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Multi-layered Security Governance as a Quick Fix? The challenges of donor-supported, bottom-up security provision in Ituri (DR Congo)

**Kasper Hoffmann (IFRO, Copenhagen University),
Koen Vlassenroot, Karen Büscher
(Conflict Research Group, Ghent University)**

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The Editor, Justice and Security Research Programme, International Development Department, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE

Or by email to: Intdev.jsrp@lse.ac.uk

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background to the Ituri war	2
Urban Security Governance: The Case of Bunia.....	4
The Local Participative Governance Committees.....	7
The Proximity Police.....	10
Multi-Layered Security Governance in the Context of Violent Conflict in Irumu Territory	12
Conclusion	17
Bibliography	19

Multi-layered security governance as a quick fix? The challenges of donor-supported bottom-up security provision in Ituri (DR Congo)

Kasper Hoffmann, Koen Vlassenroot, Karen Büscher

Introduction

There is currently a lively debate among policy-makers and scholars about the role that local non-state actors can play in security provision in so-called ‘fragile situations’,¹ or contexts characterized by high levels of insecurity and limited state capacity to deal with it. The idea that building security institutions based on Western models is the remedy to the insecurity of fragile situations, has come under increased criticism both from scholars and practitioners and has promoted the inclusion of local non-state actors in peace-building strategies².

Classic donor approaches to security governance generally supported comprehensive reforms of state security services that aimed to create security services that respect basic human rights and strengthened their capacity to combat security threats such as rebel movements, terrorist groups or criminal networks. However, disillusionment with the results of this state-centric approach has provoked two major criticisms, and has fostered an increased interest in the role that local non-state actors can play in security provision. First, it is argued that attempts to export Western-style institutions to fragile situations are inappropriate because they are often perceived as illegitimate locally and because they fail to reflect realities on the ground (e.g. Boege et. al. 2008; Duffield 2007; Mac Ginty 2010, 2011; Richmond and Franks 2009, Scheye 2009). Second, it is argued that a one-sided focus on support to state security forces is equally problematic because it is often used to shore up forces that are considered illegitimate by large segments of the population, thus protecting elite interests, and being complicit in creating insecurity. So, it is argued, this support may lead to increased instability rather than reducing it (Jackson 2015).

These critiques have led to a growing awareness among external actors that local non-state security actors should be included as viable partners in the governance of security. Already in 2006, the OECD published a report that called for a ‘multi-layered’ approach to reforming actors and institutions that provide security and justice services. Based on the dual assumption that local non-state security actors may have more legitimacy among local communities and that they are better positioned to provide security to people (Baker and Scheye 2010; DFID 2004), this ‘multi-layered’ approach should also include non-state security actors (Scheye and McLean 2006). Examples of such actors include customary chiefs, village elders, or business associations working in collaboration with self-defence groups such as hunter associations or youth groups (Albrecht 2015).

¹ We use this term as an alternative to the concept of the ‘fragile state’, which is associated with the fragile and failed states agenda. This agenda is permeated by Weberian ideals of what a state should look like in terms of monopoly of force, legitimate authority and clear-cut distinctions between state/society, public/private and civil/military. See Engberg-Pedersen et al. (2008).

² See amongst others the special issue of *Third World Quarterly*, 2015, Vol. 36, No. 5.

This paper investigates ‘multi-layered’ security governance arrangements developed in the restive Ituri province in north-eastern DR Congo, where different forms of insecurity affect people’s lives on a daily basis. It looks more specifically into ‘multi-layered’ security governance in Ituri’s capital of Bunia, which is facing a high level of violent crime, and in the Irumu territory, which is the site of a violent conflict between the *Forces de Résistance Patriotique d’Ituri* (Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri, or FRPI) and the Congolese army that is relying on support from the *Mission de l’Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo* (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo, or MONUSCO).³ The paper argues that while international support for non-state security actors can help in mitigating insecurity, it should not be considered as the ‘missing link’ in security governance. Involving local non-state security actors in security governance is perceived as a practical way to improve security conditions, but the issues which produce insecurity in north-eastern Congo are far too complex and deeply rooted for such localised “bottom-up” approaches to significantly change the status quo. Furthermore, we argue that adding new security actors may result in tensions with existing ones, that in turn may have adverse effects on the security of citizens. This is because ‘security’ is a deeply contested political issue that is ultimately about who can enforce order. ‘Multi-layered’ security, therefore, should not be seen as a technical ‘fix’ to people’s daily security problems, but rather as a political choice, the effect of which can be quite unpredictable especially in areas such as north-eastern DR Congo, where political and coercive authority is deeply contested.⁴

Background to the Ituri war

Between 1999 and 2003, Ituri was the scene of one of the most horrific episodes of the Congo Wars. In 1999, deeply rooted inter-ethnic competition over land access, economic opportunities and political representation became connected to regional conflict dynamics (Fahey 2013; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2004). This led to the outburst of massive violence, which claimed the lives of more than 55,000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands (HRW, 2003).⁵

At the origins of the Ituri conflict lies an historical dispute between Hema and Lendu communities. The trigger to the latest episode of inter-ethnic dispute was the fraudulent acquisition of property titles by Hema landowners, and their subsequent

³ MONUSCO took over from an earlier UN peacekeeping operation: *Mission de l’Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (United Nations Organization Mission in the DR Congo, MONUC) on 1 July 2010.

⁴ This paper is based on fieldwork carried out in Bunia in September 2015. Interviews have been conducted with UN and EU agencies, NGOs, and government officials as well as non-state security actors and key informants (civil society activists, university professors, and neighbourhood watch groups).

⁵ The first Congo War started in 1996 and aimed at dealing with security threats coming from refugee camps in eastern Congo. An internationally supported rebel force in May 1997 dislodged Mobutu from power. When Congo’s new president Kabila in 1998 expelled Rwandan and Ugandan troops, which had brought him to power, a second war, in which numerous armed groups and their foreign supporters participated started, which lasted until 2003. For an overview of the Congo Wars, see: e.g. Reyntjens (2009) and Lemarchand (2009). For detailed accounts of the history of the Ituri conflict, see; e.g. Tamm (2013); Fahey (2013) and Veit (2011).

threat to evict Lendu farmers from their land. In response, Lendu leaders organised a series of revenge attacks. These attacks set in motion a vicious cycle of violence that soon affected other communities as well (Pottier 2010: 27-9). Hema leaders recruited self-defence groups and obtained military support from Ugandan army commanders whose troops occupied the area. In response, other communities instituted their own protection forces that even so became linked to larger transnational military and economic networks (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2004). In September 2002, the Congolese and Ugandan governments signed a peace agreement in Luanda. This paved the way for the creation of the UN-assisted Ituri Pacification Commission (IPC) (Tamm, 2013). In March 2003, all armed groups signed a ceasefire agreement, with the exception of the Union of Congolese Patriots (*Union des Patriotes Congolais*, UPC). This agreement created the necessary conditions for the IPC to operate. In May 2003, the Ugandan army withdrew from Ituri, which paved the way for the UPC to take control over Bunia and triggered yet another round of armed confrontations between different militias. As the United Nations mission in the Congo (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUC) was not able to contain these clashes, the European Union decided to intervene and offer its support. Mandated by the United Nations Security Council, a French-led EU force, *Operation Artemis*, deployed with a short term-mandate to secure Bunia.

