



Situation Report

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The Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A never-ending story!

Introduction

The recent incidents of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are a clear reflection of the effect of non-completion of the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. During a visit to the Institute for Security Studies in January 2007, Ambassador Ajelo, the then European Ambassador for the Great Lakes Region, made it clear that the completion of the DDR process and the start of Security Sector Reform (SSR) are crucial for the successful post-conflict reconstruction process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This statement is in conformity with Herbert Wulf's definition of SSR as "*the transformation of the security system which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibility and actions, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework. Responsible and accountable security force reduce the risk of conflict, provide security for citizens and create...a secure environment that is conducive to development.*"²

On 22 March 2007 violence broke out in Kinshasa between elements of the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC), the Republican Guard and elements of the *Détachement de Protection Présidentielle* (DPP) of Jean-Pierre Bemba. In the process, it was estimated by Western embassies that 600 people died and property worth millions of dollars was damaged. The fact that non-integrated combatants were the key players during the clashes in Kinshasa makes it clear that this violence was due to incomplete DDR. According to the plans of the *Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (CONADER), the DDR process should have been completed by 31st December 2006. It however did not happen because of various reasons of which the most important was the lack of political will from different parties to come to the demobilisation process, lack of funding and poor logistics. Efforts by *Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) and the international community to speed up the process in November 2006 failed because of the same reasons. The international community and MONUC are currently busy trying to move the process forward with new funding from the World Bank to CONADER and also contributions by the international community. The events of 22nd March 2007 have made a serious impact on the stability of the future political situation in the DRC. The situation report will focus on the current security situation in the DRC, the status of DDR, the mixage process, a possible way forward and when and how to address SSR.

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The security situation in the DRC had been improving immediately after the November 2006 elections, except for controversy around the demobilisation of the personnel guards of Jean-Pierre Bemba and Azarias Ruberwa. The incident of 22nd March 2007 in Kinshasa unfortunately changed the optimism and a dark cloud all of a sudden appeared over the DRC.

The incident between Bemba's guards and the Government forces

The incident started with an ultimatum issued by the government to the former vice-presidents, Jean-Pierre Bemba and Alizarias Ruberwa, to dismantle their respective guards and send them to join the DDR process by 15 March 2007. The government promised to provide each of the leaders with 12 policemen to protect them. The international community was hopeful that the issue could be resolved when the ultimatum was extended to 31 March 2007. Bemba, however, ignored the ultimatum and on the morning of 22 March 2007, the FARDC and members of GSSP took siege of Bemba's residence. Bemba's DPP, identified with red headbands and armed with AK 47's and RPG's were also reinforcing all the premises of Bemba. During midday on 22 March 2007 the Republican Guard was seen moving in big numbers from the airport into town. It is unclear who started the shooting, but the first shots were reportedly fired at 12h30 on 22 March 2007. More than 600 people were killed in the three days of fighting that ensued. After his residence was partially destroyed by government shelling, Bemba found "temporary asylum" in the South African embassy around three o'clock on Friday morning. He stayed there until the situation was temporary defused. He then left for Portugal for 60 days to seek medical treatment. This departure has not solved the issue of Bemba's DPP, the Kinshasa garrison of the FARDC and the Republican Guard who have not gone through the DDR process.³

Ongoing conflict in Ituri

There are some outstanding conflicts, more specifically in the eastern DRC that still need to be addressed. In the Ituri area, Peter Karim has continued to pose a serious security challenge. On 23 February 2007, the FARDC Commander in Ituri stated that the "only obstacle" remaining in the district's peace process is Peter Karim, commander of the Front for National Integration (FNI) militia, the sole group that has refused to join the DDR process. It is unfortunate that this issue has not been resolved. It all started in May 2006 when Peter Karim abducted 7 Nepalese peacekeepers. The Eastern Brigade, which was dealing with the incident, was told to leave it to a UN delegation from New York. The MONUC Divisional HQ in Kisangani was very unhappy with the situation, as it was not being consulted or made use of. The fact that the Nepalese peacekeepers were kept in separate locations by Peter Karim's FNI made it very difficult to launch any assault to free them. It was also not clear if there was any ransom money involved or whether Peter Karim was seeking amnesty and possible integration for himself and his soldiers into the FARDC. When an agreement was reached with Peter Karim in July 2006, the Nepalese soldiers were released but at a price. Peter Karim got a hero's welcome, the National Anthem was played and he was made a Colonel in the FARDC. He also agreed to demobilise the FNI as part of the bigger DDR process. However, there was an international warrant for his arrest from the ICC on charges of human rights violations. The UN mission from New York ignored advice from the Divisional Force Commander, Maj Gen Cammeart to go after Peter Karim and arrest him. Eight months later, Peter Karim is still playing games. The question could be asked whether Peter Karim is serious about demobilisation and integration into the FARDC. If so, will it mean that he and his soldiers are willing to leave Ituri for Brassage Centre in North Kivu? Peter Karim is the last of the militia leaders with about 2000 followers still operating in Ituri. The economic interest at this stage is possibly too high and leaving Ituri will seriously endanger his business interests.

