

Opportunities
for Investment
in the DRC:
Executive Summary

Christine Sherry
Alexei Dunawayⁱ

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www.sherryconsulting.com

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The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC or Congo) is the eleventh largest country in the world and contains just over an estimated 71 million people, making it the 19th most populated nation.¹ Yet with a per-capita GDP of \$300/person, the DRC is the world's second poorest country, above only Burundi.²

As the largest landmass in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Congo holds enough natural resource potential to transform the Great Lakes region, through hydroelectric power, extensive rainforests, and mineral deposits. Eastern DRC is home to vast reserves of gold, copper, tin, diamonds, cobalt, tungsten and Columbite-tantalite, commonly known as coltan (see pg. 5.) Together, these minerals comprise an estimated \$24 trillion in untapped wealth.³ In addition, the Congo accounts for 15-20 percent of the world's tantalum, a metal extracted from coltan that is a primary constituent in capacitors for cell phones, laptops, nuclear reactors, and many common electronic devices.⁴

Since the late 1990s, the DRC has been enmeshed in a series of conflicts involving approximately 8 countries and 25 armed groups that has created severe crisis for women and driven millions into poverty.⁵ According to a recent survey conducted by the International Rescue Committee, the violence has caused over 5.4 million preventable deaths throughout the Congo since the war began in 1998.⁶ Less than half of one percent of all deaths were due directly to violence, however. Instead, the vast

majority were caused by infectious diseases, malnutrition, and pregnancy-related conditions attributable to consistent disruption of health services, a lack of food security, and population displacement.⁷ The humanitarian situation remains dire with an estimated 2 million internally displaced people and an additional 185,000 refugees from neighboring countries.⁸ Security constraints often prevent necessary aid from reaching the most vulnerable populations. Furthermore, lack of government control, persistent human rights abuses, limitations on civil society, and endemic corruption have prompted Freedom House to rate the DRC's political rights and civil liberty scores at a low 6 out of 7.⁹ In 2011, the Foreign Policy Failed State Index rated the DRC as the fourth most failed state.¹⁰

The following summary outlines the results of a field scan conducted through over 50 international expert interviews and extensive literature review. This research uncovered stronger institutions as the fundamental need within the DRC, in both the state and civil society. The most viable methods to build them include security sector reform, journalism support, and training programs for the next generation of leaders, especially women. In addition, the conflict is not likely draw to a close unless mechanisms are put in place to resolve ethnic and land disputes.

Table of Contents

I. Importance of the DRC	3
II. History	3
III. Gender-Based Violence	4
IV. Drivers of Conflict	5
V. Opportunities for Investment	6
VI. Conclusion	8

I. Importance of the DRC

REGIONAL STABILITY: History has demonstrated that unstable states can quickly become a haven for armed groups and terrorists. Few places in the world exhibit this as much as the Congo, which provides a base for dozens of local militia and rebel groups associated with other African nations. Adding to the presence of the LRA, the FDLR, and a plethora of other armed groups, recent years have seen expansion into the DRC by the ADF, an Islamic terrorist organization fighting the Ugandan government with suspected ties to Somalia's Al Shabaab.¹¹ The attacks armed groups launch against the DRC's neighbors can act as a catalyst for regional instability; indeed, the specter of Hutu extremists that had fled across the border into the Congo was in large part responsible for Rwanda's involvement in the First Congo War. Since then, nearly half a million refugees fleeing the conflict have increased the strain on neighboring countries and may amplify risks of instability.¹²