As a means to stabilise Ituri, Kinshasa and MONUC attempted to negotiate a deal with rebel leaders in May 2004. An agreement was signed, which was followed up by a UN-led programme to disarm and reintegrate combatants into society (*Programme Opérationnelle du Désarmement de de Réinsertion Communautaire*). More than two thirds of the estimated 15,000 combatants demobilised voluntarily, and some militia commanders were appointed to senior posts within the Congolese army. At the same time, Congolese courts and the ICC prosecuted a number of armed group leaders. In June 2004, the ICC opened its first investigation into crimes committed in Ituri and initiated cases against four individual rebel commanders. Some groups resisted disarmament though, and continued to operate in parts of Ituri's rural areas. Violence was no longer directed against rival ethnic communities. Instead, these groups increasingly targeted the Congolese army and MONUC peacekeepers, who had taken a more assertive stance against armed groups after being embarrassed when Bukavu (the capital of South Kivu) was briefly taken over by rebel commanders in June 2004. This explains why MONUC, also in Ituri, eventually began targeting armed groups' positions and tried to cut their supply lines, in collaboration with the Congolese armed forces.

In February 2005, nine peacekeepers were killed in an ambush near Kafe (Tamm, 2013). This led to the arrest of the leaders of several armed groups. One year later, a number of peacekeepers were taken hostage in Djugu. With the prospects of national elections looming on the horizon, Kinshasa tried to reinstall stability in Ituri by negotiating a peace deal with the remaining rebel commanders. In July 2006, an agreement was concluded between a number of militia leaders and the Congolese army. This led to the launching of a second demobilisation programme, but it took another round of negotiations to persuade militia leaders to join the third disarmament and demobilisation process. By 2007, more than 20,000 combatants had gone through the three phases of the Disarmament and Community Reinsertion Programme (Tamm, 2013) and most militia activities had ceased in Ituri, with the exception of a few minor pockets of resistance.

In 2008, several new armed groups emerged, albeit with limited success. Additionally, a group of FRPI combatants continued to operate in parts of the Irumu territory, despite the fact that most of its commanders had integrated into the FARDC. A military operation by the Congolese army only managed to dislodge FRPI from its strongholds temporarily. In June 2010, former FRPI leader Cobra Matata defected from the FARDC. He claimed that he and his fellow FRPI commanders had been mistreated and that their ranks had never been confirmed. After several unsuccessful attempts by the FARDC to dismantle the group, in October 2011, he was able to reach the FRPI stronghold. When Congolese soldiers in Ituri were redeployed to other parts of the country as part of the regimentation process of the Congolese army, it allowed the FRPI to consolidate itself as a “community army” (*armée communautaire*) defending the interest of the community. Kinshasa responded with a combination of diplomacy and military action, but neither had much success and lacked clear commitment. Several negotiations were initiated to demobilise and integrate the FRPI, while military campaigns aimed at dismantling its structures. Efforts in 2013-2015 to demobilise and reintegrate the group collapsed and were followed by a joint military campaign of MONUSCO and the FARDC. Military operations in June 2015 pushed back FRPI, but it still remained a major source of insecurity in the Irumu territory. Its exactions were a major cause of the displacement of more than 100,000 people (USAID, 2015).

Other parts of Ituri are still faced with the proliferation of armed groups as well. In particular in Mambasa, militia activities contribute to the persistence of insecurity. The main armed group in this territory is the Mayi-Mayi Morgan (also known as Mayi-Mayi Lumumba). It claims to defend people’s rights to access land in the Okapi Fauna Reserve, but it has also gradually shifted its focus towards revenue generation by taxing artisanal gold mining. In April 2014, its leader, Paul Sadala alias Morgan, was shot when he refused to travel to Bunia to take part in negotiations with the Congolese army about his surrender. His death split the group into two factions, which both regularly attack mining centres and local villages (Pax Christi, 2015b). Both groups regularly carry out attacks against the Congolese army in order to take over local control.⁶ As in the case of the FRPI, the relationship between the armed group and the local population remains a rather ambiguous one. While perceived by some as a major security threat and as bandits roving the countryside, other people feel protected by militia members and see them as a form of self-defence. Similar appreciation exists for Congolese security forces that, for some, provide the necessary protection, while others experience them as an additional security threat and try to prevent their redeployment.⁷ These conditions highlight the huge complexities of local security conditions and the many challenges that local security governance is faced with.

Urban Security Governance: The Case of Bunia

Insecurity in Ituri is not limited to rural areas. As in other ‘post-conflict’ urban centres in Eastern Congo (Büscher, 2011; 2015; Raeymaekers 2014), people living in the city

⁶ Radio Okapi. *4 morts dans les affrontements entre FARDC et miliciens à Mambasa*, 26 October 2015. <http://www.radiookapi.net/2015/10/26/actualite/securite/rdc-4-morts-dans-les-affrontements-entre-fardc-et-miliciens-mambasa>. Accessed on 16 November 2015.

⁷ To make things even more confusing, it is claimed that Morgan received support and supplies from a FARDC commander operating in the area (PaxChristi, 2015b).

of Bunia and other urban centres in Ituri today are dealing with a wide range of entangled political, military, social and economic issues, which combine to produce an insecure environment (Pottier 2010: 30). Efforts by local, national and international actors that try to govern security in Bunia are coordinated in a 'multi-layered' system of security governance. Yet, this system is severely hampered, not only by problems related to coordination, resources and communication, but also by the absence of a strategy to address the structural factors fuelling insecurity, such as unemployment, land issues, ethnic tensions, and poverty and by intense competition between the different actors involved. As will be argued in the next sections, a major impediment to security is the clientilistic governance norms of the Congolese security forces, including the Congolese army, the police and intelligence services.

While the security situation in Bunia has considerably improved since the formal end of the war, the people of Bunia are still faced with serious security challenges. As observed elsewhere, long-term militarisation and conflict are related to rising levels of insecurity in urban settings (Branch, 2008; Beall and Goodfellow 2014). Socio-economic problems including widespread poverty and high unemployment rates also fuel insecurity. There is a high frequency of acts of physical violence, a rise in drug and alcohol abuse,⁸ abusive and extractive authorities, illegal roadblocks⁹ and armed robberies.¹⁰ Banditry, kidnapping and murders have become part of everyday life in the popular neighbourhoods of Bunia.

