



Mapping and assessment of national, bilateral and multilateral actors' support to work against sexual based violence in the Great Lakes region in Africa



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Violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women's lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence — yet the reality is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned.

— UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 8 March 2007

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Acronyms

AfDB	The African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRCPF	DRC Pooled Fund
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FAF	Réseau Action Femmes
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
GoDRC	Government of the DRC
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
MoGFC	Ministry of Gender, Family and Children
MONUC	United Nation Mission in the DRC
PAIDECO	Program for Community Development Initiatives
PEAR	Program of Expanded Assistance for Returnees
PNC	Congolese National Police Force (Police Nationale Congolaise)
PNPFC	National Program for the Promotion of Congolese Women
REJUSCO	Restoration of the Judicial System in Eastern Congo
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SV	Sexual Violence
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	UN Development Program
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
UNICEF	UN Children’s Fund
UNSCR 1325	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)
UNSCR 1820	UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Women, Peace and Security (2008)
WB	The World Bank

1. Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has, since 1996, been in a state of open or low-level, localized conflict, notwithstanding multiple peace accords and ceasefire agreements, and the presence (since 1999) of the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), one of the largest peacekeeping operations in the world.¹ Eastern Congo has been the site of the most persistent fighting, wherein an array of actors – including various rebel factions supported by Rwanda and Uganda, the semi-reconstituted national army (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo, FARDC), and MONUC forces – have battled each other and preyed upon the civilian population.² Sexual violence, looting, gender-based violence (including the targeted killing of men and boys), and various forms of torture have seemingly become routine among some of the combatants.³ Unfortunately, the particular condition of irregular, decentralized, often village-based violence committed by a combination of state and non-state actors makes the conflict exceedingly deadly and difficult to stop. This also means that it is difficult to reach consensus about the number of survivors of sexual violence and, relatedly, how to access and treat them most effectively (Pedersen 2009; see also Baaz and Stern 2009).⁴ While the Panzi hospital in Bukavu, and a few other hospitals and health centers throughout the region, are providing an indispensable service to survivors of sexual violence, resource limitations on the part of both the hospital and survivors mean that many never receive any assistance.⁵

¹ On 28 May 2010, the UN Security Council decided that MONUC would be transformed into a stabilization force, to be rechristened MONUSCO, as of 1 July. Given that the activities referred to in this report have taken place under MONUC auspices, this report refers to MONUC rather than MONUSCO.

² With the exception of MONUC, which has not targeted and exploited the civilian population in the same manner as other parties to the conflict, but which is nevertheless the subject of recurrent and grave allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers of local women, men, and children.

³ In this study sexual violence is defined in accordance with the internationally agreed definition of rape, sexual torture and mutilation, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, sterilisation and forced pregnancy. See International Criminal Court (ICC), *Elements of Crimes* (UN Doc. PNICC/2000/Add. 2, Article 8(2) (e) (xxii)-2 to (xxii)-6.

⁴ Rape is not the only form of sexual violence, but to give an example: between 1996 and 2004, approximately 36,000 rapes were reported in DRC. 14,000 new cases were recorded in 2005, and 13,000 in 2006. Between January and June 2007, 4,500 cases were recorded. As in other conflict or post-conflict areas, the reliability of data relating to sexual violence can be considered as extremely dubious; in particular, it is difficult to assess whether rises in the number of reported rapes reflects an actual increase in rapes or stems from better reporting of the crime of rape, or some combination of the two. See Baaz and Stern (2009).

⁵ Resource limitations on the part of survivors limit access to treatment by e.g. making it impossible for survivors to afford to travel to Bukavu, or to leave the household short of the labor provided by the survivor, etc.

While there remain many unknowns about sexual violence in Eastern Congo (see Bøås, Dalen, Pedersen and Solhjell 2009), some characteristics have been established. Sexual violence often occurs opportunistically, e.g. when women leave the homestead to conduct typical women's work (such as fetching firewood or water), thus placing themselves in a state of heightened vulnerability. More predictably, it also occurs when armed forces enter villages to pillage, loot, and abduct people (Solhjell 2008), which is consistent with the finding that many are attacked in their own homes (Bartels et al. 2010). Because both rank-and-file government soldiers and rebels in the DRC are poorly paid (if paid at all), preying upon the civilian population has become a key survival tactic; and while sexual violence cannot be seen as an element of soldiers' survival strategies, it seemingly functions as an additional spoil. Furthermore, a study by Baaz and Stern (2009) suggests that government soldiers explain their sexually violent behavior as a consequence of the frustration and anger they feel towards their superiors, and towards the violent life they feel trapped in. Finally, adding to the magnitude of the problem is the fact that civilians have increasingly become perpetrators of sexual violence, though many of these men may be former soldiers or insurgents who have demobilized (Swedish Foundation for Human Rights 2008). An analysis conducted in South Kivu by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam showed an increase in the number of rapes committed by civilian men: the number of rape cases committed by civilians reported to the Panzi hospital for the period 2004 to 2008 increased by 1,733 percent, whereas the numbers of rapes committed by armed combatants decreased by 77 percent (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010).⁶ Although these figures are not representative for the entire country, they nevertheless suggest a trend of normalization of rape in the civilian population. Sexual violence is not only a direct consequence of the war; it may also have morphed into a socio-cultural phenomenon. If this is the case, it will be all the more difficult to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence.

This mapping exercise attempts to provide an overview of the main activities being conducted and resources used in the attempt to combat sexual violence in DRC. The following sections of the report will outline the applicable frameworks for action against sexual violence in DRC, including the 2009 Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual

⁶ The study also showed a steady decrease in the number of sexual assaults reported at Panzi Hospital between 2004 and 2008, but did not attempt to explain this trend.

Violence in DRC (hereafter 'Comprehensive Strategy'); summarize national, bilateral and multilateral actors' efforts against sexual violence, classifying them according to the broad categories of justice/ legal support, health and psycho-social support, and reintegration support; discuss the role of new important donor countries such as China and India; and suggest some possible measures that could be undertaken to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to the issue of sexual violence. First, however, we will briefly identify some of the challenges and limitations faced by donors on this particular issue, in order to give some perspective to the technical questions of 'what's being done, by whom, where?'.

1.1. Combating Sexual Violence in DRC: Challenges and limitations

One of the main limitations on effective action against sexual violence in DRC is a lack of reliable data concerning its prevalence and other relevant factors, such as affiliation of the perpetrator(s), geographical distribution, and form. Although, as noted above, there is an increasing knowledge base on sexual violence in DRC (and Eastern Congo in particular), there is still an over-reliance on anecdotal evidence and/or non-representative data. This means that both aid and policy interventions are being planned and implemented in the absence, in most cases, of a comprehensive understanding of the scope and dimensions of the problem in the affected area; it also complicates later efforts to assess the success of such interventions, given the absence of dependable baseline data. The UN itself acknowledges the problem caused by the 'disparate reports and accounts' that constitute much of the knowledge base on sexual violence in DRC, calling for 'A contextual and situation analysis on sexual violence in DRC [to] be developed to better inform and develop appropriate and effective prevention and response strategies (Office of the Senior SV Advisor and Coordinator 2009:6)'. To this might be added the need for critical, constructive evaluations of existing projects, so that national and international actors can better target limited resources towards activities that are shown to have a positive impact on the prevention or punishment of sexual violence, and/ or on the quality of life of survivors.

A more elemental limitation facing attempts to combat sexual violence is the impotence, if not outright malevolence, of key Congolese institutions (or components of those

institutions), in particular the judicial and penal systems and the armed forces. Because sexual violence, even if reported, is rarely prosecuted successfully, impunity is rife. Meanwhile, as noted above, the FARDC is implicated in sexual violence against civilians. The problem in DRC is not the lack of a legal framework to punish sexual violence (see below), but the lack of will and capacity to enforce existing laws – and, more fundamentally, the absence of any functioning state authority, infrastructure, and ability to provide even minimal services in large swathes of the country.

