC. For Canada to lose interest in the DRC now, while violent conflict is still a fact of life in eastern DRC, would not only leave hundreds of thousands of civilians at risk, but would also undermine Canada's long history of support to DRC and to the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Canadian government must immediately exert its full diplomatic influence to call for an end to violence in eastern DRC by:
 - ❑ Advocating strongly with the governments of the DRC and Rwanda to uphold commitments made in Nairobi Communiqué.
 - ❑ Calling on all armed groups that signed the Act of Engagement, especially the CNDP, to abide by the cease-fire agreement and immediately end all acts of violence, including sexual attacks, against civilians.
 - ❑ Funding the full implementation of the Amani Program in collaboration with other donors.

2. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Development (SCFAID) should review Canada's support across all government departments involved in the DRC since the 1990's to ensure all policies support the goal of peace in the DRC. The review should:
 - ❑ Immediately consider how Canada could contribute additional peace operations support to MONUC's overstretched peacekeeping forces in the DRC.
 - ❑ Revisit the decision not to include the DRC in the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF) priority countries list.
 - ❑ Assess if Canada could do more to support peace processes in the DRC.
3. Developing a strategy in CIDA and DFAIT to support sexual violence programs in the DRC. A strategy would ensure that:
 - ❑ CIDA funds programs aimed at strengthening local capacity to work on issues of sexual violence.
 - ❑ Continued funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence is based explicitly on building local capacity.
 - ❑ Victim support is gender and culturally sensitive and include collective approaches to healing.
 - ❑ Humanitarian access and cease-fire discussions include ending sexual attacks.
 - ❑ Men are included in sexual violence programming.
 - ❑ Support is given to programs aimed at broader violence against women issues.
4. DFAIT should examine how the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) sets its priorities for supporting peace processes including:
 - ❑ Reviewing and evaluating Canadian support to peace processes, in particular, Canada's participation as observers, chairs, and facilitators to peace talks.

3.0 THE GOMA PEACE PROCESS

One of the core agreements of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the December 2002 Global and Inclusive Agreement (GIA), laid the ground for the December 2006 elections. These elections brought President Joseph Kabila to power and ended three years of political transition. Despite commendable success in holding nation-wide elections and in adopting a new constitution by referendum, the security sector reform provisions of the ICD and GIA remain unfulfilled, particularly in eastern DR Congo. Restructuring the army through *brassage* programs, aimed at integrating various armed factions, has remained an elusive goal. The lack of progress on the security sector front has had devastating consequences for the likelihood of peace and stability in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

Violence in the Kivu's dates back to the conflicts of the 1990's and the entry of Rwandan *genocidaires* into Congolese territory. Conflict in the Kivu's has remained unresolved and politically neglected as other parts of the DRC make progress in implementing the political transition envisaged in the 2002-2003 peace agreements. Despite provisions in the agreements to integrate the military forces in the east into the national army of the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC), General Laurent Nkunda's CNDP forces have not been integrated. Clashes between Nkunda's CNDP forces and the FARDC escalated in 2006 and 2007 adding to the humanitarian crisis in the east. The presence of 22 other armed groups has militarized all of eastern DRC. Following a major confrontation where Nkunda's 5000-strong CNDP forces defeated more than 15 thousand soldiers of the FARDC in 2007, pressure increased on the Congolese government to seek non-military solutions with Nkunda. Since October 2008, violence has again escalated in North Kivu province due to clashes between the CNDP and the FARDC.

3.1 An Overview of Current Peace Efforts

3.1.1 The Nairobi Communiqué

The Nairobi Communiqué is a product of the on-going peace initiatives of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission. Commission members include the Foreign Ministers from Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. It is facilitated by the US with the African Union (AU), European Union (EU) and MONUC acting as observers. Canada is not part of the Tripartite process, nor were other international actors previously involved in peace initiatives included. The Italian faith-based peace-making group, Sant'Edigio, for example, organized a Rome 2005 conference with the FDLR, Congolese civil society and government representatives, and the international community to address the issue of repatriation of Rwandan refugees. As part of the Sant'Edigio process, the FDLR was to identify the *genocidaires* within their ranks. This work, and the work of other international actors, was unfortunately not used during the Nairobi Communiqué process.

In November 2007, the Rwandan and Congolese governments signed the Nairobi Communiqué, agreeing to work together to “dismantle the ex-FAR / *Interahamwe* as a genocidal military organization operating in the territory of the DRC” (par. 4). The Nairobi Communiqué clearly endorsed and committed signatories to taking military action to tackle the FDLR (the Rwandan, predominantly Hutu, rebel group). The Communiqué also committed both states to preventing “...the direct or indirect support – political, material or human to any national and foreign armed group operating in the DRC” (par. 5). In practical terms, “national and foreign armed groups” refers to the CNDP and FDLR as both are suspected of receiving financial and material support from supporters inside Rwanda. The Communiqué further obligated the DRC to “... launch military operations, as a matter of urgency, to dismantle the ex- FAR / *Interahamwe*”. The Communiqué stipulated that armed groups, in particular Nkunda's CNDP, were not to receive any military, material or human support from Rwanda. The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) was recognized as an essential partner in “dismantling” the *Interahamwe* in DRC. Steps to disarm and demobilize FDLR fighters and to repatriate Rwandan (*non-genocidaires*) refugees were also included in the Communiqué. The emphasis of the Communiqué was clearly on approving military means to respond to the FDLR. The commitment by the Congolese government to politically and militarily dismantle the FDLR was key to setting the stage for the Goma Peace Process as national rebel groups, the CNDP for example, cite the presence of the FDLR as justification for their own existence.