Access to security is also very unequal. The wealthy can afford to pay expensive private security companies or privately hire policemen or soldiers for their own protection,¹¹ yet the vast majority of the population has to rely either on inefficient and resource-starved Congolese security services, self-organised local security actors, or techniques of self-protection.

One issue that lingers through this transformation from wartime to peacetime violence is the easy access to small firearms. The circulation of small arms in town is often referred to as a significant source of insecurity in Bunia, despite different disarmament efforts.¹² But the security of ordinary people in Bunia is also strongly affected by particular events related to broader politico-military dynamics. For example, between 2011 and 2013 urban crime levels increased when colonel Willy Bonane Habarugira (a former RCD-Goma officer) was deployed as deputy

⁸ Drugs and alcohol abuse was mentioned during several encounters and in different reports as a serious challenge to security in the urban neighborhoods. The growing numbers of selling points and the involvement of the Congolese military in the sale seems to be particularly disturbing people (Group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015; Group Interview Mudzi Pela Neighborhood 27 September 2015; Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia; interview, PDP officer, Bunia, 29 September 2015; interview; Chef de Division Unique, Bunia, 25 September 2015; Interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015; PNUD 2015B; PNUD 2012; RHA et al. 2011).

⁹ See for example RHA (2011). Although the problem of roadblocks has declined over the past years, reports by local neighbourhood chiefs mention the continuous problem of '*coupeurs de route*' and '*barrières*', often located in the urban periphery (Rapport Annuel Quarier SAJO, 2014), interview Chef de Division Unique, Bunia, 25 September 2015; own observations.

¹⁰ For example, between January and May 2015, 65 armed robberies were registered by PDP in Bunia (statistics provided by PDP).

¹¹ Group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015.

¹² Interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015, Bunia; PNUD 2012; PNUD 2015 (B).

commander. Bonane was reported to sponsor criminal networks in Bunia, amongst other things by providing weapons (UN Security Council, 2014). The case exemplifies the ambiguous role of protector-predator that Congolese state authorities take *vis-à-vis* ordinary people (cf. Verweijen, 2013). Local inhabitants and observers observe a clear shift in the general evolution of post-conflict urban security. The years just after the war were marked by ‘chaos’ and widespread ‘insecurity’. In 2007-8 the situation started to improve, but when Bonane was deployed, the frequency of crime related insecurity started to rise again. Since the change of military command at the end of 2014, the situation has improved slightly,¹³ although urban crime rates remain very high, as is confirmed by several statistics. A survey carried out by PNUD indicates that the frequency of incidents of insecurity, such as armed robberies, in urban neighbourhoods actually increased between 2012 and 2015 (PNUD 2015b).¹⁴

Security forces in DR Congo have been dysfunctional for a long time.¹⁵ Harassment, including the imposition of illegal taxes and fines, extortion and plunder, often involving physical violence or the threat thereof, already marked the relations between state services and the population during Mobutu’s rule. The same security services were more or less explicitly encouraged to fend for themselves, epitomised in the expression “*civil azali bilanga ya militaire*” (‘the civilian is the [corn] field of the military’) (Baaz ad Stern 2008). As a result, even during Mobutu’s rule, the population lived in constant fear of being stopped and extorted by security services, either under the pretext of some real or fake transgression of the law, or simply by referring to the expression above.

In response, people have tried to find practical solutions to their daily security concerns, including through vigilantism and popular justice. A particular strategy to deal with security concerns was the creation of local security committees. Among these were the so-called Youth Committees (*Comités des Jeunes*, CDJs). Originally mobilised by Mobutu’s Ministry of Youth, such committees turned into key actors in the governance of security in post-war Bunia. In the absence of regular security forces, these CDJs were the main security providers present in Bunia’s troubled neighbourhoods and they collaborated closely with local urban authorities such as neighbourhood and street chiefs (*chefs de quartiers* and *chefs d’avenues*). Consisting of neighbourhood youths, they were widely recognised as legitimate local ‘self-defence groups’ (*groupes d’autodéfense*),¹⁶ as they tried to prevent and deter crime by surveying the neighbourhoods, alerting local authorities and patrolling between sunset and sunrise. During the war, the tasks of these committees were partly taken over by the militias operating in town. Yet, because these CDJs sometimes deployed violence

¹³ Group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015; Group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015.

¹⁴ For statistics over the past six years: RHA et al. 2010 ; RHA et al. 2011B; RHA et al. 2011C; RHA et al. 2012; RHA et al 2014. A survey carried out by PNUD demonstrates that the frequency of incidents of insecurity like armed robberies in urban neighbourhoods increased between 2012 and 2015 (PNUD 2015b).

¹⁵ Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia; interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015. See also: Pottier (2010). Since the colonial era the primary role of the security forces in the Congo has been to protect the interests of the country’s politico-economic elites, rather than the population, which has been seen as potential threat (Young and Turner 1985). Historically this has bred mutually hostile attitudes between the security services and many people.

¹⁶ Group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015; Group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015.

to fight crime, their role as security providers was ambivalent. Their violent character was reinforced by the particular background of the youths, many of them former combatants for whom the use of violence was seen as a legitimate strategy for collective as well as individual ends.¹⁷ As one respondent put it, these youngsters were “in a sort of limbo between war and peace”.¹⁸ Even today, the violent conduct of these former combatants in ‘rendering justice’, remains a serious challenge in several urban neighbourhoods (PNUD, 2015; RHA et al. 2010).

However, these committees are just one of the different state and non-state actors currently involved in security governance in Bunia. Several platforms have been created to help in exchanging information and coordinating security governance. At the municipal level, a Local Proximity Security Committee (*Comité de Sécurité Locale de Proximité*, CLSP) is organised on a weekly basis. It is headed by the mayor of Bunia who is the highest administrative authority in town. Participants include the neighbourhood chiefs, the proximity police (*police de proximité*, PDP, see *infra.*), elected members of civil society, and international donors. At the neighbourhood level Neighbourhood Forums (*Forums des Quartiers*) are regularly held, during which inhabitants can present and discuss their security problems with the local authorities and the PDP. Every week, the mayor reports the security situation to a meeting of the security committee of Ituri province, where all the major formal security services are represented (intelligence services, immigration services, the army, the police, the head of Ituri, MONUSCO, etc.).