A further challenge is the distrust and/or unwillingness to coordinate (or be coordinated) that exists between – and even within – the various institutional actors. Here the UN is a serial offender, with MONUC's own Office of the Senior Adviser and Coordinator for Sexual Violence noting that '(d)uplication of efforts and lack of inter-agency communication is posing a major obstacle' to effective implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy (Office of the Senior SV Advisor and Coordinator 2009: 6). However, this problem is not confined to the UN. Indeed, while tensions have recently escalated between the central government of Joseph Kabila and MONUC, with Kabila calling for MONUC's departure by August 2011, the existence of friction and non-cooperation between MONUC, Congolese actors, bilateral donors, and the international financial institutions has been longstanding.⁷ The DRC is without question a challenging and extraordinarily complex environment in which to work, which puts into harsh relief the difficulty for donors of reconciling the principles of effectiveness, transparency, and local ownership in (supposedly non-political) aid interventions.

A final, obvious challenge to attempts to tackle sexual violence in DRC is the ongoing, if low-level, conflict in the eastern part of the country. Above it was noted that sexual violence is no longer (and never was) exclusively driven by conflict; nevertheless, the existence of conflict undoubtedly complicates the viability and sustainability of efforts to curtail sexual violence. In this respect, the achievement of a more-than-illusory peace will be an important contributing factor in any effective strategy to combat sexual violence. This point will be returned to below.

⁷ See e.g. Onana and Taylor (2008). Moreover, Boshoff et al. (2010: 9) report that, in aid to the justice sector, bilateral donors and GoDRC actors coordinate well, but there is ongoing tension between MONUC and donors, as well as between MONUC and national actors.

The point of listing these challenges is not to encourage despair, but rather to acknowledge the limitations facing even well-designed and – implemented aid and policy interventions. Incremental progress measured in daily, ‘small’ successes – such as one more survivor getting medical, psycho-social, or economic assistance – is perhaps the best that can be hoped for, and this should not be disparaged.

2. Frameworks for action against sexual violence in DRC

Action to combat sexual violence in the DRC occurs within the overlapping frameworks of the international obligations of the GoDRC, DRC national law, and strategies and programs agreed to by the GoDRC and various international actors. Of the latter, the most important is the Comprehensive Strategy, which was developed by MONUC in conjunction with the GoDRC's STAREC program.

2.1. International obligations

The DRC ratified the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986.⁸ In 2004, the CEDAW committee reported that one of the main challenges for full implementation of the convention in DRC was the existence of armed conflict and its negative consequences on women and girls, who are the main victims of sexual violence. Other major obstacles identified were lack of access to justice, impunity, lack of concrete data, and lack of political participation of women (Gaps 2009). The DRC is also a signatory to a number of international treaties or resolutions that promote the right of women and girls to be protected from violence. These include the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1987); the African Platform for Action (1994); Beijing Platform for Action (1995); UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security (2000); the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (2002); the Dakar Strategy on Equality between Women and Men within the AU (2003); the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004); and UNSCR 1820 on Women, Peace and Security (2008) (*Ibid.*).

2.1.2. The African Union, ICGLR, and the Goma Declaration

Gender equality and the protection of women's rights and security have featured in several official documents adopted by the African Union, of which DRC is a member state. These include the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), Article 4, sub-article 2 of which specifically focuses on sexual and other forms of violence against women (Rumbold 2008); and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2007), which includes a call for public awareness campaigns against sexual and

⁸ They have not yet signed or ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

gender-based violence and an end to impunity for crimes of violence against women.⁹ Within the AU's institutional framework, there is a Gender Directorate residing in the Office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, which is charged with ensuring gender mainstreaming in the Commission's work and supporting gender equality within AU member states; and an AU Gender Policy (adopted 2009), which supports increased women's participation in politics and society but does not specifically mention the issue of sexual or gender-based violence. There is also the Plan of Action on Violence Prevention in Africa (2007), which presents violence as a preventable problem and calls for the strengthening of public health systems in order to improve the prevention of, and response to, violence in African societies (Rumbold 2008).

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) is an attempt to build a regional organization among the eleven different countries that comprise a volatile region, including governments with different, occasionally incompatible interests and degrees of involvement in the current conflicts.¹⁰ Its mandate is very broad, and one of the aims expressed in its Constitution – the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region – is to combat various forms of sexual and gender-based violence, expressed through the Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Violence against Women and Children. The Secretariat has a staff of only 26 people and, considering its extensive mandate, rather limited resources. Nonetheless, it has propagated a novel, and potentially fruitful, approach to security through its 'border security zoning system'. This approach is built on the (likely correct) assumption that security issues assume different forms in different parts of the Great Lakes region. The answer to this problem is, according to the ICGLR, to dissect the region into smaller units based on their particular security dynamics. Accordingly, the ICGLR has divided the region into 12 different border security zones: DRC features in Zone 1 (Uganda, Rwanda and DRC); Zone 4 (Sudan, Uganda and DRC); Zone 5 (Sudan, Central African Republic and DRC); Zone 6 (Republic of Congo, DRC and CAR); Zone 7 (DRC, RoC and Angola); Zone 8 (DRC, Zambia and Angola); Zone 9 (Tanzania, DRC, Burundi and Zambia), and Zone 10 (DRC, Burundi and Rwanda). While combating sexual violence is not a primary activity for ICGLR, it has initiated some promising activities, such

⁹ The text of the Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa is available at: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/Past/2006/October/WG/doc.htm>.

¹⁰ This paragraph draws primarily from Bøås, Lotsberg and Ndizeye (2009).

as a series of seminars on sexual and gender-based violence in Goma in 2008, which resulted in the Goma Declaration (see below), and a series of meetings in collaboration with UNIFEM on the role of security forces in addressing sexual violence. The ICGLR also has a program officer and an assistant officer on gender, which is supposed to be a cross-cutting issue in the organization. All the same, gender as a priority issue has not been fully mainstreamed in the organization or in its policies. However, this is not necessarily due to a lack of understanding or complacency on the issue. Rather, the lack of progress on gender is first and foremost a consequence of the amount of time spent on constituting the Secretariat. The increased collaboration with UNIFEM should help in putting gender more on the front burner, particularly if gender issues are connected to the border security zoning system, and thereby prioritized and implemented locally in the different security zones established by the ICGLR.

Finally, the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region (2008) is a notable product of the ICGLR, in that it 'recommends' 50 specific actions against sexual violence to be taken by member states at the state and regional levels, as well as by international partners (donors and the UN) (ICGLR 2008). These recommended actions cover the gamut from improving legal systems and trial procedures in order to better handle sexual violence cases; to strengthening medical systems; encouraging grassroots activism; providing training to the range of actors that may come in contact with sexual violence survivors; launching public awareness campaigns and media strategies; improving data collection; reforming penal systems; and putting in place various regional facilities to prevent and/or improve responses to sexual and gender-based violence. It also calls for more thorough enforcement of MONUC's protection mandate, as well as donor support for the implementation of the ICGLR's Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children, and its Project on Prevention and Fight against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence and Assistance to Victims. Interestingly, the Goma Declaration identifies SGBV as 'a threat to national and regional peace and security', and acknowledges 'the cost of SGBV on the economic and sustainable development of the countries of the Great Lakes Region' (ICGLR 2008: 3). This implies that, at least at an official level, ICGLR member states regard

these forms of violence as multi-faceted threats to society, rather than ‘just’ isolated threats affecting individuals.

2.2. National law

Gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence are also enshrined in the DRC Constitution (2006), Article 51 of which states: ‘The State has the duty to see to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure respect for and advancement of their rights The State shall take steps to combat all forms of violence against women in public and private life’ (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2004: 9). Additionally, the problem of sexual violence was featured in the 2008 Goma Agreement, article III of which binds signatories to end all acts of violence and abuse against the civilian population.¹¹

Within its national legal framework, DRC has the necessary statutes to address sexual violence. The law on sexual violence was approved by the National Assembly in June, 2006. Under the law, rape is punishable by a prison sentence of 5 to 20 years. The law addresses several aspects of sexual violence, such as sexual slavery, sexual harassment, forced pregnancy, and other sexual crimes that had not been recognized in previous laws; it also encompasses sexual violence committed against men.