As part of the Nairobi Communiqué, the Rwandan government agreed to release a list of suspected *genocidaires* within the FDLR. The list consisted of about 7000 names, which coincides with approximately the same number of people in the total FDLR ranks. The FDLR interpreted the list of 7000 as an accusation that all FDLR's are *genocidaries* and, therefore, could be charged with genocide if returned to Rwanda. The demobilization and repatriation for FDLR combatants, in this context, has become even more difficult.

3.1.2 The Goma Conference on Peace, Security and Development

Two months after the signing of the Nairobi Communiqué, the Goma Conference on Peace, Security and Development was held in January 2008 in Goma, North Kivu. The Conference focused exclusively on the conflicts raging in North and South Kivu Provinces in eastern DRC. More than 1500 representatives from civil society, government, and armed groups met to discuss *inter alia* the cessation of violence in the east. The Conference resulted in the Act of Engagement signed on January 23, 2008, by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and 22⁶ armed factions operating in the east. The Agreement is endorsed by Kambasu Ngeze, the representative of Laurent Nkunda's CNDP. Indeed, reports indicate that Ngeze was the first representative of rebel groups to sign the Agreement. The Agreement calls for a ceasefire, withdrawal of troops from key areas in the east and the creation of a UN "buffer zone". Rebels are granted amnesty for acts of insurgency or acts of war. War crimes and crimes against humanity, however, are not included under the amnesty provisions. Unfortunately, the cease-fire agreement has not held.

While the Goma Process included 22 armed groups, it excluded one of the chief belligerent groups, the predominantly Rwandan-Hutu rebels known as the FDLR. The FDLR is comprised of, primarily, Rwandan refugees, some of whom are suspected of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi's and moderate Hutu's in Rwanda. Some interviewees said that approximately 1,000 of the 6,000-7,000-strong FDLR could be *genocidaires*. Regardless of whether some of the FDLR combatants are *genocidaires*, the FDLR, as a group, has been implicated in massive human rights violations, including war crimes and sexual and gender-based violence, in eastern DRC.⁷

3.1.3 The Amani Program

The Amani Program was established after the Goma Conference to implement agreements in the Act of Engagement. The Act of Engagement consists of four main articles comprising:

1. A cease-fire agreement for all hostilities in North and South Kivu;
2. The establishment of the Mixed Technical Commission on Peace and Security co-chaired by the government and an international facilitator. Included in the mandate of the Commission is the demobilization of armed groups and implementation of the Nairobi Communiqué;

⁶ Since October 2008 another armed group has emerged in the east bring the total to 23.

⁷ For more on rights violations see Twenty-sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 3 July 2008 (S/2008/433): <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/403/27/IMG/N0840327.pdf?OpenElement>.

3. Respect for humanitarian principles and human rights, including establishing a Commission to supervise the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs); and,
4. Justice provisions, including an amnesty for acts of aggression and insurgency from 2003 onwards and the establishment of a Technical Commission to finalize the disengagement plan.

The Amani Program attempts to respond to two of the biggest challenges in the east: fostering national and social reconciliation; and disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating combatants from 22 armed groups. The road since the signing of the Agreement has been difficult. Cease-fire violations are common with MONUC reporting over 200 between January and August, 2008. Despite the challenges, the Amani Program remains the best chance for peace the Kivu’s has seen in a long time. President Kabila, on September 14, 2008, announced the renewal of the Amani Program for one year.

3.2 Engaging the CNDP

“Following the massive defeat of FARDC forces in the Fall 2007 by CNDP, the likelihood of military victory by Congolese forces also seemed like a slim prospect.” (Goma – NGO representative)

The January 23, 2008, Act of Engagement (the main agreement coming out of the Goma Peace Process) was, according to diplomats interviewed, a “back-door” negotiation. The United States, European Union, African Union, MONUC, and rebel groups were part of the negotiations. Civil society and women’s groups were not involved in these “back-door” talks. According to one interviewee, the Goma Peace Process was the result of a shift in strategy by MONUC. MONUC, previously, did not engage in direct talks with CNDP leader, Laurent Nkunda. The international community, and the Congolese government, however, realized that sidelining Nkunda made peace a distant prospect.