The Local Participative Governance Committees

The difficult security situation in Bunia in the aftermath of the war also prompted concerned international and local organisations to develop strategies aimed at improvement of security conditions in the city. In August 2010, Caritas/The Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and IKV Pax Christi, that were partnering with the Congolese NGO network *Reseau Haki na Amani* (Reconciliation and Peace Network, RHA), started a programme aiming at improving security in Bunia’s twelve neighbourhoods.¹⁹ They did so by engaging the youth of Bunia in crime prevention and by creating a forum through which the youth, formal security services (army, police, immigration services, and the intelligence services) and politico-administrative authorities could meet. The idea behind engaging the youths in crime prevention was in order to harness their potential and to transform existing vigilante groups into more non-violent ways. The forum was also meant to improve the strained relations between youth and the authorities. Finally, the project wanted to create synergies between existing youth organisations and prevent tensions between them.²⁰ To this end, a new security structure, called Local Participative Governance Committees (*Comités locaux de gouvernance participative*, CLGP), was initiated.²¹

¹⁷ Interview Chef de Division Unique, Bunia 25 September 2015; Group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015; Group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015.

¹⁸ Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia.

¹⁹ They are: Bankoko, Kindia, Lembabo, Lumumba, Mudzi Pela, Ngezi, Nyakasanza, Rwambuzi, Saïo, Salongo, Similyabo, Sukisa.

²⁰ These included confessional youth groups, the association of taxi drivers, many of whom are former militia members, art groups, street kids (called *shegue* and *maibobo*), political party youth groups.

²¹ Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia; group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

As in other urban settings in the DRC, the lowest levels of the urban administrative apparatus (local chiefs of streets, chiefs of ‘ten houses’) are tasked with documenting and reporting security incidents in their neighbourhood on a regular basis. However, in reality this reporting system is often carried out badly or not at all due to lack of means and demotivated local officials. One of the aims of the CLGP was to fill this void and provide quality registers on the local security situation.²² Another objective was to try and turn the existing CDJs into non-violent actors.

But the project was soon confronted with a number of challenges. One of the biggest ones was to avoid conflict with the formal security services. These services are largely driven by clientilistic norms, which encourage officers of all ranks to engage in illegal revenue-generation activities. Patronage is a prevalent, but not all-pervasive, feature of security governance in DR Congo. Positions in the security services are highly valued because they provide access to coercive means of enforcement, which are important in the context of violent competition over resources. This fierce competition means that authority does not simply follow the formal hierarchy. Instead the Congolese security services consist of a collection of different patron-client networks, which extend outside of their own branch of the security services.²³ Forced to serve their patrons and living in precarious conditions themselves, security agents thus try to exploit the benefits of their position to collect as many resources as possible, usually through exploitation, predation and coercion. This helps to explain the suspicion of Congolese security services towards the newly created CLGP.²⁴ Not only did security forces experience the CLGP’s as actors that stepped into their domain, they were also concerned that they would expose and denounce their illegal revenue-generating activities.

Donors stressed the importance of the civilian and non-violent character of the CLGPs and emphasis was put on human rights sensitisation. CLGP members and documents also explicitly stressed the principle of ‘*la non-violence active, ne pas se rendre justice*’ (‘active non-violent approach, not rendering justice themselves’).²⁵ In addition, the project sought to improve the strenuous relationship between the youth and their neighbourhoods on the one hand and the Congolese security forces and politico-administrative authorities on the other. This was done through the creation of

²² Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia; group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

²³ These networks can be based on ethnic or geographical origins, past army unit affiliation, or former armed group membership. The system creates nepotism/favouritism, which conditions access to positions and revenue-generation opportunities. This is crucial because security forces are severely underfunded and mismanaged and have very poor service conditions. This in turn encourages them to seek income through protection arrangements, which are often indistinguishable from protection rackets. Although patrons are obliged to protect the interests of lower-ranking personnel, this protection is highly ephemeral and volatile. Patrons can become losers in power struggles and violent conflicts with other networks. This renders them incapable of protecting their clients. They may also withdraw support at any moment, which often happens if lower-ranking officials fail to feed enough resources upwards in the hierarchy, or if their loyalty is put into question. The resulting uncertainty means that security officials at all levels often attempt to reap the benefits of their position while it lasts. This in turn feeds insecurity amongst those from whom they extract wealth. Furthermore, the uncertainty felt by high-ranking patrons result in a strong tendency to focus on narrow short-term objectives. This short-termism works against the implementation of meaningful reform and social change (Baaz and Verweijen 2013).

²⁴ Interview, consultant, local NGO, 23 September 2015, Bunia; group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

²⁵ CDJP, 2012; interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015, Bunia.

an Urban Assembly (*Assemblée urbaine*), which was held every trimester and which invited the various state security services (intelligence services, immigration services, the army, the police, the head of Ituri province) and MONUSCO.

In 2012, when Bonane was deployed in Ituri, the CLGPs also began to reinforce and support existing local community alert systems.²⁶ Neighbourhood inhabitants were provided with megaphones, whistles, cans, and alarm bells so they could alert the youth and the security services in case of a crime being committed. Even though funding for the project ended in 2013, the CLGPs continue up to today to monitor and document crime events. The alarm system has been preserved and is supported by other actors in the neighbourhoods, such as the Congolese Business Federation (*Fédération des entreprises du Congo*, FEC), which distributes megaphones to the population. In addition, the CLGP urban assemblies are still taking place. During these meetings, CLGP members present their statistics, and try to persuade the police to intensify its patrols in the most problematic areas.

Ideally this project should create a ‘multi-layered’ security system, through which the different actors involved collaborate to improve security provision for Congolese citizens. And indeed, it seems that the project has produced a number of positive effects on local security governance. It has led to an improved documentation of security incidents, it has created a platform through which local communities can approach the Congolese security forces and authorities, and it has helped to support an existing alert system. After some time the Congolese authorities also began to appreciate the collaboration with the CLGPs, which provided them with valuable information.

However, overall the effects are ambiguous. The relationship between local youths and the police remains tense. Distrust in the police remains high, not only because they often do not show up when a violent crime has been committed, but even more so because they are believed to be complicit in crime. According to different sources, police officers rent their guns to bandits and take part in armed robberies.²⁷ At the same time, security forces continue to be engaged in illegal revenue-generating activities. Moreover, the police can easily be bribed, which means that while criminals are often let go, innocent people are arrested or worse and police officers impose self-invented infractions, fees and fines on people. These dynamics create a general sense of distrust and suspicion by urban inhabitants towards the security

²⁶ Interview, head of Saïo neighbourhood, 26 September 2015, Bunia; interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015, Bunia.