RESOURCE WEALTH: The DRC's is home to a wealth of natural resources, including environmental assets as well as profitable minerals. Its vast network of rivers and lakes account for 52% of Africa's surface water reserves and the world's second largest discharge volume, offering enormous potential for hydroelectric energy.¹³ In addition, the DRC possesses 23% of Africa's renewable water resources, mostly through abundant rainfall.¹⁴ The Congo is further home to a veritable treasure trove of minerals including diamonds, gold, coltan, copper, tin, and even hydrocarbons, much of it located where there is the most violence. Currently, the corrupt FARDC, various rebel groups, and vast criminal networks have access to the majority of generated revenue; in 2008 an estimated \$185 million went to armed groups in the DRC.¹⁵ If instead profits could be diverted towards state infrastructure and social programs as in Botswana, the humanitarian situation in the Congo could be vastly improved.¹⁶

HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS: More often than not, civilians have borne the brunt of the conflict. Sexual violence in the DRC is among the world's worst; in some areas of Eastern DRC, 2 out of 3 women have been victims of some form of sexual violence.¹⁷ A culture of impunity for human rights abuses contingent on the fragile Congolese state virtually guarantees that massacres and mass rapes will continue unless stronger institutions are built. Even many who escape the violence face potentially life-threatening circumstances. Millions of Congolese are displaced, an estimated 74% of the country does not have access to safe drinking water, and hundreds of thousands do not have access to proper healthcare.¹⁸ Repeated outbreaks of disease including cholera, yellow fever, and the ebola virus have plagued the country for years; malaria, diarrhea, and malnutrition are likewise common.¹⁹

II. History

BELGIAN COLONIALISM: Like much of Africa, the DRC felt the heavy hand of European colonization. King Leopold II of Belgium annexed the country as his own personal property in 1885, and later sold it to the Belgian government in 1908 after initial development of gold mines.²⁰ At the time, the colony and mining system was dependent on forced labor, and uprisings were brutally suppressed. Beginning in the 1920s, control of the mines passed to private corporations and taxation began to replace coercion as a means of encouraging subsistence farmers to work as miners or industrial workers.²¹ The colony won independence in 1960 with Patrice Lumumba as prime minister and Jose Kasavubu as president. Lumumba was assassinated in January 1961, allegedly in a plot planned by American and Belgian governments unnerved by his nationalist policies.²²

MOBUTU SESE-SEKO: In 1965, an army officer named Joseph Mobutu led a coup to take control over the DRC. Later changing his name to Mobutu Sese-Seko and renaming the DRC to Zaire, he maintained a repressive dictatorship for the next 32 years. Rather than the provision of government services, Mobutu's government served instead to perpetuate a system of individual enrichment and patronage.²³ Feeding on a system of severely underpaid civil servants and thievery by high-level state officials, corruption became commonplace.

CONGOLESE WARS: Following the 1994 genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda and the assumption of control by the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), over a million Hutu genocidaires and civilians fled en masse across the border into the Congo. Worried about the brewing threat in Congolese refugee camps, the Rwandan vice-president Paul Kagame urged the international community to stop humanitarian aid that inevitably was diverted to rebel groups. Encountering resistance, he reached out to other governments in the region whom Mobutu had offended, including Uganda, Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.²⁴ Under Kagame's guidance, rebel groups affiliated with these countries formed the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), led by long-time Congolese rebel Laurent-Desiré Kabila. The AFDL launched a campaign to unseat Sese-Seko in late-August 1996, and scarcely nine months later Kabila assumed power.²⁵

Out of paranoia that Rwandan and Congolese Tutsi would turn on him, Laurent Kabila expelled all Rwandan troops from the Congo and incorporated Rwandan Hutu ex-military soldiers into the Congolese army.²⁶ In response to Kabila's poor governance, two large militias formed out of expelled Rwandan troops and Ugandan-backed rebels; the following war only

diminished in 2001 with the assassination of Laurent Kabila. Laurent's son Joseph Kabila assumed power and immediately called for reconciliation, transition, elections, and engagement with the West. International community involvement helped support negotiations and reconciliation between Kabila and rebel leaders, which led to the 2003 transitional government and "reasonably free and fair" 2006 elections, won by Kabila.²⁷ The institutions decimated under Mobutu's regime remained poor, however, due to the difficulty of fundamentally altering the state during wartime or transition.