On its own, however, the law is necessary but not sufficient. For example, it is believed that many victims of sexual violence still do not report the abuses, while those that do rarely see the cases taken to court.¹² The first time a rape was tried as a crime against humanity took place in 2006, when a military court in Mbandaka found seven army officers guilty of mass rape of more than 119 women. This was the first sentence against FARDC personnel for these crimes. However, protection for those that pursue prosecution against their perpetrators continues to be weak, and survivors who come forward risk both social

¹¹ Note that the 2008 Goma Agreement is a separate document from the 2008 Goma Declaration. The former is a peace agreement signed between GoDRC and various armed groups operating in Eastern Congo, including the faction then led by Laurent Nkunda.

¹² It is worth noting that the low prosecution rate of rapes is hardly a problem unique to DRC or other weak states. In Norway, for example, it has been estimated that only 16 percent of reported rapes are taken to court, and only 1 in 8 reported rapes leads to a conviction. See Amnesty International (2008).

stigma and continued harassment from the perpetrators (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010; Kippenberg 2009). Three challenges in particular remain in the fight against impunity in DRC. First, the judiciary and the police are dysfunctional, and existing laws are not properly enforced. This means that the ability of and incentives for victims to take their cases to court are few. Second, the majority of perpetrators are current or former members of an armed group, the armed forces, or the police. They are protected by the other members of their group. Indeed, there are examples of cases where the victims of sexual violence have been imprisoned themselves after reporting about the injustice conducted against them (see Human Rights Watch 2005; Tosh and Chazan 2008; Carlsen 2009). The third main challenge is that the prison system in DRC is dysfunctional. For example, Human Rights Watch has documented cases where the perpetrators escaped from prison and continued to harass their victims (Kippenberg 2009).

2.2.2. Resolution 1325-related activities

The Ministry of Family, Gender and Children (MoGFC) is the main implementing agency for the promotion of Resolution 1325; it has also developed a national strategy for the fight against gender-based violence, which is the nationally-owned counterpart to the Comprehensive Strategy. With the exception of training organized by the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with MONUC, for the national police and army, there is little evidence of any extensive action on gender or sexual violence issues in other ministries. Among the MoGFC's most important allies is MONUC's Gender Office, which is working with the ministry to develop a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. The National Action Plan should include items relating to the protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence and the impunity issue. In 2008, a three-day training session on UNSCR 1325 was conducted by MoGFC in collaboration with MONUC. The participants in this session were the heads of the provincial gender ministries and civil society activists from all 11 provinces (Gaps 2009). However, a 1325 National Action Plan is still not finalized. MoGFC is also involved in the Joint Initiative in the Fight Against Sexual Violence, an initiative with participation from MONUC and other UN agencies, in addition to MoGFC. This initiative was started in 2008 and has been supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In addition, the MoGFC cooperates with civil society organizations and women's groups working for the empowerment of women across 10 thematic networks, with the goal to pursue the National Program for the Promotion of Congolese Women (PNPFC). The Program includes issues such as the promotion of female leadership; the legal status of women; education; access to economic resources; women's health; and women and peace. MoGFC also supports programs for gender mainstreaming for both women and men in the Congolese National Police Force (PNC), in addition to a number of awareness-raising campaigns on the issue of women's rights (initiated in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights). However, funding for these campaigns have been scarce, and it has been difficult to reach out to the more remote areas where sexual violence is endemic. Similarly, the MoGFC's plan to establish Women's Houses to function as shelters for women survivors of sexual violence is threatened by a lack of funding. Both of these areas can be seen as funding opportunities for donors, and will be returned to below.

Finally, it should be noted that several regional and international civil society organizations are also active in issues relating to sexual violence and, more generally, Resolution 1325. The main actors are Action Aid, Akina Mama we Africa, Christian Aid, Common Cause UK, Forum inter-régional des femmes Congolaises, International Action Network on Small Armies, International Alert, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Save the Children, Women for Women International and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom DRC.

In addition to the regional and the international community, a number of local NGOs are engaged in various work related to UNSCR 1325. However, lack of financial resources and long-term support makes it difficult to create sustainable organizations that can make a substantial difference in the local communities.

2.3. STAREC

The impetus to develop the Comprehensive Strategy was provided by the GoDRC's Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC), launched in June 2009. Among the priorities identified in STAREC are security and the restoration of state

authority; humanitarian and social assistance; and economic recovery. STAREC is supported by a Stabilization and Reconstruction Fund, which is jointly managed by GoDRC and the international community, and which is intended to provide a rapid and flexible mechanism for allocating international funds given to STAREC initiatives.

In support of and accordance with STAREC, the UN subsequently revised its existing Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (UNSSSS, from 2008) so as to better reflect GoDRC priorities. Like the previous strategy, the UN's revised plan, known as the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), focuses on five areas, one of which is sexual violence: specifically, to improve the prevention of and response to sexual violence, as well as coordination around the issue.¹³ The Comprehensive Strategy is thus a key element of one of the UNSSSS priority areas, which was carried over when UNSSSS was revised into the ISSSS in support of STAREC.

2.3.2. The Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in DRC

The [Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in DRC](#) has been signed on to by the GoDRC, but it is not a GoDRC plan: it was developed by MONUC's Office of the Senior Adviser and Coordinator for Sexual Violence, in collaboration with relevant UN agencies, MONUC sections, international NGOs, the Sexual Violence Task Force and respective humanitarian clusters. GoDRC participation with the Comprehensive Strategy is supposed to come from the Ministries of Justice, Defence, Interior, Health, and Gender, Family and Children. The overall aim of the strategy is to create a common framework for action among all partners involved in combating sexual violence in DRC. Importantly, the Comprehensive Strategy is essentially a voluntary initiative: the Office of the Senior Adviser has no statutory or budgetary means to compel enforcement by the GoDRC, MONUC, or other actors. Instead, the Office of the Senior Adviser is limited to an advisory and coordination role, without an operational mandate. This narrow mandate for the Office of the Senior Adviser clearly constrains the extent to which the Comprehensive Strategy can be consistently prioritized and enforced across the many national and UN actors involved.¹⁴ This implications of this constraint is made explicit in the Comprehensive

¹³ See the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office website:

<http://mdtf.undp.org/dashboard/fund/information/assistance?dash=CRF00>.

¹⁴ For a critique of the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy, see Solhjell (2009a).

Strategy itself, which lists a number of obstacles to the implementation of the strategy, foremost of which is the (lack of) political will on the part of the GoDRC (Office of the Senior SV Adviser and Coordinator 2009: 5-6).¹⁵

The objective of the Comprehensive Strategy is to strengthen and support GoDRC and UN system efforts to prevent, protect against, and respond to sexual violence (*Ibid*: 1). Reflecting the limited mandate of the Office of the Senior Adviser, the Comprehensive Strategy identifies primarily processual goals, such as improving coordination between involved parties; ensuring that issues related to sexual violence are related to broader agendas (such as justice and security sector reform) and taken up in ongoing processes and initiatives (such as the SSR working group and the National Police Reform Committee); and improving the methodological capacity and programmatic focus of projects on sexual violence (*Ibid.*). It also calls for a centralized funding mechanism to be managed by the Sexual Violence Task Force, which would ‘allow for better targeting and distribution of the specific activities proposed in this comprehensive strategy (*Ibid*: 6)’.