²⁷ Group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015; group interview Saïo neighbourhood 26 September 2015; Interview, human right advocate, 24 September 2015, Bunia . The problematic presence and behaviour of FARDC in Bunia’s urban neighborhoods has recently been brought up again in a series of articles published by Radio Okapi: “*Des Militaires accusés des plusieurs exactions a Bunia*”: <http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2015/01/04/province-orientale-des-militaires-accuses-de-plusieurs-exactions-bunia>;

“*L’Etat major des FARDC décide de déloger les militaires de la cité de Bunia*”:

<http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2013/02/23/ituri-letat-major-des-fardc-decide-de-deloger-les-militaires-de-la-cite-bunia>;

“*Des hommes en uniform insécurisent les habitants de Bunia*”:

<http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2015/03/24/des-hommes-en-uniforme-insecurisent-les-habitants-de-bunia>

services.²⁸ According to a recent survey 36 percent believed that the police protected the population in Bunia, 24 percent thought that it did nothing, 33 percent believed that it was involved in crime, and 7 percent were not sure.²⁹

In response to the alleged passivity and complicity of the Congolese security forces, youngsters sometimes revert back to their former role as vigilantes and take matters into their own hands. But vigilante justice comes with serious risks. Sometimes, families or friends of the victims of vigilante justice, who are often outsiders from the neighbourhood, mobilise to take revenge on the youth. This risks setting in motion vicious cycles of tit-for-tat violence.³⁰ In addition, some youth groups have asked, without success, that the police no longer enter their neighbourhoods after sunset unless they receive the permission of their superiors and only if the youth is allowed to participate in the nightly patrols. Finally, by documenting security incidents, these committees inevitably also reveal cases where the police or army have been involved, so youngsters express a fear of reporting to the authorities, as “you never know who is invited at the urban assemblies”.³¹

The Proximity Police

Another important, and newly introduced, actor in urban security provision in Bunia is the proximity police (*police de proximité*). As a result of the weak performance of the Congolese police, an internationally supported process of police reform was initiated in 2004³² as part of a larger, but fragmented security sector reform strategy (Boshoff et al. 2010). The driving idea behind this reform was to transform the police from a force that was mainly repressive and hostile against the population to a modern police force, aimed at providing protection.³³ However, the focus was on institutional and legal reform. Moreover, from the outset there were question marks about how the police reform would be received by the police chiefs and senior members of the government for a variety of reasons. One of them was that neither the PNC leadership nor the Ministry of Interior were sufficiently consulted, so there was thus no certainty of their commitment to it (Boshoff et al. 2010: 14).

In 2009, an action plan for this reform included the creation of the *police de proximité* (PDP) project,³⁴ which was largely based on the model of its French homologue. The

²⁸ Group interview, Saïo neighbourhood, 26 September 2015, Bunia; Group interview, Mudzi Pela neighbourhood, 26 September 2015, Bunia.

²⁹ The data was retrieved from PeacebuildingData.org database created by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and covers the period between March and May 2015. For the army the corresponding numbers are: 36 percent, 22 percent, 32 percent, and 10 percent. For further information see: http://www.peacebuildingdata.org/interactivemaps/drc-polls#/?series=Poll2&indicator=7_5_4

³⁰ Interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 24 September 2015.

³¹ Informal talks youngsters Saïo Neighborhood; interview, assistant, Université Shalom de Bunia, 27 September 2015.

³² The UK was the main international partner and donor. The European Commission is the second largest donor. In addition, UNDP, UNPOL, Japan, Angola, South Africa were involved in different ways. Canada, Netherlands and Sweden were involved with their own programmes, but they are considered part of the mainstream police reform (Boshoff et al. 2010: 16-17).

³³ Interview, international consultant, DFID, 5 November 2015, Copenhagen.

³⁴ “Appui à la réforme de la police en RDC: Introduction de la police de proximité”, UNDP. 2010.

idea behind the PDP was to improve communal security by capitalising on local energies and serve local needs.³⁵

The PDP pilot projects were launched in five major cities around the DRC: Matadi (Bas-Congo), Bukavu (South Kivu), Kinshasa, Kananga (Western Kasai) and Bunia.³⁶ The Bunia project started in 2011, and although donor support ceased in 2015, the ambition is to keep the PDP operating within the structures of the police force. In total, 260 civilians have been recruited into the PDP and trained in Kisangani since September 2013.³⁷ From end of 2014 onwards, the PDP has been deployed in five of the city's most insecure neighbourhoods³⁸ following different sensitisation processes to familiarise the urban inhabitants with the particular logic of this new police unit.³⁹ The first phase consisted of the recruitment and training of PDP personnel, the construction of police stations in the neighbourhoods and a sensitisation campaign carried out by local NGOs. The main instruments for the harnessing of local energies to improve security provision are the Neighbourhood Forums (*Forum des Quartiers*, FQ). In these forums, inhabitants can discuss their security problems with local authorities and the PDP. The PDP can then relay these problems to the city's CLSP.⁴⁰

Recruited from different social layers of urban society, endowed with new equipment and trained in subjects such as human rights, international humanitarian law, and administration, it is generally recognised that the PDP has been able to improve the relations between civilians and police in the neighbourhoods concerned. For instance, comparing the surveys carried out by the UNDP jointly with the UN Police and the Congolese National Police (*Police Nationale Congolaise*, PNC) from 2012 and 2015, it can be observed that whereas only 37.9 percent of the respondents felt reassured by the presence of the police in their neighbourhood in 2012,⁴¹ the figure rose to 73 percent in 2015.⁴²

However, the ability of the PDP to improve security in Bunia is severely curtailed for a number of reasons. Firstly, like other Congolese police units, the PDP lacks sufficient resources to cover its operating costs. Secondly, when problems arose with the timely payment of salaries, PDP elements started to quit their job, which has reduced the number of PDP. Thirdly, since the PDP are unarmed, they are faced with considerable constraints when intervening against armed bandits.⁴³ The creation of the PDP has also seemingly bred new competition within the already deeply divided PNC. Having received training and new equipment, they had to face resentment from

³⁵ Interview, international consultant, DFID, 5 November 2015, Copenhagen.

³⁶ DFiD funded the project in Bukavu, Kananga and Matadi, the Belgian Technical Cooperation funded the project in Kinshasa, and the UNDP funded the project in Bunia.

³⁷ PNUD, 2015 "Projet d'appui à la Réforme de la Police en RD Congo: Introduction de la Police de Proximité", Bunia: PNUD.

³⁸ Kindia, Lembabo, Mudzi Pela, Bankoko and Sukisa.

³⁹ PNUD, 2015 "Projet d'appui à la Réforme de la Police en RD Congo: Introduction de la Police de Proximité", Bunia: PNUD.

⁴⁰ Décret Nr. 13/042 du 16 Septembre 2013 portant création, organisation et fonctionnement des conseils locaux pour la sécurité de proximité.

⁴¹ 'Rapport de mission de collecte de données de base à Bunia/Province Orientale.' UNDP. May 2012.