CURRENT VIOLENCE: Despite the official end of the war in 2003, rebel groups remain active today in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. To reduce this violence, Kabila's newly-elected government focused its efforts towards eliminating the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP). Kabila's attempted military offensive in December 2007 against the CNDP failed, however, and mounting international pressure to reduce violence forced the government to turn to negotiation with the rebels. In late-January, 2008, the government signed an agreement in Goma with various rebel groups, including the CNDP, to disarm and integrate into the Congolese army. The ceasefire was soon violated, and heavy fighting resumed in North Kivu by late 2008; the failed CNDP offensive had exposed the weakness of government security forces and removed incentives for rebel groups to cooperate with the government.

One such group, the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), had been formed in 2000 by Rwandan Hutu genocidaires and other Hutu militias. Initially, the FDLR enjoyed the covert support of the Congolese government, threatening the Rwandan government. Late 2007 saw an agreement between Rwanda and the DRC to work towards FDLR's elimination, but it wasn't until 2008, however, that the Congolese government ended their support to FDLR in exchange for Rwandan help in arresting the CNDP leader.²⁸ After his arrest in late 2009, the DRC government hastily integrated the CNDP troops and established them as the main fighting force against the FDLR.²⁹ Some experts believe that the CNDP has accepted integration into the Congolese Army out of convenience but will not relinquish control over areas it deems most important, even to the Congolese state.³⁰ Because the integration proceeded without vetting to remove human rights abusers, army human rights abuses against civilians continue at high rates.³¹ The lack of an independent judiciary threatening to hold military perpetrators responsible has exacerbated this worrying trend.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement founded in Uganda and led by the ICC-indicted Joseph Kony, has been

implicated in mass atrocities and massacres throughout Uganda, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Eastern DRC since 2008.³² The rebel group is responsible for displacing almost 340,000 people.³³

In November 2011, elections were held in the DRC for the first time since 2006. Kabila again emerged the victor, but the results were tainted by repeated allegations of fraud. By many accounts, the lack of international community monitoring compared to the 2006 election allowed for a series of unfair voting procedures ensuring Kabila's victory.

UN INVOLVEMENT: The UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was created in November 1999 to implement a ceasefire created in Lusaka, Zambia a few months earlier. During the early years of Joseph Kabila's assumption of power, MONUC was instrumental in the transition negotiations with rebel leaders; the UN mission also helped stabilize the country during the 2006 elections. The UN mission has additionally co-managed Radio Okapi with Fondation Hirondelle since 2001, successfully providing a nationwide outlet for independent journalists.

MONUC has been repeatedly criticized for failing to adequately carry out its civilian protection mandate; mass rapes have occurred within miles of MONUC bases and hundreds of peacekeepers have been accused of sexual abuse.³⁴ MONUC has failed to attach human rights conditionality to its provision of food, logistics, and support for the Congolese army, allowing human rights abusers to remain at high positions after the 2009 integration of the CNDP and other armed groups.³⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 1925 (2010) renamed the mission as the Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and authorized the withdrawal of all but 2000 troops by June 30, 2011.³⁶ Tony Gambino, the former head of USAID in the DRC, believes that such a reduction is dangerous as the UN is needed to help provide services and prevent further conflict deterioration in the absence of state capacity.³⁷

III. Gender-Based Violence

The sexual violence in the Congo is horrific, with reports of "gang rape, sexual slavery, genital trauma, forced rape between victims, and rape in the presence of family members," indiscriminant of age.³⁸ After returning from her April 2010 visit to the Congo, Margot Wallström, the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, called the country the "the rape capital of the world."³⁹

Though it remains difficult to accurately measure levels of sexual violence, existing statistics are frightening. According to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* that calculated rates much higher than previous estimates, over 400,000 women were raped within a twelve-month period in 2006-2007, equating to 1,152 women a day or 48 per hour.⁴⁰ Children are at particularly high risk; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) documented that 65 percent of sexual violence cases in 2008 were children, with an estimated ten percent less than ten years of age.⁴¹ Abuses are not only committed against women, however, 22 percent of men in the Eastern Congo have also been victims of sexual violence.⁴² The difficulties of data collection and social stigma associated with reporting rape may discourage victims from coming forward; the actual number of sexual abuse cases, therefore, is likely to be higher than estimated.⁴³ There is little evidence that sexual violence is decreasing.