Earlier this year, with the possibility of the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigating Nkunda for war crimes, there was increased pressure on Nkunda to co-operate, at least initially, with the Goma Peace Process. While Nkunda claims his CNDP troops are protecting Congolese Tutsi’s (Banya-

Lesson Identified

Peace agreements are fragile. Their implementation is dependent on the will of belligerents to abide to the agreement. Pressure through diplomatic channels, and MONUC, needs to be sustained for belligerent forces to uphold their commitments. Unfortunately, MONUC is overstretched and the will of the diplomatic community remains uncertain.

While peace agreements are critical for establishing peace and can provide parameters for political and social reforms, they should not be exclusively relied on to resolve conflicts. Parallel multi-track and multi-level efforts are required to ensure ownership of a peace process by the affected-communities. Ownership occurs when communities and civil society are an integral part of a peace process (though not necessarily directly involved negotiations).

Recommendation

- ❑ DFAIT and DND should consider how they could further support MONUC’s peacekeeping and peace-making capacity.
- ❑ Ensure civil society and local community participation in a peace process is part of the criteria for CIDA and DFAIT funding for peace processes.

mulunge) from the FDLR, CNDP's acts of violence have been rejected by the Banyamulunge – the very community Nkunda claims to protect. The Banyamulunge, in an October 2008 communiqué signed by their National President, Enock Ruberangabo Sebinezza, rejected Nkunda's call to arms and further called for the CNDP to respect the Act of Engagement and the Amani Program. The Banyamulunge communiqué also urged communities in the North and South Kivu to unite against communal violence and for the Congolese government and the international community to call on the CNDP to respect the Amani Program.

Since the signing of the Act of Engagement in January 2008, the CNDP has pulled out of the Amani Program. The CNDP will not lay down arms while the FDLR is armed. According to two interviewees involved in the Amani Program, the CNDP has boycotted participation because of both the FDLR disarmament issue and *brassage* (the process of integrating rebel forces into the national army). The CNDP is demanding that its troops, mainly based in the Kivu Provinces, remain there after they are integrated into the national army. According to interviewees, this demand is being met with resistance by both the government and civil society organizations. The CNDP is responsible for abuses against civilians in the Kivu's and the victims, understandably, do not want the CNDP as part of the national army in the same area where it once perpetrated abuses. Laurent Nkunda also wants the title of Commander in Chief as a prerequisite for CNDP's entry into the *brassage*.

Lesson Identified

Considerable skill and financial investments are needed to prepare for negotiations leading to a peace agreement. The same level of skill and preparation is required for public dialogue processes. Women's groups need dedicated support in order to effectively negotiate their priorities in public dialogue processes. If this support is not available, large ad-hoc conferences may, unintentionally, increase expectations for quick results, leading to frustration and disappointment.

Recommendation

- Ensure that DFAIT / CIDA criteria for funding peace conferences and public dialogues include support to women's groups and civil society organizations.

Another reason for Nkunda's refusal to participate in the Amani Program, according to interviewees, across ethnic groups in both North and South Kivu, is that the CNDP controls and benefits from mining operations in the region. The CNDP's ability to financially benefit from mining operations makes it all the more difficult to place pressure on Nkunda to negotiate.

3.3 The Participation of Civil Society and Women's Groups

"Goma was not Sun City, there was no message of solidarity from women, their effectiveness in raising gender issues and being a 'peace lobby' was minimal." (Goma – NGO representative)

Civil society organizations are skeptical of the Goma Conference. However, even skeptics interviewed want to see the process succeed. The main criticism of the Goma Conference was that the process was imposed on the local population. Although the conference included civil society actors, some saw civil society's involvement as merely a face-saving or legitimacy-

granting gesture, on the part of both the government and international community, as “behind-the-scenes” negotiations for the Act of Engagement were already well-advanced. The Conference, according to interviewees, served to validate the process. Civil society or local community involvement in determining the parameters of the conference were seen, by almost all interviewed, as minimal.

Women’s rights advocates said that discussions, at Goma, about gender equality issues were weak. Issues of violence against women, displaced and refugee women, and sexual violence were not sufficiently addressed. The breakdown in women’s solidarity after the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (see section 5) was noted by many interviewees as contributing to the lack of mobilization of women’s groups for the Goma Conference. Interviewees noted that given the level of violence against women, the levels of conflict-related sexual violence in the east, and the impact of the conflict on women, the need for women’s solidarity and advocacy is still great. Although there were some women delegates at Goma, an organized women’s “peace lobby” was missing.

Both men and women civil society representatives at Goma said that key women’s leaders from the east were unable attend the Goma Peace Conference because, having fled eastern DRC for personal security reason, they were fearful of returning to Goma, even in the context of a peace conference. Women leaders, still working in the east, were too overwhelmed responding to the ongoing violence against women, to attend.

During the Goma Conference, according to delegates and representatives to the Conference, women delegates were divided along conflict lines. There was little leadership on part of the women to work on common strategies or to do advocacy for women’s rights. The lack of a women’s movement was cited as a major impediment to advancing gender equality and women’s rights issues in the Act of Engagement and in the Amani Program.