⁴² 'Rapport de la mission d'enquête sur la perception de la population par rapport à la prestation des policiers formés en "pdp". Bunia/Province Orientale.' UNDP. February 2015.

⁴³ 'Rapport mission de suivi conjoint du projet "appui à la réforme de la police en RDC: Introduction de la Police de Proximité à Bunia"'. UNDP, UNPOL, PNC. February 2015; interview, PDP officer, Bunia, 29 September 2015.

some of their colleagues from the regular PNC.⁴⁴ Finally, there is a fear that the good habits of the PDP may not be sustainable, because donor funding is not secured beyond 2015. The urban population living in the areas of deployment are already increasingly disappointed with the PDP, accusing them of gradually taking over the 'bad habits' (corruption, extortion, passivity etc.) of their regular PNC colleagues.⁴⁵ The critique of the PDP in Bunia, also rubs off on people's attitudes towards donors, who are accused of being responsible, along with the government, for the increased competition within the PNC and for the lack of sustainable effects on security conditions.⁴⁶

It is clear that international donors have sought alternative ways to help provide security to Bunia's inhabitants. They have funded existing non-state actors through the CLGP and they have supported, trained and equipped the PDP, which is supposed to serve local needs. These well-intentioned projects can contribute to improving security conditions in urban post-conflict settings. However, our research indicates that the impact of these projects is limited, as they do not address the complex of interconnected social, political and economic factors, which combine to produce urban insecurity for Congolese citizens. The CLGP's and the PDP do not act in vacuum. Rather they are part of a very complex context, which strongly conditions what they can do and how they can do it. There is only so much these actors can do to change this situation. Even if they had been fully resourced and received the best training available, they would still have been subjected to the pressures and constraints of the larger context marked by poverty, violent crime, political tension and strong competition over power and resources. Furthermore, supporting such actors entails the possibility that the existing political and social hierarchy is altered, or at least the expectation or suspicion that it could change. This can generate resistance and further competition. Thus, such "bottom-up" approaches to security provision in urban contexts should not be seen as technical fixes to improving security in a broad sense of the word. Rather they should be seen as political choices, which can have quite unpredictable consequences especially in areas such as north-eastern DR Congo, where political and coercive authority is deeply contested.

Multi-Layered Security Governance in the Context of Violent Conflict in Irumu Territory

Just as different responses have been developed to improve security conditions in urban areas, so too have they been initiated in the rural areas. In this section we will look at how MONUSCO has attempted to counter armed groups. MONUSCO has a very broad mandate to simultaneously protect the civilian population, neutralise armed groups, stabilise the country and restore state authority in DR Congo. However, it has proved extremely difficult to align these objectives, which has seriously tarnished its reputation. Yet, MONUSCO's apparent failures must be seen in the light of the significant constraints under which it works. First, it is mandated to support the Congolese state and its security forces that – due to clientilistic features and built-in dynamics of violent competition over power and resources – have limited impact on

⁴⁴ Group Interview Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

⁴⁵ Group Interview Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

⁴⁶ Group Interview Mudzi Pela neighbourhood 27 September 2015.

the ground and are often considered as a factor of insecurity themselves. Second, institutional culture, stress and reliance on standardised models lead to the adoption of simplified and ineffective solutions to extremely complex problems. Third, since there is little strategic interest among major powers in the UN Security Council in DR Congo, MONUSCO is not able to get the necessary political and military support to develop a more comprehensive approach.⁴⁷ These constraints have resulted in a supply-driven strategy that strongly emphasises the restoration of formal state authority through technical solutions such as building infrastructure and the training of Congolese officials to achieve peace rather than developing more creative responses (De Vries, 2015: 37). In its mid-term report of 16 October 2015, the ‘Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo’ concludes that military operations against armed groups “thus far had limited success, failing to dismantle the targeted groups. Armed groups continue to pose a threat to the peace and stability of the area” (UNSC, 2015a).

Nevertheless, in response to its failure to protect the population and the backlash this has produced, MONUSCO has gradually transformed into a vehicle for the development of new approaches that aim at providing security to Congolese citizens. These include the use of more aggressive, “robust” peacekeeping, both in Ituri (2005-2007) and in the Kivus (2013-present), and supporting and working with local non-state actors (Stearns, 2015). MONUSCO has provided critical lessons on peacekeeping for the UN Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which in recent publications recognises the importance of local conflict drivers and of the reinforcement of local capacities to tackle insecurity (UNSC 2015b). Irumu territory, which has been the site of confrontation between the Congolese army and MONUSCO on the one hand, and the FRPI militia on the other, is one of the places where a stronger collaboration with local non-state security actors has been built and a number of initiatives have been developed to strengthen local capacities for security governance.

The FRPI is the last remaining armed group from the Ituri war. It is fairly representative of a number of armed groups operating in eastern Congo. Its authority is drawn from the historical grievances of a particular community – in this case the Ngiti – that it claims to protect against neighbouring communities and the government. Yet, its relationship with its own community is rather ambiguous, as it is also deeply involved in acts of extortion and abuse. As such the FRPI contributes to the creation of insecurity in spite of their claims to do the opposite (cf. Hoffmann and Vlassenroot 2014).

A combination of negotiation and force has been used to counter the group. The latest negotiations took place between November 2014 and January 2015 and again in May-June 2015. As with most negotiations with armed groups, the talks with the FRPI centred around issues such as the recognition of military ranks, amnesty,⁴⁸ and one-off payments (UNSC, 2015a). Talks in January 2015 failed because of the arrest of FRPI leader Cobra Matata. In June 2015, additional demands from the FRPI and its refusal to deliver military equipment put an end to the negotiations. This led to new clashes between the FRPI and the FARDC around Aveba in the Walendu-Bindi

⁴⁷ For more details see De Vries (2015).