The causes of sexual violence in the DRC are diverse. One of the primary uses of sexual violence by armed groups is as a means to control the civilian population, in a setting where militias often have little resources and limited access to arms.⁴⁴ Consistently underpaid Congolese soldiers resort to pillaging and looting for food and physical comfort; one UN report found that the vast majority of all sexual abuses in the middle of 2010 were committed by elements of the Congolese army.⁴⁵ Yet another cause of rape is reprisal for judicial inquiry – women who seek prosecution often face increased threat of re-rape.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most worrying trend is the increasing internalization of rape in Congolese society, with civilian rapes increasing 17-fold from 2004 to 2008.⁴⁷ Children accustomed to rape around them will accept it as a norm later in life; one Congolese woman said the instability had meant that “to be raped by gangs of men is very normal for women.”⁴⁸ Michael Van Rooyen, the director of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, claims that “rape is becoming part of the culture,” citing the sobering statistic that 22.5 percent of women have been targets of sexual violence by their domestic partners.⁴⁹

Both the UN and international NGOs have documented a connection between conflict minerals and the prevalence of gender-based violence.

Concentrated armed group presence around mines uses sexual violence to clear the surrounding population and creates a high for women sex slaves, some as young as 12 years old.⁵⁰

IV. Drivers of Conflict

Most experts believe that no single cause is responsible for the violence in the Congo; rather the violence is fomented by an intricate web of institutional, land, ethnic, and mineral struggles.

POOR INSTITUTIONS: Mobutu Sese-Seko, ever aware of his rise to power through a military coup, quickly became paranoid and sought to undermine the very structures that brought his regime into place. Endemic corruption became the norm as underpaid public servants turned to bribery to sustain their families and high-level officials regularly stole from state coffers.⁵¹ The DRC’s institutions remain weak even today, and opposition leaders suffer regular harassment and limited free speech. Transparency International’s 2011 Corruption Perception Index ranks the DRC 168th out of the 182 countries it surveys.⁵²

WIDESPREAD IMPUNITY: War crimes and crimes against humanity continue today despite President Kabila’s public promise to have “zero tolerance” for those crimes. Rather than pursue this policy, Congolese officials have publicly espoused the narrative that “stability” trumps “justice,” implying that the pursuit of accountability could have destabilizing effects. Several rebel group leaders, well-known for human rights abuses and in one case under warrant by the ICC, have obtained senior political posts and successfully procured amnesty for their groups’ actions.⁵³ In 2008, despite 7,703 reported new cases of sexual abuse in North and South Kivu, only 27 soldiers were convicted.⁵⁴ Even when prosecutions are successful, men are commonly able to bribe their way out of jail.⁵⁵ Without accountability for human rights abuses, neither the militias nor the army have incentive to stop perpetuating violence and sexual abuse. Several recent arrests have provided evidence that the situation is beginning to change, however.