Against this general backdrop, the Comprehensive Strategy focuses in particular on efforts in four inter-related components, namely: combating impunity; improving prevention and creating a protective environment against sexual violence, as part of the UN’s broader Protection of Civilians agenda; interweaving the effort to combat sexual violence in ongoing SSR processes, with a focus on increasing accountability, improving vetting procedures, and sensitizing SSR processes to the needs of survivors of sexual violence; and improving survivors’ access to multi-sectoral services, with the establishment of ‘minimum standards for the provision of assistance (*Ibid*: 3)’.

Finally, the Comprehensive Strategy notes that new software has been developed in order to provide a better platform for analysis of the trends on sexual violence. If this is well implemented and coordinated, it could constitute an important analytical tool that would create more certainty concerning the prevalence of sexual violence, and also help explain why it has featured so heavily in the conflict. However, the software has not yet been utilized because the UN is still discussing which agency should house the database, a decision which touches on issues of data maintenance, ownership, and access. This thus

¹⁵ Other limitations include several of those outlined in section 1.1. above.

seems to be an example of a situation where a valuable and much-needed tool is being held hostage to turf wars between different UN agencies.

3. Sexual Violence-Related Activities and Aid to DRC

The following section will not attempt to summarize all the aid flows and programmatic interventions in the DRC, but will focus just on those related to sexual violence. A similar exercise was conducted by the Office of the Senior Adviser in 2008, wherein the following categories were developed to classify the actions surveyed: protection; legal/justice support; health and medical support; psycho-social support; and economic and/or social reintegration of survivors (Office of the Senior Adviser and Coordinator on Sexual Violence 2008: 3).¹⁶ Given the overlapping nature of many of the activities being conducted on sexual violence in DRC, as well as the inter-relatedness of the categories themselves – for example, psycho-social support is often received at the same site as health and medical support – we have compressed the five categories into three: justice sector reform and legal support; health and psycho-social support; and reintegration.¹⁷

First, however, it is worth noting that the 2008 mapping exercise was plagued by difficulties in finding out what was being done and by whom. This was due to the large number of actors involved; the cross-cutting nature of (responses to) sexual violence; coordination problems between actors; the ways in which funds were pooled and managed (making resource flows difficult to track); and the inability to identify ‘both the precise role and the expertise of each actor with regard to SV (Office of the Senior Adviser 2008: 3)’. The exercise’s main finding was ‘a general lack of coordination within and between the sectors with regard to policies, approaches, the distribution of funds and expertise. ... One UN [agency] leads the majority of interventions, and the programmatic focus is essentially on two sectors: medical and judicial support to SV survivors, while the remaining sectors show very few interventions (*ibid*)’. Without implying that the situation has remained static since 2008, it is nevertheless the case that this finding remains largely valid today. However, given the surge in media and donor attention paid to sexual violence in DRC from 2007/8 until today, it is reasonable to expect that the resources and programs

¹⁶ The report also mentioned the existence of cross-cutting activities contained in each sector – specifically capacity-building, advocacy, and education/sensitization – but did not attempt to classify interventions according to these categories.

¹⁷ Protection against sexual violence is an element of MONUC’s larger mandate to protect civilians ‘under imminent threat of physical violence’, using force if necessary. The way in which protection has been operationalized and understood emphasizes the centrality of military force: protection is primarily a task for the blue helmets, although there have been attempts to broaden and demilitarize the protection agenda (see the section on MONUC, below).

devoted to sexual violence issues have multiplied, even if absolute figures are hard to come by.¹⁸

The following sections will inventory the main sexual violence-related projects and programs being conducted in the three identified categories: legal/justice support, health and psycho-social support, and reintegration. Where programs contain elements of one of more categories, they are inventoried in the category that seems most prioritized in the programming. These sections are followed by a brief overview of the role of MONUC and some elements of the UN Country Team, which assume a place of particular importance in the aid-and-intervention landscape in DRC; and by a short overview of other aid activities with indirect effects on sexual violence in DRC, including the activities of ‘unconventional’ donors such as India and China. Because the following sections are organized thematically, concise summations of the general (non-SV-related) activities of key bilateral and multilateral donors can be found in Annex 1.

3.1. Justice sector reform and legal support

The overriding goal of aid focusing on justice reform and legal support is to combat the existing impunity for sexual violence offenses. This is primarily attempted in two ways: capacity-building and training programs, which aim to improve the ability of the police and legal authorities to sensitively and effectively handle sexual violence cases; and the provision of free legal support to survivors. Other relevant areas for assistance could include support for the development of family units in the police, which requires capacity-building and training as well as resources for infrastructure/ construction (so that the units can be housed separately from the rest of the police station); the recruitment of more women to the police force; and support for penal reform, in order to avoid the problem (mentioned above) of perpetrators escaping or bribing their way out of jail.

¹⁸ Indeed, some argue that there is an over-emphasis on the issue of sexual violence, leading to donor neglect of other pressing problems (such as domestic violence of a non-sexual nature) while at the same time prompting NGOs and others seeking funds to exaggerate the prevalence of sexual violence, in order to access yet more donor funding – thus creating a non-virtuous cycle. See Baaz and Stern (2010) and Boshoff et al. (2010). This point will be expanded upon below.

Table 1: SV-related justice reform and legal support interventions				
Donor	Project Name	Justice reform and legal support activities related to sexual violence¹⁹	Amount and time period²⁰	Location
UNDP	Access to Justice and Legal Protection for Women Victims of SGBV	Free legal assistance for SV survivors; establishment of legal centers; training of paralegals; outreach to traditional leaders on SV issues	USD 1.5 million for next 3 years; 2005-2012	North and South Kivu
European Commission plus UK, Sweden, ²¹ Belgium, Netherlands	REJUSCO (Restauration de la justice à l'Est du Congo)	Capacity-building and training related to SV issues and women's rights; victims assistance and protection; construction of courthouses and prisons	USD 17 million; 2008-2013	Eastern Congo
European Union/ EUPOL	Action against sexual violence component of STAREC	Training of police officers on SV issues	NA	North and South Kivu
UK	Security Sector Accountability and Police Reform Program	Capacity-building and training to improve police handling of SV cases	£40 million; 2009-2014	Kinshasa and three provinces
Norway (via Norwegian Church Aid)	Not available (NA)	Training of military and police on SV issues, outreach to local authorities and religious leaders	NA	North and South Kivu
Belgium	Indicative Cooperation Program	Justice system reform with some elements focusing on improving access of SV survivors to the legal system	USD 288.8 million; 2008-2010	Eastern Congo
UNHCR	NA	Legal assistance to survivors	NA	South Kivu
OHCHR	NA	Grassroots justice, e.g. training on SV issues for tribal chiefs, community leaders, etc; support to mobile tribunals; provision of legal clinics	NA	North and South Kivu

¹⁹ Note that only SV-related activities are being covered, not the totality of activities encompassed by a named program or donor.

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted, the monetary amount listed covers the entire project, of which the sexual violence component may be only a limited part.

²¹ The UK and Sweden finance only the sexual violence components of the REJUSCO program (Boshoff et al. 2010).

3.2. Health and psycho-social support

The intent of aid in the category of health and psycho-social support is, simply, to increase survivors' access to healthcare and psycho-social support in the wake of a sexual assault. Here some context is necessary. The General Referral Hospital of Panzi is the main referral centre for South Kivu and North Katanga. The hospital has 334 beds and provides general services including OB/GYN, pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, dentistry, and nutrition. The majority of patients are rape survivors. The hospital has a 'Victims of Sexual Violence Program', which offers survivors free medical treatment and free psychological care in addition to socio-economic assistance. The pressure on the hospital is enormous and, despite 200 beds allocated to survivors of sexual violence, it is not uncommon for the hospital to have 450 survivors admitted. The hospital has only one specialist on gynecology, in addition to one trained psychologist and several social workers (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010). Thus, while the work being done at Panzi hospital is extremely important, it is nevertheless the case that the demand for treatment is higher than the capacity to treat the survivors of sexual violence. Moreover, despite longstanding funding from PMU InterLife (the Swedish Pentecostal Mission Relief and Development Cooperation Agency), Panzi Hospital continues to face a shortage of money, supplies, and resources to expand its base of qualified personnel.