⁴⁸ Interview, local observer, Bunia, 24 September 2015; interview, FARDC commander, Bunia, 26 September 2015.

chiefdom. In June 2015, the FARDC and MONUSCO carried out joint operations against the FRPI, using attack helicopters and drones. Observers thought the operation was noteworthy due to the renewed collaboration between MONUSCO and the FARDC, which had fallen apart in February.⁴⁹

Despite the military operations against it and the various attempts to negotiate its demobilisation, the FRPI remains a key actor in the politico-military landscape of the Irumu territory. However, it is highly fragmented and no longer able to militarily control significant territory. Previously, the group had its own taxation systems for generating revenue but today it is increasingly relying on looting and extortion and operating as *'coupeurs de route'*, particularly during market-days (UNSC 2015a). The group's relation with local society is ambiguous. On the one hand, it coerces local authorities into obeying it and abuses and extorts people.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the group is still considered as a protection force by residents of the area. The FRPI is partly inspired by local grievances and remains firmly rooted in Ngiti society, which has historically been faced with marginalisation and exclusion. Like many other armed groups in eastern Congo most of combatants are local youth. They are perceived as 'children of the community' and local residents are hesitant to collaborate with local authorities in combatting them. A UN community liaison assistant told us that the local population often tell them that FRPI fighters are "children of the village, we cannot ask the soldiers to go and shoot them".⁵¹ Furthermore, it is difficult to distinguish combatants from civilians.⁵² For instance, as is the case with many Mai-Mai groups from eastern Congo, local specialists in traditional medicine (*'lenga na kisi'*) are among the group's leaders.⁵³

Observers claim that neither Kinshasa nor the FRPI leadership ever really intended to reach an agreement. It is argued that for the fragmented FRPI leadership, these talks were considered as an opportunity to get access to food and other resources.⁵⁴ Several sources also state that political and community leaders from the area, including members of parliament, provide support to the FRPI and try to prevent a further demobilisation of the group because of its strategic importance as a reserve force.⁵⁵ Such a reserve force can potentially be utilised by political actors as political leverage during negotiations and to mobilise support for Irumu territory.⁵⁶ Sources also told the United Nations Group of Experts that the Congolese government does not want to integrate the FRPI into the Congolese army (UNSC, 2015a). Kinshasa is believed to

⁴⁹ The rift between MONUSCO and the FARDC occurred when MONUSCO suspended support to Congolese troops in their operations against FDLR rebels. It cited concerns about allegations of human rights violations by two Congolese generals: Fall Sikabwe, army commander of North Kivu province and Bruno Mandevu, commander of operations against the FDLR. See: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/32665/politique/rdc-l-onu-stoppe-son-soutien-l-arm-e-congolaise-dans-la-lutte-contre-les-fdlr/> and <http://congosiasa.blogspot.dk/2015/06/the-latest-installment-of-military.html>.

⁵⁰ Interview, civil society representative in Bunia, 24 September 2015.

⁵¹ Interview, UN community liaison assistants, Bunia, 29 September 2015.

⁵² Interview, human rights association, Bunia, 28 September 2015.

⁵³ Interview, local observer, Bunia, 23 September 2015; Interview, local observer, Bunia, 24 September 2015;

⁵⁴ Interview, local observer, Bunia, 24 September 2015.

⁵⁵ Interview, local observer, Bunia, 23 September 2015; Interview, local observer, Bunia, 24 September 2015; interview, FARDC commander, Bunia, 26 September 2015.

⁵⁶ Interview, local observer, Bunia, 24 September 2015; interview, FARDC commander, Bunia, 26 September 2015.

aim at dismantling the armed group in order to demonstrate to the international community that maintaining stability is mainly a law-and-order issue for which no international support is needed (UN Group of Experts, 2015).⁵⁷ At the same time, rumours are circulating that certain officers in the Congolese army are not interested in finding a solution to the problem since the operations against the FRPI increase their budgets and provide access to income derived from informal taxation of the local population.⁵⁸

Armed operations by the FARDC with support from MONUSCO have also further complicated the local security context. The Congolese army is accused of extorting and abusing the populations in the areas it has cleared in South Irumu.⁵⁹ Subjected to abuse and extortion by the army as well as the FRPI, the population in Irumu is trapped between a rock and a hard place. Several human rights organisations, including Justice Plus and MONUSCO's human rights section, have tried to sensitise the Congolese army and have developed a number of protection strategies, including advocacy and legal support to victims, but so far these strategies have had a limited effect on its conduct.⁶⁰ FRPI members who want to demobilise are also caught in a dilemma. While they are afraid of what might happen to them if they surrender to the FARDC, they also fear being killed by their own commanders if they are caught trying to leave the group.⁶¹

In order to restore state authority in southern Irumu, MONUSCO launched an 'island of stability' in July 2014 in Geti (South Irumu), in collaboration with the Congolese authorities of Ituri. This programme entails a set of activities meant to assist the government in the restoration and consolidation of state authority in areas cleared of armed groups, which should pave the way for the development of the area. In turn, this should help to dissuade people from joining the militias. However, as early as September 2014 renewed activity from the FRPI prompted MONUSCO to suspend the project,⁶² prompting questions about the pertinence and feasibility of such strategies. According to De Vries, the Islands of Stability approach may be inappropriate and counter-productive to improving people's security as it focuses mainly on 'rolling out the state' rather than solving fundamental issues (De Vries, 2015: 54-5). In a similar vein, Cooper argues that it may do more harm than good because the strategy is based on a 'clear, hold, and build' counter-insurgency strategy that is centred on state security rather than paying attention to the needs of ordinary people (Cooper, 2014). Given the *modus operandum* of the Congolese security forces, it seems indeed rather unlikely that 'rolling out the state' automatically creates stability.

⁵⁷ Interview, MONUSCO staff member, Bunia, 27 September 2015.

⁵⁸ These allegations have a history. In 2010 unspecified Congolese authorities, told a UN Group of Experts that the FARDC was involved with taxing gold mining in Geti in the FRPI heartland (UN Groups of Experts 2010: 67).

⁵⁹ Interview, human rights association, Bunia, 28 September 2015. This is a pattern that goes back to earlier operations against the FRPI. For further details see Justice Plus (2007).

⁶⁰ Interview, human rights association, Bunia, 28 September 2015.

⁶¹ Group interview, UN community liaison assistants, 29 September, 2015.

⁶² MONUSCO. 2014. *In Ituri, MONUSCO and District Authorities Suspend Island of Stability Program in Walendu-Bindi*. Link: <http://MONUSCO.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=10662&mid=14594&ItemID=20684>. Accessed on 16 November 2015.