ETHNIC AND LAND STRUGGLES: Ethnic and land disputes pervade the DRC, predating but exacerbated by policies advanced during the Belgian colonial and Sese-Seko regimes. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a porous eastern border led to Hutu and Tutsi (the Banyarwanda) crossings from Rwanda and Uganda; friction from their arrival has continued to this day with some indigenous groups still perceiving them as foreign occupiers. In the early 20th century, food shortages prompted Belgian administrators to import another 175,000 Rwandans to work on fields taken from tribal chiefs. Though their descendents now own most of the land, native communities such as the Hundes and Nyangas continue to claim it as their own. Mobutu encouraged this hostility between native Congolese and Rwandans for his own political gain, to ensure he would not face a unified opposition. Even after his fall, Congolese politicians have repeatedly exploited anti-Tutsi

rhetoric to justify violence and rally support. Also taking into consideration the massive migrations in and out of the Eastern DRC from Rwandan, Burundian, Ugandan, and Congolese crises, it is easy to see why clashes over land and ethnicity have so long been central to the violence.

CONFLICT MINERALS: The Congo is home to a wealth of high-value minerals, including diamonds, gold, tin, copper, coltan, and hydrocarbons, the highest concentrations of which lie in the east. Control over mines offers the potential for large profits and has created an extensive criminal network within the DRC, one of the greatest remaining obstacles to security sector reform. The Enough Project has estimated that armed groups in the Kivus earned between \$137 and \$225 million from exploitation of Tin, Tantalum, Tungsten, and Gold in 2008 alone.⁵⁶ The Congolese army itself plays a large role in mineral trafficking, at some locations taxing and even overseeing mining operations.

The majority of DRC experts warn against over-emphasizing the role of conflict minerals, however. Even if all mining were to stop within the DRC, ethnic and land struggles against a backdrop of lawlessness would ensure the propagation of violence and human rights abuses. Although the UN Group of Experts on the DRC acknowledged that the Dodd-Frank legislation has had a limited positive impact, the approach has been criticized for its unintended consequences for miners and its failure to attack the root causes of conflict. The Institute for Security Studies summarizes: “the reality is that illegal mining is opportunistic in this conflict scenario, fanning the flames but seldom causing the fire.”

V. Opportunities for Investment

A significant amount of money already flows into the Congo, totaling over \$450 million in 2011 alone.⁵⁷ Major funders include Oak Foundation, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR), the Global Fund for Women (GFW), the Open Society Initiative of South Africa (OSISA), Oxfam, Mama Cash, and a number of US-based foundations including the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Humanity United, Bridgeway Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Open Square Foundation, and the Eastern Congo Initiative.

The following is an examination of opportunities for investment in the DR Congo, based on current funder activities and addressing the causes of conflict detailed above. Based on our research, the most marginally effective strategies for stabilizing the DRC in the long term are women’s leadership training,

land reform, strengthening the Congolese media, changing the dialogue of Congolese advocacy, judicial reform and mixed tribunals, and youth engagement. For the sake of completion, other less-recommended strategies are included below.

A. WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Women’s leadership training programs emerged as particularly attractive funding targets in the DRC. Such programs are underfunded when existent; even a small donation would have a large impact. In addition, the lawyers, politicians, and NGO directors emerging out of training programs are particularly well suited to tackle violence, which disproportionately affects women in the DRC. Currently, governmental institutions are overwhelmingly run by men, with the highest portion of women parliamentarians (17%) in Kinshasa province, followed by Katanga (13%). In the long run, empowered women are a prerequisite to reversing the entrenched culture of gender-based violence and building a more equitable political system.

There are several strong women’s groups that run women’s leadership programs, though none make it their exclusive purview. Some work with abuse victims, providing them vocational tools and life skills to be able to re-gain a prominent position in their community. Other NGOs specifically focus on political leadership, while yet others train women as legal workers, election monitors, or community mediators. Two programs outside the DRC in particular serve as good models to follow: Afghan Women Leaders Connect (AWLC) and the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda. AWLC seeks to build the capacity of promising women’s NGOs in Afghanistan by providing grants, funding external consultants, and training leaders. FOWODE focuses on the promotion of women’s participation in government through a research and training center, conferences, and nationwide training workshops.