Table 2: SV-related health and psycho-social support interventions				
Donor	Project Name	Health and psycho-social support activities related to sexual violence²²	Amount and time period²³	Location
Norway (via Norwegian Church Aid)	Dorca's House	Dorca's House is a center for women victims of SV, connected to Panzi hospital. Women receive literacy and skills training, psycho-social help, and legal information.	NA	Bukavu
Norway and UNFPA (via Pentecostal Foreign Mission & Aid)	Various projects	Medical and psycho-social support to female victims of abuse and SV; legal advice	NA	South Kivu
Norway (via Christian Relief Network)	Various projects under a variety of CRN programs, including Fistula Treatment, Victims of Sexual Violence, and Hospitals and Health Clinics	Construction of a 100-bed fistula department at Panzi hospital (also with DFID funding); building reception and rehabilitation centers; improving primary care through e.g. training of health personnel; transport of victims to hospitals and clinics; psycho-social treatment; access to medical care for SV survivors; social and economic reintegration; awareness-raising campaigns; restoration, expansion and equipping of Kyeshero hospital in Goma	Depending on the project, from 1997 to present	North and South Kivu
Germany/ GTZ	Health program	Combat sexual violence and improve HIV/AIDS treatment (within a larger health program)	NA	Eastern Congo
Canada (via UNFPA)	Fight Against Sexual Violence	Medical care and psycho-social support for SV survivors, socio-economic reintegration and access to legal support	CAD 15.5 million; 2006-2011	North and South Kivu
UNICEF (via Heal Africa)	SV program	Medical and psycho-social services to SV survivors; training of counselors to deal with SV issues; awareness-raising campaigns; emergency response teams and mobile clinics; social and economic reintegration	NA; 2003 to present	Eastern Congo
World Bank	Social protection component of the Emergency Multisectoral	This component provides support to projects targeting vulnerable groups, e.g. sexual violence survivors, street children, adolescent sex workers, children	USD 9 million for social protection component	Congo-wide

²² Note that only SV-related activities are being covered, not the totality of activities encompassed by a named program or donor.

²³ Unless otherwise noted, the monetary amount listed covers the entire project, of which the sexual violence component may be only a limited part.

	Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program (PMURR)	with HIV, etc. Has supported the Bethsaida Missionary Center in Goma, a shelter for SV survivors and other vulnerable children, providing medical and psycho-social support and education/ vocational training.		
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3.3. Reintegration support

Aid interventions focusing on the social and economic reintegration of sexual violence survivors typically use a number of tools, such as the provision of skills training and education to survivors; awareness-raising in communities (in order to lower stigmas against survivors of sexual violence); programs intended to increase women’s political and socio-economic participation at the family and community levels; and cash or in-kind payments to survivors, usually meant as a transitional measure to help survivors ‘get back on their feet’. A separate but related aspect of reintegration support involves the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process being undertaken as part of the broader security sector reform in DRC: in this effort, attempts are made during the cantonment phase to sensitize demobilizing combatants to the problem of sexual violence, as well as to target and provide extra assistance to those being demobilized who have themselves experienced sexual violence. However, the DDR/SSR effort is not included here, as SV is not a primary focus in that process, nor is it possible to differentiate the overall funding for DDR/ SSR according to the narrow parameter of sexual violence.

Table 3: SV-related reintegration support interventions				
Donor	Project Name	Reintegration support activities related to sexual violence²⁴	Amount and time period²⁵	Location
USAID and World Bank (via International Rescue Committee)	Breaking the cycle of vulnerability and violence facing women and girls in Eastern DRC	Community-based groups that aim to increase women and girls' decision-making power in families and communities, and participation in education and other opportunities; provision of health, psycho-social and legal services; support to local advocacy groups; highlight role of masculinities in SGBV	US share: USD 7 million from 2009-2012; WB share: USD 1.98 million, start-up 2010	North and South Kivu
USAID (via Cooperazione Internazionale)	Psychosocial support and reintegration of survivors of SGBV in Eastern Congo	Programs to enable survivors to resume their roles within family and community; strengthen community responsiveness to SGBV issues, including creating a protective environment against future incidents	USD 4.945 million; 2008-2011	Ituri district and Maniema Province
UNDP	Security, empowerment and reintegration of women	Outreach to communities on SV issues; socio-economic reintegration assistance and legal assistance to survivors	NA	North and South Kivu
Norway (via Christian Relief Network)	Fatherhood Program; other projects under its Assistance to SV victims program	The Fatherhood Program focuses on men and their relationship with and treatment of women and of SV issues, featuring training and discussion groups; other projects aim to support women survivors of SV, including through survivors' groups	NA	Eastern Congo

3.4. The Role of MONUC and the UN Country Team

It is impossible to discuss international aid and programmatic interventions in DRC without taking into account the role of the UN, and that of MONUC in particular. As noted above, the Comprehensive Strategy is primarily a creature of MONUC, albeit with GoDRC input and buy-in. MONUC also plays a key, if not entirely successful, role in civilian protection (as

²⁴ Note that only SV-related activities are being covered, not the totality of activities encompassed by a named program or donor.

²⁵ Unless otherwise noted, the monetary amount listed covers the entire project, of which the sexual violence component may be only a limited part.

part of the UN's Protection of Civilians agenda); SSR; judicial reform; the electoral process; and in facilitating and coordinating humanitarian assistance. All of these processes are supposed to take gender into account, either explicitly (usually through programming targeted at women, who are typically the recipients of anything to do with 'gender', with the disturbing implication that men are 'gender-less') or through more diffuse efforts to 'mainstream' gender into the planning processes and implementation. Per Resolution 1325, MONUC's gender office is supposed to ensure that gender is indeed being taken into account across the range of mission activities, and is also tasked to assist the national MoGFC in its own efforts; the Office of the Senior Adviser occupies a similar role but with a slightly narrower range, holding sway only on sexual violence issues.

An important limitation on MONUC's effectiveness in combating sexual violence is that civilian protection is still largely treated as a task for the blue helmets: the protection agenda has been a militarized one, epitomized in MONUC's mandate to protect civilians under 'imminent threat of physical violence'.²⁶ There have been only sporadic attempts to broaden the understanding of what 'protection' encompasses, which, in operational terms, would imply shifting the focus from military (area) security to personal security. For example, in 2007, MONUC created a protection unit in order to assist those in need of protection, including survivors of sexual violence. The unit has relocated some survivors with the need for physical protection to a designated shelter, but this facility is very small compared to the actual number of victims that need protection and counseling. There are also allusions by the UN and other actors about creating a 'protective environment' against sexual violence, although it is unclear what this constitutes other than increasing the frequency and scope of patrolling by blue helmets. Rethinking the idea of protection – by first (re)defining what constitutes the 'imminent threat of physical violence' – could improve the protection agenda's effectiveness against sexual violence (Samset 2010).

MONUC's role in DRC is currently in flux. As noted above, the Security Council decided on 28 May 2010 to transform MONUC into a stabilization force, renamed MONUSCO, and to downsize the number of peacekeepers by 2,000. The Security Council's hand was forced by President Joseph Kabila's call, in December 2009, for the total withdrawal of MONUC by

²⁶ The 'imminent threat' clause first appeared in UNSCR 1565 in 2004, and was repeated (with specific reference to the Kivus) in UNSCR 1794 (2007) and UNSCR 1856 (2008).