3.4 Root Causes Missing in the Goma Conference

“The war in the Kivu’s is political, at national and regional levels, due in large part to economic motives to exploit Congo’s resources.” (Goma – NGO representative)

A criticism of the Goma Conference by civil society representatives in North and South Kivu is that the Conference did not sufficiently address root causes of the conflict in the Kivu’s. According to interviewees present at the Goma Conference, the conflict was reduced to an ethnic dispute. Almost all interviewees, however, did not list inter-communal tensions as the primary cause of the conflict. Interviewees pointed out that there was a history of inter-ethnic co-existence with numerous instances of intermarriage and other inter-tribal or inter-ethnic links. However, when the issue of access to land combined with ethnic and tribal dynamics, conflict ensued. Many interviewed said that the Goma Peace Conference, erroneously, placed the ethnic agenda above all other causes of the war.

According to representatives of local civil society organizations, one of the main causes of the conflict is the struggle for control of natural resources. There is even recognition by the UN that the exploitation, transport and trade in natural resources is directly linked to financing armed groups in eastern DRC. Many interviewees said that they are frustrated that the Goma Conference did not adequately address the exploitation of natural resources and its links to the conflict. Many pointed out that the beneficiaries of the exploitation of DR Congo's natural wealth are military and political actors, rebel leaders, regional countries and investors, foreign companies and their investors overseas.

Neither the Goma Agreement nor the Amani Program involved regional or foreign-armed groups such as the FDLR. Civil society representatives said that the omission of armed groups was a weakness in the process. Excluding non-Congolese and regional actors (FDLR or Rwanda) from the Goma Peace Process meant that major parties to the conflict were left out of the peace negotiations.

The need to repatriate Rwandan refugees was noted by all almost interviewed. It was also noted, although not consistently, that not all Rwandan refugees are *Interahamwe* or *genocidaires*. The repatriation issue is complicated by the fact that Rwandan children, who crossed the border in 1994 and are now adults, may have stronger links to the DRC than to Rwanda and may not want to return. Most interviewees recognized that as children in 1994, these young adults are not implicated in the genocide, and are therefore not considered *genocidaires*. Interviewees said that after almost 15 years of living in the DRC, citizenship status of these young adults is not clear. Whether these young adults should be repatriated to Rwanda or have the option to remain in DR Congo is a contentious issue. Many interviewees said that even more problematic is what to do with children born in the DRC of Rwandan refugees, including those born to *genocidaires*. Children born of mixed relationships between Rwandans and Congolese and children who are the product of rape by foreign fighters face an unclear citizenship status. Many interviewees warned that since citizenship is linked to access to land, as these children age, conflicts over land and inheritance rights are likely to be volatile. Interviewees, who were at the Goma Conference, said that the Conference did not address these critical issues.

Lesson Identified

Missing from the Goma Peace Conference was an analysis of the root causes of the conflict. Since root causes, for example the exploitation of natural resources and the citizenship of Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC, were not identified, there were no mechanisms established to deal with these issues – issues critical to building a sustainable peace. Clearly, a peace conference cannot identify and sufficiently address all grievances in a conflict, but a peace process will lose its legitimacy if the parties involved say that the critical issues for a lasting peace are being ignored. Root causes of the conflict need to be addressed in a peace process, if not fully in the negotiated settlement, then in other mechanisms and processes accompanying the negotiations.

Recommendation

- Strengthen the capacity of START to analyze root causes of conflicts.
- Ensure policy and programming coordination among CIDA, DFAIT and other donors on peace processes so that long-term programming and support for the implementation of peace agreements include initiatives aimed at root causes.

3.5 Achievements at the Goma Peace Conference

While recognizing its flaws, the Goma Peace Conference was viewed positively for enabling communities to list grievances, express views on the conflict and put forward priorities and visions for peace and development in North and South Kivu. Each province now has a development plan which, if funded, could be the basis of recovery programs.

The Mixed Technical Commission on Peace and Security (MTCPS) was launched on April 3, 2008 and includes two representatives from government, an international facilitator, two CNDP representatives, two *Forces Républicaines Fédéralistes* (FRF) representatives, 10 representatives from South Kivu, and, 9 representatives from North Kivu. The Commission is supported by the US, EU and MONUC. The MTCPS is widely viewed as one of the most positive outcomes of the Goma Process. The MTCPS brings together donors, armed groups and government to discuss demobilization, security issues.

Although the CNDP is boycotting the Amani Program, the MTCPS provides an opportunity to engage with armed groups and to encourage adherence with the Act of Engagement.