B. LAND REFORM

Two primary strategies have emerged as the land dispute mechanism frontrunners, either larger local mediation centers or government-run land commissions. Séverine Autesserre emphasizes the former, suggesting that donors should fund the training of local Congolese NGOs and justice officials to be deployed as observers to land-distribution commissions or educators in rural communities.⁵⁸ The International Crisis Group recommends the latter, advising that the donor community provide funding for the land redistribution commissions in North Kivu and Ituri.⁵⁹ UN-Habitat and UNHCR has launched an important initiative with mobile teams of mediators operating in Masisi and Ituri, where large number of IDPs and refugees are returning. Tensions may

also be calmed by the construction of infrastructure with shareholders from different communities as a means of creating linkages and reducing violence. Similar strategies have been used successfully in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Tajikistan.⁶⁰

C. STRENGTHENING CONGOLESE MEDIA

Radio in the DRC is a booming sector, there are now approximately 250 radio stations operating in the country and the majority of recent growth has been in community radio.⁶¹ Yet, one panel of 16 Congolese journalists noted that professionalism in journalism is often sharply lacking. Many journalists do not adhere to high-quality reporting standards, contenting themselves with news given to them by politicians or sponsors without consulting experts or fact checking. The professional ethical code created in 2004 is often ignored, with severely underpaid journalists falling prey to corruption or poverty and accepting bribes. Education and training are lacking; journalism degrees offer poor preparation and there are few post-graduate programs. In some cases, journalists take positions as press attachés or communication advisors to politicians to supplement their income. Because of this, the panel noted a lack of objectivity in the Congo as a whole.⁶²

Potential levers of change to strengthen the Congolese media could be funding community radio associations, training programs, or groups monitoring the freedom of press. One set of interviews identified three types of needed/useful support: engagement by commercial interests to ensure media independence, investments in telecommunications projects and training to integrate with the internet, and provision of equipment and training to produce higher-quality journalism.⁶³ The BBC World Service Trust's African Media Development Initiative suggested another three: construct a legislative environment that promotes media development, develop local content, and raise journalism standards through training.⁶⁴ In particular, the Association des Femmes des Médias du Sud Kivu (AFEM-SK) is a notable funding target with its focus on training young women journalists in rural areas to promote community radio.

D. CHANGING THE DIALOGUE OF CONGOLESE ADVOCACY

After David Aronson's August 7th article criticizing the Enough Project's conflict-mineral centered advocacy was published in the New York Times, the advocacy community erupted over the appropriate approach to moving forward in the Congo.⁶⁵ There is a need for more forums to unify the advocacy community's message, in the US and in the DRC. Laura Seay of Texas in Africa writes, "It's long past time that all the players in the Congo discussion sat down at one table to talk about the core

assumptions of the conflict, the advocacy movement, and what the Congo needs."⁶⁶

E. JUDICIAL REFORM AND MIXED TRIBUNALS

Mixed chamber tribunals staffed by a mix of Congolese and international judges were attempted first in the Balkans and have been discussed by many experts as a potential solution in the Congo, though some logistical questions remain to be worked out. Human Rights Watch recommends their establishment as a national institution with a mandate limited to war crimes. Such tribunals would apply Congolese laws, but have an independent bench advised by international personnel. A witness protection plan is both a critical element of the tribunals and a necessity for the justice system as a whole. Some experts believe foundation funding could act as a catalyst to spur more government donation. Human Rights Watch has taken a lead on these efforts.

F. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

A focus on youth is critical to prepare leaders to build a stronger DRC for the future, and to break the metastasized culture of violence against women that has permeated Congolese society – children who grow up with violence as the norm will be more likely to perpetuate or accept it later. Youth may also be particularly vulnerable to violence and prosecution. The primary strategy is to fund groups that support youth empowerment to build new leaders for the future. This often takes the form of leadership skills, vocational skills, or journalism training.