August 2011. Kabila's reasons for wanting to give MONUC the boot are undoubtedly linked to the forthcoming elections in the autumn of 2011. Kabila was elected in 2006 on a peace platform, and he may improve his chances of re-election if he enters the campaign as the president who officially declared peace in the country, and therefore asked the UN to leave. He may also prefer to have MONUC out of the electoral process by the time of the next election. If implemented (or adequately demagogued), Kabila's request could indeed increase his popularity, for the very reason that MONUC itself is not very popular amongst the population – a condition that is mainly a consequence of its apparent inability to offer the people of DRC adequate protection (see e.g. Samset 2010). Despite the Security Council's recent move, it is still uncertain what will eventually happen, as the same resolution (1925) that transformed MONUC into MONUSCO also extended its mandate through June 2011. Moreover, the recent unrest in Western DRC (Mbandaka) shows that Kabila still relies on the UN to, if not solve, at least prevent such disturbances from reaching the scale that may threaten his rule. It is therefore most likely that Kabila will in the end 'understand' that he stills needs MONUC, thus suggesting that – after the initial withdrawal of 2,000 troops – any larger withdrawals will be based on the ability of the FARDC to perform certain 'critical tasks' (see BBC 2010).

Finally, the UN Country Team – chiefly UNICEF and UNDP, as well as UNFPA – are also involved in combating sexual violence, both through their own programs (mostly implemented by local partners; see tables above) and through their participation in the Sexual Violence Task Force, a group comprised of GoDRC, MONUC, UN, and other international and national actors. Unicef's work on sexual violence issues seems to occur primarily within the framework of its Child Protection in Emergencies program, which focuses on providing critical care and protection for children and women displaced by conflict. That said, it is difficult to find information on the specific programs targeting, and resources allocated for, sexual violence issues; typically the agency will assert that it and its implementing partners have assisted x number of survivors, without providing any further details (see e.g. Humanitarian Action Plan 2010, 2009; and Unicef 2009). It is also worth reiterating that the coordination of efforts by different UN agencies continues to be problematic, potentially diluting the effectiveness of individual agency initiatives.

3.4.2. DRC Pooled Fund (DRCPF)

The DRC Pooled Fund was established as a pilot in 2005 and has been fully operational since 2006. It is supported by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. At present, the total portfolio in the fund consists of USD 512 million (pledged). DRCPF is the primary source of funding of humanitarian programs in DRC. The fund is under the overall authority of the Humanitarian Coordinator for DRC (OCHA and UNDP 2010).

The fund aims to ensure prompt, needs-based allocation of humanitarian aid resources, with funds being made available to participating UN organizations and implementing partners for projects conducted within the framework of the annual, inter-agency Humanitarian Action Plans. (Bilateral donors also fund HAP activities outside of the DRCPF framework.) Some of this funding goes to help survivors of sexual violence. The Humanitarian Action Plan of 2010 estimates that, in 2009, 'support' (unspecified) was provided to over 6,700 survivors of sexual violence by projects conducted under the auspices of the HAP protection cluster (Humanitarian Action Plan 2010: 11). Conversely, the 2009 HAP reports that, in 2008, medical care was provided to 14,468 survivors of sexual violence; psychosocial support was provided to 12,434 victims; 2,753 sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases were referred to justice; 3,564 cases benefited from reintegration support; and 5,441 sensitization workshops on SGBV were conducted for communities and authorities (Humanitarian Action Plan 2009). However, no information was provided on specific projects or implementing partners. Data collection is also carried out using DRCPF/ HAP funding, primarily by UNCHR and implementing partners.

3.5. Aid with indirect effects on sexual violence: Infrastructure investments and 'non-traditional' donors

Virtually all aid interventions can be said to have possible positive indirect effects on the reduction of levels of sexual violence, insofar as they improve living conditions and livelihood opportunities, the capacity of state institutions, access to education, etc. Large-scale infrastructure projects – which have fallen out of favor among most donors in the

past two decades²⁷ – can also be argued to assist survivors of sexual violence, insofar as they facilitate survivors' access to treatment and lessen their vulnerability (e.g. by cutting travel time to markets and fields, increasing electrification, etc). Perhaps more arguably, an improved infrastructure may also reduce the intensity of some of the many conflicts in the country, and help integrate and reunite the Congolese nation (at least physically). This will not happen automatically, but almost all stakeholders and observers stress the importance of infrastructure development for sustainable statebuilding in DR Congo, and in the long run effective measures against sexual violence and harassment will not materialize without a better integrated and more legitimate state. The question is therefore not that this kind of statebuilding is unimportant, but rather how it can be achieved. Currently 'non-traditional' donors have started to occupy important role within this particular field of development.

China and, to a lesser extent, India are two 'non-traditional' donors that are increasingly making their mark in Africa, primarily through the funding of such large-scale projects. In China's case, one could argue that 'donor' is an incorrect appellation, considering that Chinese involvement in Africa is typically a quid pro quo, with Chinese financial and human resources being expended in return for the exploitation rights to various natural resources. For example, China has agreed to support the DRC with an ambitious investment plan that, if implemented in full, will ensure the building and rehabilitation of some 3,300 kilometers of roads and 3,000 kilometers of railways. In exchange, China will receive mineral rights worth about USD 6 billion. Under the plan, mineral-rich Katanga will be connected by rail to the port of Matadi in the west, and by road to Kisangani on the Congo River. Two hydroelectric dams are also proposed in order to export energy and facilitate mineral exploitation.

India, meanwhile, has offered the GoDRC a loan of USD 263 million to build hydroelectric plants and repair infrastructure broken down by the civil war. India has also offered loans of USD 168 million for the Katende Dam project in Kasai Oriental, USD 45 million for the Kakoba dam, and USD 50 million to rehabilitate the rail system in Kinshasa (Bavier 2009).

²⁷ One exception being the Pro-Routes program, coordinated by the World Bank, which aims to rehabilitate up to 3,000 km of the DRC's roads; DFID (UK) is among the donors to this program.

The International Monetary Fund and some of the traditional donor countries have expressed doubts about the barter and loan arrangements between DRC and China and India. The argument is that, by using mineral reserves as a guarantee for infrastructure projects, the country may fall into even greater external debts. A Congolese counter-claim is that these doubts are more related to fear of losing control of the mineral extraction to 'non-Western' powers than concern for the well-being of Congolese economy. This debate aside, the point remains that DRC desperately needs a functioning infrastructure, which traditional donors are currently not prepared to assist on any sizable scale. This opens the door to deals such as those made by China and India.

4. Potential avenues for action

Per the Comprehensive Strategy, donor action against sexual violence should focus on ways to prevent, protect against, and better respond to sexual violence. Insofar as these inter-related aims can be separated, the latter goal is the most straightforward (if not simple): expanding access to healthcare and psycho-social services, offering free legal support to survivors, and providing them with reintegration support (e.g. skills training, access to microfinance, cash or in-kind payments) are fairly quantifiable ways to improve the current response. Preventing and protecting against sexual violence are arguably the greater challenges.

Prevention is often linked to the fight against impunity, in that potential perpetrators will be less likely to commit sexual violence if they believe that they may be punished for it.²⁸ Yet combating impunity is a highly complex, and not easily measurable, process. At the least, it involves reforming the military, police, judiciary, and penal systems into better functioning and less corrupt institutions. Ideally, such reform processes would occur concurrently with awareness-raising campaigns that aim to transfer any stigma associated with sexual assault from the survivors to the perpetrators, and/or that attempt to promote different masculinities from the highly militarized, predatory model that has prevailed during the conflict.

Meanwhile, as noted above, creating a protective environment against sexual assault is associated mostly with military efforts (e.g. establishing a feeling of greater security through an increase in patrols, the use of foot rather than mounted patrols, etc). However, a wider reading of protection could also refer to longer-term, resource-heavy activities such as infrastructural improvements that have the effect of decreasing one's vulnerability (by e.g. minimizing travel and wait time for water, easing access to markets and fields, increasing the amount of lighted spaces, etc); or the enactment of jobs programs for ex-combatants, on the theory that access to steady work will limit predation on the civilian

²⁸ This line of argumentation has long been used by death penalty advocates in the United States and is highly controversial, with both sides of the argument presenting research that seemingly proves their point. Given that the rate of impunity for sexual assault is almost uniformly high even in wealthy countries with well functioning legal systems, it is likely difficult to assess whether a lack of impunity does, in fact, have a preventative effect on sexual assaults.

population, and subsequently curtail sexual assaults.²⁹ Arguably, shifting (or continuing the shift) from a narrow to a more holistic understanding of protection would be an important step in combating sexual violence in DRC, especially in light of justified doubts as to whether MONUC, much less FARDC, has the credibility or resources even to provide military protection.