4.0 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence initiatives contribute to building peace over the long term in the DRC. Issues of sexual violence were included in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and the Goma Conference. The scale of sexual violence, combined with the number of sectors involved in prevention and response, means sexual violence initiatives must simultaneously involve security sector reform, access to justice, human rights and women's rights monitoring, health systems, sexual education for boys and girls, and traditional / local justice and healing. Taking action on sexual violence involves addressing its implications on men, women, girls, and boys at the individual, family, community and national levels. Sexual violence programming also offers the opportunity to integrate peace-building approaches through initiatives that not only respond to the immediate physical needs of the women, but also examine issues of justice, psycho-social support and the broader effects of violent conflict.

Lesson Identified

Full funding for the Amani Program has not yet been secured from donors, and many Congolese fear that the Program will not be implemented. If the Amani Program and Goma Peace Process fail, it will not only mean continued hardship for the civilian population, but it will send a message to belligerents that they can abandon peace agreements.

Recommendation

Canada should adopt a diplomatic strategy that supports the implementation of current peace agreements, by:

- Advocating strongly with the governments of DRC and Rwanda, and armed groups to uphold their commitments in the Nairobi Communiqué and Act of Engagement.
- Funding the implementation of the Amani Program.

4.1 The Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence

Sexual violence against women has been perpetrated by all major armed groups operating in the east, including the FARDC, FDLR, CNDP and Mai-Mai local militias. In response to the massive scale of sexual violence in DRC, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) established the Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence. The Initiative operates across UN agencies in DRC and works in partnership with the government and NGOs. Canada is one of two lead donors for the program, committing \$15 million between 2004 and 2008. The Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence objectives are:

- ❑ Strengthening health systems to respond to sexual violence;
- ❑ Providing psycho-social and economic support;
- ❑ Supporting access to justice; and
- ❑ Preventing sexual violence.

The Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence also supports victim accompaniment programs and public education programs aimed at reducing stigma surrounding sexual violence so that victims may more readily seek assistance.

The representatives of women's groups noted that Canada's \$15 million over four years is commendable, but that it needs to be put in perspective given the number of victims and the state of health services in the DRC. Fifteen million dollars spread over three provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri) over four years amounts to \$1.25 million per year, per province. In June 2008, in North Kivu alone, more than 2, 200 rapes were recorded. Representatives of civil society organizations working for victims of sexual violence also complained that UNFPA funds have not translated into direct victim assistance and many suspect that the money has gone to administrative costs, international salaries and UN system overhead costs. International and local NGO staff said that high expectations for the UNFPA program and its failure to deliver has led to disappointment on part of women's groups who thought the program could respond to their needs more directly.

According to donors, funding for a second phase, post 2009, of the Joint Initiative Against Sexual Violence, is being considered. Congolese women's groups, however, are overwhelmingly calling for increased direct funding through credible civil society organizations, rather than through the UN and the UNFPA initiative. Although local organizations recognize that they do not yet have the administrative capacity to manage large sums of money, a solution, proposed by one interviewee, would be to increase funding to Canadian NGOs (CECI, Development and Peace, Oxfam Quebec, etc.), already partnered with local NGOs working on sexual violence programming. Civil society organizations in Goma and Bukavu stressed that much more support is needed for local NGO's in the provinces and in rural areas as victims usually approach local groups first.

4.2 Women's Groups Working with Victims of Sexual Violence

According to representatives of local and international NGOs, when Congolese women first started speaking out about sexual violence, the Congolese government and the international community did not want to admit to the levels of violence. Recognition of sexual violence, by the government and international community, is due, mainly, to the sheer determination of women to fight against sexual violence. The efforts of former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, former UN Special Envoy for HIV / AIDS in Africa, Stephen Lewis and feminist-playwright, Eve Ensler to call attention to shocking acts of the sexual violence were noted by many interviewees as helpful in raising international awareness about the scale of the sexual violence. But, while these efforts were welcome, women interviewed expressed frustration that although they had been working with victims of violence and denouncing acts of violence for years, the issue of sexual violence was ignored, by both national authorities and the international community, until prominent international spokespersons became involved.

Grassroots organizations or women's groups are often the frontline responders to sexual violence. Yet, many women's associations working on issues of sexual violence and providing support to victims are not part of the UNFPA program. The most common reason cited for excluding local women's groups was their lack of administrative capacity.

Women's groups are highly critical that International NGOs (INGOs), funded through the UN Initiative, are displacing local organizations with years of experience working on sexual violence issues. According to a number of women interviewed, when INGOs do partner with, or

Good Practice

International recognition of sexual violence has helped generate programs to reduce stigma surrounding sexual violence and to provide assistance to victims. Formerly a taboo subject, the level of violence and its consequent health effects (such as traumatic fistula) has forced national authorities to recognize vaginal destruction as a war crime. Just this year, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence calling on all parties to conflict to halt acts of sexual violence.

Lessons Identified

The level of frustration and disappointment expressed by women with a long history of working with victims of violence should be cause for concern on the part of international agencies and INGOs working on sexual violence. Donors to sexual violence programming need to examine the extent to which building local capacity is supported through their programming.