However, it should be mentioned that MONUSCO's scope of action is limited. When it comes to dealing with armed groups, MONUSCO has largely been side-lined by the Congolese government that views it as a question of national sovereignty (Boshoff et al 2015). In spite of the claims of the Congolese authorities, however, the FRPI militia is not only a security problem but also a political issue related to the political and socio-economic marginalisation of the Lendu and Ngiti communities. Institutionally, MONUSCO is also crippled by restrictive security rules. Armed convoys are required to take staff to areas where security incidents have occurred, which limits their flexibility and response speed. This tends to alienate and anger local populations in Irumu.⁶³ Furthermore, people on the ground have no real sense of these restrictions and in some cases even perceive the mission as complicit with armed groups.⁶⁴

In line with its mandate to protect the civilian population, MONUSCO has also created a number of non-military approaches aimed at mobilising local actors and strengthening local conflict prevention capacity. In 2009, it launched its 'Joint Protection Team', in which several of its sections were involved. The aim of this team was to gather information about security threats and evolutions and socio-economic conditions on the ground, and to produce recommendations to MONUSCO and the Congolese authorities. Even though military protection was provided, it proved to be difficult to collect the information needed in more remote areas. A next step was the creation and support of 'community alert networks' (CAN), which were intended to reinforce communication between peacekeepers and the local population and to raise the alarm in case of any immediate security risk. The aim of this project was to install a system of alert and conflict prevention mechanisms through a network of 'community liaison assistants' that could support MONUSCO's activities. But here again, one of the key challenges is to mobilise the necessary (military) response in case of an alert, particularly in more remote areas.⁶⁵ Another protection mechanism initiated and supported by MONUSCO is the 'local protection committees' (LPCs), that are already operational elsewhere in Ituri but at the time of fieldwork in September 2015 were also being deployed in FRPI affected areas. These committees consist of local decision-making authorities, including customary leaders, who are tasked with preparing community protection plans. The main objective of this project is to create local capacity and ownership of security governance and to transfer competences to local actors so they can help to improve security conditions.⁶⁶

MONUSCO should be commended for attempting to forge a new path to improve security provision in Irumu. But as is the case in the urban security governance in Bunia, it is doubtful that these "bottom-up" initiatives will prove to be a solution to the complex security problems that people are faced with in south Irumu. The current 'carrot-and stick' strategy deployed to counter the FRPI clearly has its limits. The extractive and abusive behaviour of the FARDC, the strong ties between the FRPI and the populations in Walendu-Bindi, and the persistence of political grievances among the Lendu-Ngiti communities render it unlikely that basic security will be restored in south Irumu any time soon. Military operations have only further escalated the conflict and have had an adverse impact on the security situation.

⁶³ Interview, MONUSCO staff member, Bunia, 27 and 29 September 2015.

⁶⁴ Interview, MONUSCO staff member, Bunia, 27 and 29 September 2015.

⁶⁵ Interview, MONUSCO staff member, Bunia, 27 and 29 September 2015.

⁶⁶ Interview, MONUSCO civil affairs officer, 27 September 2015.

Conclusion

Even though large-scale violent conflict in Ituri ended in 2007, insecurity remains part of people's everyday life. A multitude of factors contribute to the persistence of insecurity, understood in a broad sense of the term. These include numerous small-scale land conflicts, competition over natural resources, banditry, poverty, the proliferation of small arms, parasitical and abusive state services, and the proliferation of popular justice and self-protection mechanisms. As illustrated in this paper, these mechanisms connect to several responses that have been developed over time, and have contributed to a context of multi-layered security governance.

Some of these popular responses are supported by donor strategies that aim to improve security governance. Donors are hedging their bets: on the one hand they attempt to strengthen state security services and reinforce state authority, on the other hand they recognise the potential added value of '*auto-prise en charge*' initiatives and provide them with support. However, 'security' is a hypersensitive *political* issue in areas of chronic conflict and unrest, and is ultimately about who has the right to enforce a certain political order. International support to non-state security actors is therefore likely to create reluctance, suspicion and resistance from state security actors benefitting from the *status quo* as these directly impact on the distribution of power. The attitude of the Congolese government towards MONUSCO's role in the neutralisation of armed groups in Irumu and elsewhere, as well as that of the Congolese security forces toward the CLGPs in Bunia, should be understood in this light. This is why non-state security actors are not merely apolitical elements that can simply be added to existing ones. Rather, multi-layered security is characterised by competition and distrust as much as by collaboration and the search for common solutions to shared security problems. External actors should be aware therefore that support to non-state security actors could create further competition in the field of security governance, which can create considerable shifts in the power structure and thus cause resistance and contestation. By extension it should be recognised that non-state actors may be caught up in the logic of competition and violence prevalent in the field of security governance.

Our research also suggests that while these initiatives can help to improve security conditions locally in the short and medium term, these gains are not likely to fundamentally improve people's security conditions in the long run so long as the underlying, entangled and systemic causes of insecurity are not tackled. These causes interact in complex and sometimes unpredictable ways. For instance, a project like the CLGP may reduce insecurity in Bunia's neighbourhoods by sensitising the youth not to carry out violent vigilante justice and by developing new non-violent techniques of security provision such as monitoring, reporting, and audible alert systems, but how will this project measure up against the systemic complicity of Congolese security forces in the continuation of insecurity? Further, while the creation of the PDP has seemingly improved people's perceptions of the police, how is the PDP going to perform without resources to cover its basic operating costs and how will it function within the regular police without donor support? The same can be argued for the creation of local security governance mechanisms in Irumu; the idea behind these mechanisms is to promote local ownership of security governance, but it seems that deeper problems and drivers of insecurity, including ethnic tensions/community grievances and the *modus operandum* of the Congolese security forces, constantly

undermine these initiatives. Moreover, it seems that MONUSCO-FARDC combat operations against the FRPI have had a limited effect on the security situation. This underscores MONUSCO's difficulties in aligning the different objectives of its mandate, in particular the mandate to protect civilians with the mandate to restore the authority of the state and neutralise armed groups.

In order to address these risks and shortcomings, it is therefore key that any policy aimed at strengthening security governance in contexts such as Ituri is based on a profound understanding of the local context. Furthermore, attempts to improve security provision to Congolese citizens should include a coherent and long-term strategy aiming at addressing the underlying causes of insecurity, given their importance. This strategy should be based on in-depth knowledge of the socio-political context within which it is to be implemented. What is needed is contextual knowledge about what contributes to insecurity and this requires investment in the production of both qualitative and quantitative knowledge to identify the factors generating insecurity and how they interact with each other. If these factors are identified, international actors can begin to make coherent strategies to deal with them. Such a strategy might benefit from the incorporation of non-state security actors, but it should be emphasised that they do not necessarily offer a solution, since empowering them represents a political option that can create friction with state authorities.

Attempts to improve security conditions for Congolese citizens must go beyond technical fixes to security provision. Political solutions must be found to the underlying conflicts, which generate insecurity. In the absence of political solutions the effectiveness of attempts to improve security conditions by external actors will be severely limited and will only generate short-term gains. This would require the Congolese government to accept that insecurity is not only a law and order issue that can be dealt with through repression, but a political, economic and social one.

Such a strategy would also imply that the larger governance context and conditions in the Congo are taken into account. Since the clientilistic norms of the security forces are one of the biggest factors promoting insecurity in Ituri and elsewhere in the Congo, security sector reform should develop strategies that deal with the current divided and patronage-based system of security governance and move away from its technical approach to security and institutional reform.

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Contact details:

email: Intdev.jsrp@lse.ac.uk

Web: lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/JSRP/jsrp.aspx

Tel: +44 (0)20 7849 4631