Some concrete activities that donors can support in order to help facilitate a preventive or protective environment against sexual violence, and/or improve the response to sexual violence, include:

- Building or expanding shelters for women affected by domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence; providing training to and, if possible and practicable, paying salaries of shelter staff; ensuring the provision of integrated services (health, psycho-social, reintegration, legal) at the shelters.
- Supporting the development of specialized family units as part of the police reform; funding construction costs so that the family units can be physically separated from the rest of the station.
- Developing awareness-raising campaigns in close consultation with local partners, so that the language and imagery of the campaigns are easily relatable; funding various means of dissemination, including radio programs, theatre sketches, comic books, t-shirts, etc.
- Equipping and supporting mobile clinics that can provide primary medical care and also have the capacity to deal with cases of sexual violence.
- Investing in infrastructure that can facilitate a more protective physical/ built environment.
- Supporting more comprehensive data collection and monitoring, so that trends can be identified and an evidence base can be developed in order to assess the success or failure of future interventions.
- Focusing on men and boys, both as target groups for awareness-raising campaigns, but also as a vulnerable group themselves. Men and boys have been the subjects of gender-based violence throughout the conflict – where

²⁹ For a critique of this theory, see Jennings (2009; 2008).

women are typically raped, men and boys are maimed or killed. Attempting to provide more constructive opportunities than fighting for men and boys, and to promote masculinities predicated more on providing and nurturing than on violence and aggression, are challenging long-term projects, but continuing to write off the men and boys as ‘the problem’ will only perpetuate the status quo.

Some have argued that the problem of sexual violence receives too much donor attention and resources, leading to the neglect of other grave problems while creating perverse incentives for implementing partners (and arguably, women and their families) to ‘talk up’ or trade on the prevalence of sexual assault (see e.g. Baaz and Stern 2010; Boshoff et al. 2010). Given the lack of solid data, the argument that prevalence is lower than it seems is difficult to substantiate – but also difficult to rebut. This underlines the importance of improving data collection on the issue of sexual violence. Regarding the substance of the critique, it may be advisable, where possible, to broaden the recipient base of services – for example, so that shelters provide services to women (or men) victims of domestic or gender-based violence, rather than ‘just’ sexual violence.

4.1. A new approach to disarmament?

Above it was argued that the achievement of a more-than-illusory peace will be an important contributing factor in any effective strategy to combat sexual violence. Unfortunately, the ‘mere’ achievement of peace is not the end of the process of demilitarizing and normalizing the Congolese society and economy; it is only the first step. Yet previous (and ongoing) attempts to either disarm and demobilize combatants, or integrate them into a new national army, have failed miserably, with the effect of actually increasing rather than decreasing insecurity over the short- and medium-term. A new process of demilitarization is needed in Eastern Congo, one that focuses less on attempting to (re)constitute an integrated army and more on providing other opportunities to former fighters. Such a disarmament program could be combined with a new approach to

artisanal mining.³⁰ Ex-combatants must be able generate income, and mining is one possibility – if it is brought under a more transparent regime.

Linking the disarmament process to a livelihood in the mining sector could give former fighters a stake in the peace process, thus hedging against the ability of opportunistic elites – many of whom benefit from the current situation and oppose a lasting solution – to manipulate conflict issues. However, any new investment in the mines of North and South Kivu must be conducted in a transparent manner and in close collaboration with local communities, in order to clean up the existing corruption and abuses in the mining sector, and to assuage community fears connected to an influx of former fighters. It would also be useful to guarantee that jobs created through new investment in the mines are not solely distributed to former fighters through a disarmament program, but are also available to civilians, in order to limit accusations of unfairness and to spread the benefits more widely. Finally, ensuring that recipient communities receive adequate resources to expand and improve their infrastructure and services, and linking these resources explicitly to the disarmament scheme, would be an important factor in facilitating a more welcoming environment for former fighters.

³⁰ Virtually all mining done in Eastern Congo is artisanal mining. For an overview of mining practices and organization in Eastern DRC, see Garrett and Mitchell (2009) and Bøås (2009).

5. Conclusion

In order to break the vicious circle of looting, killing, and sexual violence that has become the hallmark of the irregular, village-based warscape of Eastern Congo, the development of sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of conflict (see Bøås 2009; Lemarchand 2009), combined with a new approach to disarmament, is a necessary but insufficient condition. Stopping the war will not itself guarantee a reduction in the level of sexual violence; indeed, experience from other post-conflict societies suggests that levels of sexual and gender-based violence remain steady, if not increase, in the post-war period (see e.g. Pankhurst 2008). Evidence from Eastern Congo suggests that the number of rapes committed by civilian men has increased sharply, suggesting that sexual violence is no longer primarily a consequence of the war: it may also have morphed into a socio-cultural phenomenon. This has important implications for actors working to improve the situation of Congolese women and girls, in particular.

Several initiatives have been taken to help the victims of sexual violence, but too little emphasis has been placed on the *modus operandi* of the violence and abuses. In particular, efforts to prevent sexual violence should put more focus on questions concerning men and masculinity in Eastern Congo. This an important part of the picture, which has been somewhat neglected in the efforts to combat sexual violence so far.

Another issue that, unfortunately, still needs more attention is the question of coordination within and between national and international actors. One of the main challenges to the effectiveness of the work against sexual violence in DRC is the lack of coordination between the multitude of multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental initiatives and activities. While everyone agrees on the need for improved coordination, the willingness to ‘walk the walk’ remains lacking. Again, the case of the un-utilized software named in the Comprehensive Strategy is illustrative: a much-needed tool being hijacked by an inability to cooperate and surrender turf wars.

This has echoes in the situation of the Congolese state with respect to sexual violence. The challenge is not a lack of awareness of the issue or the lack of adequate legislation, but rather a lack of the capacity and political will to combat the problem. Donors must therefore seek new and novel ways to encourage the building of state capacity within this

and related fields in DR Congo. While this will not be easy, it may be more tempting for the government and state institutions to act more coherently on this issue if it is placed within a national developmental framework. Here it is worth noting the view, expressed in Kinshasa and the Lingala-speaking parts of the country, that donors overemphasize the eastern part of the country, and North and South Kivu in particular. Counteracting this view by developing a truly nationwide strategy that places the issue of sexual violence in a broader developmental context may make the issue more palatable for Congolese authorities.

This takes us to the role of new donors such as China and India. Instead of trying to convince these two countries to implement measures against sexual violence in their current activities, it may be more useful to consider their emphasis on infrastructure, energy, and mining as potentially complementary to ongoing efforts to combat sexual violence. An improved infrastructure, better energy supply, and employment opportunities in the mining sector (for ex-combatants and civilians) could potentially have huge developmental impacts. Meanwhile, increased livelihood opportunities may reduce the attraction of being part of roaming bands of militias, thus helping to break the cycle of violence and thereby reducing the incidence of sexual violence.

Improved and more efficient work-sharing and co-ordination is a pre-requisite for more effective tools, measures and policies against sexual based violence in DR Congo. This is the case for UN, other multilateral institutions and traditional donors, and the same will be the case for new approaches to work-sharing with 'non-traditional' donors. There is no guarantee that China and India's involvement in infrastructural development in DR Congo will have a positive impact on the reduction of sexual based violence. However, as it is also difficult to foresee a more peaceful and benevolent Congo without infrastructural development, some new thinking and novel approaches seem needed. An important question for a donor country such as Norway that already is placing quite some emphasis on new tripartite relationships between African partners, non-traditional donors (e.g. China and India) and Norway is how this kind of thinking also can be implemented in the fight against sexual violence in the Congo, drawing on the respective strengths of each partner country and organization.