The individual approach to victim support in the UNFPA initiative may not be sufficiently culturally sensitive. A community-based, collective approach, rather than an individual approach, to preventing and responding to sexual violence would be more appropriate and effective in the DRC.

Recommendations

- CIDA and DFAIT should develop a strategy to support sexual violence programs in the DRC.
 - CIDA should fund programs aimed at strengthening local capacity to work on issues of sexual violence.
 - Continued funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Joint Initiative should be based on local capacity-building criteria.
 - Victim support should include collective approaches to healing.

include local groups, the local organizations are used for access to, and information about, the local population rather than working to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to continue their work. INGOs were also criticized for not involving local organizations in identifying how donor funds should be used or in designing projects for the local communities.

Given the level of sexual violence in eastern DRC, local capacity building for technical health care skills and for the management of large-scale programs is needed. According to representatives of local and international NGOs, community-based organizations and women's groups are often relied on by UNFPA and INGOs for access to victims. These groups, in rural areas, far from the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu not equipped financially or technically, respond to the level of care needed by the victims. Building their capacity is, therefore, critical to a long-term and preventative approach to combating sexual violence.

4.3 Sexual Violence and Armed Groups

According to the MONUC gender unit, the Bukavu one-person gender bureau helped distribute a law on sexual violence and the Act of Engagement to rebels in the Kivu's. Women from civil society met directly with Nkunda's CNDP troops to raise awareness of the sexual violence law and its implications. According to MONUC staff, neither Nkunda nor his soldiers were aware of the law. In the meeting with Nkunda, the women said their aim was to encourage a negotiated end to fighting and to call for an immediate halt in acts of sexual violence. Women who met with the CNDP and other armed groups reported that the rebels would initially agree to end sexual attacks. Unfortunately, these agreements were never honoured and sexual attacks against women continue.

Women, troublingly, referred to a growing "politics of rape". According to representatives of local women's organizations, FARDC, CNDP, FDLR and other armed groups, all commit acts of sexual violence. The interviewees noted that instead of taking responsibility for the attacks, the groups accuse one-another of the abuses.

Women report that the location of an attack can often reveal the identity of the abuser. However, once incidents of sexual violence are reported, the data, it is feared, is being manipulated. For example, one interviewee said that if someone is attacked in the town of Goma, it is likely that perpetrators are FARDC, if an attack takes place in rural areas, the perpetrators are more likely to be the rebels. But, according to women interviewed, if someone is attacked in a town and reports the incident, authorities sometimes accuse the rebels rather than the FARDC or police in the area. Such manipulation, it was noted, makes it all the more difficult for women to report incidents of sexual violence.

Lesson Identified

Often at great risk to themselves and their families, women met directly with rebel commanders to call on them to end sexual attacks. Although these efforts have met with mixed results, such initiatives could be built on and strengthened through peace-building efforts and local justice work.

Recommendations

- ❑ Canada's political and aid staff should include ending sexual violence in humanitarian access discussions with the FARDC, MONUC, INGO and rebel groups.
- ❑ Canada's diplomatic staff should encourage all cease-fire discussions to explicitly include halts to sexual violence.
- ❑ Either through CIDA or DFAIT, or in collaboration with other donors, Canada should investigate how it can support local women's groups in engaging communities in preventing sexual violence.

Women working with and using the rape centres have been threatened and raped. The violence and the threat of violence has made victims hesitant about identifying the perpetrators and reporting acts of sexual violence

4.4 Sexual Violence and Perverse Incentives

“You have your job because I have raped...” (Perpetrator of sexual violence to a woman working with sexual violence victims)

Representatives of local women’s organizations say that political and economic incentives drive sexual violence, HIV / AIDS and advocacy projects, rather than a real concern for the issues. Funding opportunities by donors, leading to a proliferation of groups supposedly working on sexual violence as well as politicians and others wanting to be seen as supportive of the fight against sexual violence, has opened the door to opportunists. According to women working with victims, perpetrators of sexual violence are aware of the economy around sexual violence issues. Women’s groups repeatedly mentioned that the perpetrators of violence say that the victims benefit economically from acts of sexual violence because of victim support programs.

A growing concern raised by women’s rights advocates was the need to look at other forms of violence against women in addition to sexual violence. There is concern that donors are being too strict about activities supported, with many issues such as broader violence against women not considered for funding.

5.0 THE INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE

Canada actively supported the 2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) and subsequent political transition culminating in presidential elections in 2006. Canada was also a member of the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT). The Inter-Congolese Dialogue opened in Addis Ababa in October 2001, facilitated by the former President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire. The Addis Ababa negotiations stalled and the ICD was re-launched in Sun City, South Africa in 2002. The ICD was a major benchmark in Congolese history as the peace conference set the parameters for political transition after close to 40 years of dictatorship and military rule.