G. BREAKING THE CONFLICT MINERALS SUPPLY CHAIN

Some experts have advanced the perspective that the most effective way to reduce the power of corrupt army officials and militia members is to take away their income from unstable mining areas. Enough Project and Global Witness are the two most high-profile organizations involved in advocacy to implement conflict-mineral-monitoring schemes, mimicking the diamond-focused Kimberley Process. Their aim is to encourage consumers to avoid purchasing conflict minerals, lowering the demand and forcing corporations to ensure that their products are clean. This has created a very strong movement in the U.S., especially among college populations, because it is easy for consumers to emotionally relate to assertions that cell phones come at the high cost of Congolese lives. In 2010, political fall-out encouraged the Senate to insert a provision in the Dodd-Frank financial regulation requiring publicly traded companies to divulge whether their supply of certain minerals comes from the DRC. Though this has had limited success, this approach has been highly criticized for obscuring deeper causes of conflict and hurting local populations.

H. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Most experts recognize security sector reform as a key element of reducing gender-based violence and increasing the country's stability. However, the difficulty of this task is widely acknowledged, due to the network of senior army and high-level government officials that profit from the status quo – the army is still heavily involved in the mineral trade, and bribes solicited in the field often pay a cut to army officers. Vetting the army for human rights abusers, improving training, and creating better operation conditions (such as barracks and higher pay) will be essential to this task. Oxfam and Crisis Action are the two major players involved in this space.

I. SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIM RESPONSE

Victim access to healthcare centers is often very limited in remote areas, and PEP kits that can help prevent HIV if used within the first 72 hours after rape are often nowhere to be found. There also remains a need for psychological help to deal with the trauma of assault. The work of many NGOs couple victim rehabilitation with training to re-establish victimized women as leaders in their communities – this can help overcome the social stigma of having been raped. One of the most prominent such efforts is V-Day's "City of Joy" in Bukavu, a center that helps 180 women a year and is focused on developing leadership and skills. Although this strategy remains a current need, it treats the symptoms of the DRC conflict rather than any root causes.

J. HUMANITARIAN AID

With the majority of deaths in the DRC caused not by combat, but rather a lack of access to clean water and healthcare, increased humanitarian aid remains an important strategy for saving human lives. However, this aid suffers from the same reservations as sexual abuse response; it is not sustainable and is unlikely to address the causes of conflict.

K. IMPROVED UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

It is easy to see that better training of UN peacekeepers on the ground and before deployment could ensure greater stability in Eastern Congo. The UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO has been criticized for failing to carry out its mandate of civilian

protection, on several occasions unable even to prevent mass rapes miles from UN bases. Additionally, increased attention to peacekeeping could impose greater presence in Ituri Province, where the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army controls vast tracts of land and terrorizes the civilian population. Oxfam is attempting to create more local community liaisons, but it is unclear how much additional funding in this area could help solve this challenge due to the bureaucratic nature of the peacekeeping force and the relatively low numbers of peacekeepers in the field.

L. WOMEN'S FUNDS

Providing women the economic opportunity to rise out of poverty is important to creating a stronger role in society. Mama Cash and the Oak Foundation are supporting a Women's Fund to support local initiatives of Congolese women and leaders. In this context, Oak has also provided mentoring support to their grantees and invited leaders of other women's funds to meet with them. The immediate financial needs of this fund have been met, this is not recommended for future investment.

VI. Conclusion

As demonstrated above, there are a variety of potential opportunities for engaging as a funder in the DRC, addressing different perceived causes of conflict. The Congo's natural resource wealth positions it as an important regional player, with its own fate closely tied to the stability of central and eastern Africa. At the root of current misuse is the system of corruption and patronage that has changed very little since Mobutu's rule; there remains a strong need to train the next generation of leaders. Training women in particular emerged as the most promising lever of change studied; it is the most marginally effective and will be necessary to confront norms of gender-based violence that have metastasized in the DRC. Above all, dialogue must include Congolese NGOs, who are best placed to understand the conflict and implement local interventions.

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