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Annex 1: Major bilateral and multilateral donors

This annex aims to give a brief overview of the activities of key bilateral and multilateral donors to DRC; note that activities that are specifically related to sexual violence are covered in the main text, and will not be repeated here. Major bilateral donors in the DRC include Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and USA. The two latter countries are the largest donors to the DRC. The main multilateral actors in DRC are the World Bank, the European Union, UN agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA and UNIFEM) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The European Union is also active in DRC through the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions.

Table 4: Non-SV related aid to DRC: Major bilateral and multilateral donors		
Donor	Priority Areas	Amount of funding (latest figures)
Norway (MFA/NORAD)	Combating sexual violence; peace and reconciliation activities; and protection of the environment (e.g. Congo Basin Forest Fund). Much of Norway's humanitarian aid to DRC is channeled through the UN system or through Norwegian or local implementing partners.	NOK 199 million in 2008 (latest figures)
United States (USAID)	Health sector (including reduction of maternal, infant, and newborn disease and death; response to infectious disease threats; rehabilitation of essential health infrastructure; and increased access to safe water); democracy and good governance; peace and security; education; and economic growth (through programs focused on subsistence measures and agriculture). Humanitarian assistance, including emergency food aid, accounted for around 40 percent of the USAID budget in the DRC in 2009. Since 2003 USAID has supported projects in DRC that focus on the care of men, women, and children who have been subjected to sexual violence and/or torture (USAID 2010a).	USD 217.760 million in 2009
United Kingdom (DFID)	Governance; humanitarian assistance; health sector; economic growth at the community level; security sector reform; education. DFID is also involved as a donor in the new 'Pro-Routes' program, which is conducted in close collaboration with the DRC government and the World Bank. The aim for the program is to reopen some 3,000 km of the country's roads (DFID 2009).	GBP 93.9 million in 2008/9
Belgium (BCT)	Agriculture; rural development; technical and professional education. Belgium also funnels aid through the World Bank and EU within the health, education and governance sectors.	EUR 65 million (approximately) per year
Germany (GTZ)	Microfinance; biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources; urban and rural drinking water supply and waste water disposal	EUR 20 million (approximately) per year
Sweden (SIDA)	Peace, reconciliation and democratic governance; pro-poor economic development, focusing on agriculture and forestry; and health, focusing on preventing, managing and combating sexual violence and on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.	SEK 150 million in 2009; SEK 225 million in 2010; SEK 275 million in 2011 and 2012 (est.)
France (AFD)	Police reform, including training and equipping a rapid intervention force and constructing a police training school in Kinshasa; humanitarian food aid and relief aid, channeled through WFP and French NGOs; support to UNHCR to aid displaced populations in Eastern Congo. France also plays a major role in the EU mission EUPOL and EUSEC and contributes with military personnel in MONUC (Hoebeke 2007; Monuc 2010).	EUR 8.2 million in 2008

Canada (CIDA)	Political and economic governance; access to primary healthcare	CAD 54.23 million in 2008-2009
Japan (ODA)	Humanitarian assistance and emergency relief in Eastern Congo; support to UNICEF for education, health, water and sanitation, and Child Protection programs in Equateru, Kasai Oriental and Kasai Occidental provinces	Total figure NA, UNICEF agreement worth USD 6.68 million
World Bank	Education; energy; governance; health and other social services; private sector development; transportation; water; sanitation and flood protection (World Bank, 2009; World Bank 2010). Coordinates the Pro-Routes infrastructure program.	2005: WB implements multi-sectoral program in the DRC with a portfolio of USD 2.2 billion 2007-2010: assistance increased by USD 550 million 2009: 18 active projects totaling USD 2.9 billion
African Development Bank	Budget assistance to GoDRC; investment in programs in the infrastructure sector and in financial institutions; good governance; pro-poor growth	USD 188.33 million from 2008-2012 (grants)
UNICEF, UNHCR, and implementing partners	Humanitarian relief; child protection; socio-economic reintegration	NA
UNIFEM	Gender response budgeting; technical advice and gender training to GoDRC officials	NA

Annex 2: List of implementing agencies in Eastern Congo³¹

State and elected representatives

Goma

- La Police (PSPE)
- Le Gouverneur du Nord-Kivu
- North Kivu Provincial Assembly: President, Vice-président, Rapporteur adjoint an Questeur

Bunia

- Le Commandant des Forces armées del la RDC en Ituri, Province Orientale
- President du Tribunal de garnison militaire
- L’Auditeur du Tribunal de garnison militaire
- Directeur du Prison de Bunia
- Kinshasa
- Senator Eve Bazaiba, MLC
- Rr. Hon. Vital Kamerhe, Speaker of the National Assembly
- Local Non-Governmental Organizations

Goma

- PDH (Promotion de la démocratie et protection des droits humains, Goma, Nord-Kivu)
- APANIVI (Acte de promotion et d’assistance pour l’amélioration du niveau de vie des populations, Goma, Nord-Kivu)
- CREDDHO (Centre de recherché sur l’environnement, la démocratie et les droits de l’homme, Goma)
- PAIF (Promotion et appau aux initiatives fémmmines, Goma)
- Société civile de la ville de Goma
- Société civilie de Nord-Kivu
- Cuses de femmes congolaises du Sud-Kivu pour la paix
- Association des femmes jurists congolaises, antenne de Sud-Kivu
- LINAJEUNE (Ligue nationale d’appui aux initiatives des jeunes en RD Congo, Goma)
- CPDH-PHRC (Centre pour la paix et les droit de l’homme – Peace and Human Rights Center)
- APPEF/NK (Actions pour la promotion et la protection de l’enfants et de la femme)
- COJESKI/RDC (Collectif des organisations des jeunes solidaires du Congo-Kinshasa, Province du Nord-Kivu)
- Association des femmes paysannes du Nord-Kivu

³¹ Source: The Swedish Foundation for Human Rights.

- Comité interuniversitaire de Goma
- CCJT (Coalition congolaise pour la justice transitionnelle, Sud-Kivu)
- PDH (Promotion de la démocratie et protection des droits humains)
- CAFED (Collectif des associations féminines pour le développement)
- CODHO (Comité des observateurs des droits de l'homme, Nord-Kivu)
- Soprop (Solidarité pour la promotion sociale et la paix)
- Commission provinciale de lutte contre les violences sexuelles au Nord-Kivu
- AFEDEC (Association des femmes engagées pour le développement communautaire)
- ICPJ (Initiative congolaise pour les victimes des violences sexuelles)
- REPRODHOC/Nord-Kivu (Réseau provincial des ONG des droits de l'homme au Congo)
- English des amis au Congo

Bunia

- Justice Plus
- SOFEPADI
- SYNERGIE (Mahagi)
- FOMI
- UFD (Union des Femmes pour le développement)
- FOMI
- REFED (Réseau femme et développement)

International Community

Goma

- La Mission des Nations Unies en RDC (MONUC), Division Droits de l'homme
- Human Rights Watch
- L'hospital HEAL Africa
- Program de la Restauration de la Justice à l'Est de la République Démocratique du Congo, REJUSCO
- Merlin
- FNUAP/UNFPA
- American Bar Association
- CICR (Comité International de la croix rouge)
- Finnish Church Aid
- ACIDI (Agence canadienne de développement international)
- North Kivu provincial sub-commission on sexual violence
- International Rescue Committee

Bunia

- Hôpital Bon marché, Run by Médecins sans Frontières
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Kinshasa

- DFID – Department for International Development of the United Kingdom

- Sida – Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
- Embassy of the Netherlands
- UNICEF
- CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency
- Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Democratic Republic of Congo
- MONUC Human Rights Division
- EUSEC/EUPOL

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