The Inter-Congolese Dialogue is one of three commitments made under the 1999 Lusaka Peace Accords signed by Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC). The Lusaka Accords set out a vision for the DRC by establishing a:

- cease-fire among regional countries and with the two largest rebel groups – the MLC and RCD;
- UN Peacekeeping Mission to monitor the agreement; and
- Congolese National Dialogue for national reconciliation and political transition.

The Inter-Congolese Dialogue brought together representatives of the government, armed rebel groups, Congolese civil society organizations, and opposition political parties to agree on a framework for transition towards a government of national unity and reconciliation. About 366 individuals participated in the Dialogue with NGOs and diplomats as observers. Women delegates to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue represented government, rebel groups, political parties, and civil society. An expert group of women, not officially part of the negotiating delegations, was established to offer advice on gender issues.

5.1 The Nairobi Training Workshop for Women

“The women of the different factions were also preoccupied with demonstrating that their party had won the war and therefore they did not have to compromise, negotiate, or change their views.” (Civil Society Representative)

Women as Partners for Peace in Africa – DRC (WOPPA-DRC), the Senegalese NGO *Femmes Africa Solidarité* (FAS), and UNIFEM, held a Training Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya between 15 and 19 February 2002. The Nairobi Training Workshop was designed to build the capacity of Congolese women to participate in official peace negotiations in Sun City, South Africa on February 25, 2002. The workshop brought together women, from all parties to the conflict, to develop a common agenda and platform for the peace negotiations. The workshop resulted in the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan which called on belligerents to agree to an immediate ceasefire, engage in peace negotiations and include women as official delegates to the negotiations.

According to participants to the workshop, the workshop was successful in bringing together women from across the country, including representatives from government, rebel groups, civil society, and the Diaspora. The women interviewed said that women at the Nairobi Training Workshop were, initially, representing their rebel group or political party’s position. The women were concerned with demonstrating that their group had won the war. Women representatives from civil society organizations and churches pointed out that it was impossible to “win a war” when so many

Lessons Identified

Four days is not sufficient time to build skills and to establish trust between women from opposing factions. Confidence-building measures, aimed at building trust across conflict lines, will fail if they are “one-off” workshops. Confidence-building measures need to be implemented over the long term.

Recommendation

- ❑ DFAIT should fund long-term confidence-building measures.
- ❑ DFAIT’s Mediation Capacity Building program should undertake review of best practice in confidence-building measures.

Good Practice

The workshop was successful in bringing together women from opposing parties or groups. Through building their negotiations skills together and by sharing experiences, the women were able to work across party lines and build a common agenda for peace and women’s rights.

Recommendation

- ❑ DFAIT’s GPSF criteria for supporting peace processes should include opportunities for women to build skills together across conflict lines.

people died and countless women and children harmed. This led to the women abandoning party alliances and working together for a common agenda. Women from Congolese civil society, the Senegalese NGO *Femmes Solidarité d’Afrique*, and UNIFEM played a bridging role between the government and rebel group participants at the workshop. The Kenyan NGO, the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), also provided training in negotiations at the workshop.

Most workshop participants did not have any negotiating experience. The focus on technical training enabled women from opposing groups, who otherwise would not want to meet together, to participate in the workshop. An agenda was developed after substantial consultations in the provinces. The provincial consultations’ results were brought to the Nairobi Training Workshop and negotiating points for the Sun City talks were agreed to. The agreed-to negotiating points or agenda enabled representatives from the government, rebel groups, and civil society in Sun City to advocate for peace and women’s rights.

5.2 The Sun City Negotiations and the Women’s Caucus

“It was a dialogue among the men that held the guns... The preoccupation of the men was ‘we fought the war, now without fighting, what do we do? How do we show we won.’ ”
(Delegate to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue)

Initially conceived as a dialogue among belligerents (government and rebel groups), early analysis, by the International Crisis Group, indicates that the rebels were receptive to the Dialogue as an opportunity to negotiate power-sharing arrangements.⁸ Many present at the Dialogue said that discussions were primarily about power and force, with men from government and rebel groups preoccupied with power-sharing arrangements. The men, according to the women delegates, wanted to “win” positions at the negotiating table to prove that they had not lost the war. Humanitarian needs and human rights received scant attention at the Dialogue, leaving little space for women or men, who were not belligerents in the conflict, to participate.

The Dialogue eventually broadened to include non-belligerents (civil society organizations and other political parties). ICD delegates represented government, rebel factions, political parties and civil society and were selected to ensure provincial representation. There was no block of delegate seats allocated to women.

Good Practice

The Women’s Caucus, consisting of both official delegates to the negotiations and issue experts, was able to provide substantive gender equality advice often missing in negotiations. The Women’s Caucus ensured that a gender analysis was used in negotiating items on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and re-integration, and political reforms.

Recommendation

- DFAIT’s GPSF should support gender-sensitive subject-matter experts to provide advice for peace negotiations.

⁸ International Crisis Group:
http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400488_16112001.pdf

According to interviewees present at the Sun City negotiations, approximately 10 to 15% of the ICD delegates were women (40 to 50 women out of 340 delegates). An expert group of women (not official delegates) was set up to support the delegates in addressing gender issues.

A Congolese women's NGO, Women as Partners for Peace in Africa (WOPPA), was instrumental in organizing the expert group. There were about 30 female experts selected for their knowledge on key issues such as security sector reform (SSR), demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), and constitutional law. The expert group worked parallel to the formal negotiations developing strategies and proposals to inform the official delegates (both male and female). The women delegates, in particular, relied on the expert group to provide a gender analysis on items being negotiated. Many of the women delegates were included in the official negotiations because of their political / group affiliation. These women, however, did not necessarily have a broad substantive understanding of the full range of items being negotiated or their relevant gender dimensions. The expert group was able to fill this gap.

The female delegates and the experts combined to form a "Women's Caucus". The Caucus was conceived as a temporary and informal mechanism to ensure gender equality issues were addressed at the ICD. The informal status of the Caucus allowed for discussion, debate, and deliberation to take place between women of opposing groups.

In addition to the Women's Caucus at the ICD, smaller women's groups were set up in the provinces to provide input to the Dialogue. In Goma, for example, a "Reflection Group" met regularly during the ICD to share information with local women and to determine communications points for the Women's Caucus in Sun City.

All women interviewed said that during the Nairobi Training Workshop and in the early days of the Sun City negotiations, women's solidarity was strong. Remarkably, women were able to transcend conflict lines and work together for peace. The women found commonality in being victims of violence and in having to raise children and maintain households – households where family members had been killed, injured, or were absent in combat. This sense of commonality helped the women agree on a common agenda for the peace negotiations.

However, this solidarity would not hold. All women interviewed who participated either as delegates or experts in the Sun City negotiations, reported that the Women's Caucus and women's solidarity quickly broke down. The women found it difficult to negotiate in front of, and with, men. The Nairobi Training Workshop was for women only, and the women ICD delegates were challenged by a negotiating dynamic which included men. According to the women delegates interviewed, the men were manipulative in their negotiating techniques. The

Lesson Identified

The Women's Caucus initially provided space, outside the formal negotiations, for women delegates from opposing parties to meet. The independent nature (not aligned to any parties to the conflict) of the Caucus and its informal and temporary status created the conditions for women to find common ground. The lack of sustained financial and technical support, however, to women's groups and delegates, through pre-negotiations to the formal talks, contributed to the breakdown in solidarity and trust among women.

Recommendation

- DFAIT's GPSF should fund sequential peace-building initiatives through all stages of negotiations from consultations to formal peace agreements.

women delegates, in contrast, adopted a transparent approach to negotiations. This transparency, however, was seen by their male colleagues as naive. The men were also suspicious of women from their party or group meeting with women from opposing groups in the “Women’s Caucus”. This suspicion coupled with the tough negotiating environment took its toll on women’s solidarity.

According to all women interviewed, the women left Sun City with the “Women’s Caucus” split. According to one delegate, the division in the women’s movement resulted from women, as a group, not being allotted a block of seats at the ICD. Women also admitted to not being fully aware of the “rules of the game” and the appropriate codes of conduct for a political negotiation.

This breakdown in women’s solidarity meant that during the elections and the constitutional referendum, women were not able to work together or lobby for electoral lists to include a minimum number of women. In an attempt to re-ignite the women’s movement, *Femmes Solidarité d’Afrique* came back to DRC and helped establish an NGO called *Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise* (CAFCO). Almost all interviewed agreed that CAFCO, in effect, transformed the “Women’s Caucus” into an NGO. This transformation is to the disappointment of many women, particularly in the eastern towns of Goma and Bukavu. It is not clear why CAFCO is viewed negatively, however, what is clear, is that its creation has polarized the women’s movement. Some interviewees suggest that the difficulties with CAFCO reflect an increasing competition among NGOs, including women’s groups, and conflicts among women NGO leaders.

Lesson Identified

Women-only capacity-building sessions are needed, but women also need to be trained with men, and on the full range of techniques used during negotiations. Training women only in interest-based or “soft” negotiating techniques is not as helpful if men are using power-based techniques.

Recommendation

- DFAIT’s Women, Peace and Security program, and other programs funding peace processes, should include criteria to ensure that men and women are trained in a range of negotiating techniques.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Canada has provided over \$50 million in aid to DRC over the past two years, and hundreds of millions over the past 15 years, including money spent through DND for support to MONUC. Canada actively supported the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and political transition that brought elections and democracy to the DRC after nearly forty years of dictatorial and military rule. However, peace remains illusory. Unless the international community, including Canada, remains engaged in the DRC, the country runs the risk of being subsumed by violence. The safety and security of civilians will be jeopardized. And the impact of the major investments, both human and financial, that Canada has already made to the DRC will be dramatically weakened. Canada must not only stay engaged in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but Canadian peace-making efforts must be strengthened. Canada must not turn its back on the Democratic Republic of Congo.