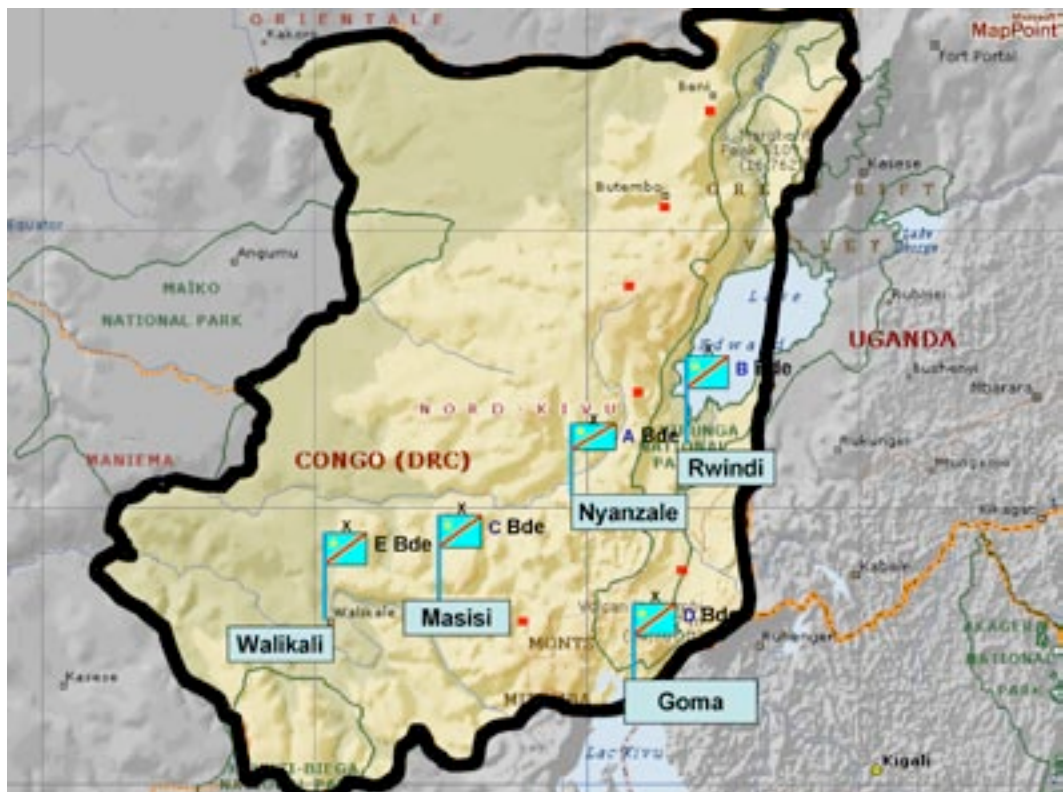
It is ironical that the Eastern Division had to deal with Peter Karim again after the deal that the UN delegation from New York made; and is clearly not working. Major General Cammeart clearly made a big impact on operations and the way they were executed in the eastern DRC and specifically in Ituri. As a result of robust operations,

14,000 militias were demobilised in Ituri stabilising the area to a great extent. Major Gen Cammeart finished his term of service as General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Eastern Division on 14 February 2007. A new GOC has not been appointed and it will be interesting to see what the impact of the new GOC will be on operations. Again, it was MONUC that did all the negotiations to convince Peter Karim to start the demobilisation process. The surrender of the 170 FNI militia members was the result of three weeks of negotiations with Peter Karim, largely facilitated by MONUC Bunia Political Affairs officer Jacob Mogeni. "He is following the previous militia's strategy to show us he is serious. This is a good sign, but we have not yet solved the problem. The issue of Peter Karim's demands for amnesty as a condition of surrender is critical, but it's the responsibility of the DRC government to decide," Jacob explained. MONUC is using all the tools available to finally deal with Peter Karim and FNI. MONUC is currently enhancing the training process of two integrated FARDC brigades in Ituri. This operation is spearheaded by the Pakistani battalion with the aim of enhancing the post-*brassage* process whereby ex-combatants are retained and reintegrated to form part of the FARDC. MONUC in Ituri is doing its best to train the FARDC brigades and police to carry out autonomous operations ensuring stability in the area. Although Karim handed 170 militia members to the FARDC for demobilisation, there are still about 1,800 militias left. FARDC with the support of MONUC is currently putting pressure on Karim to demobilise. The use of force by FARDC supported by MONUC is an option, as it has in the past resulted in positive response. The ongoing pressure resulted in Peter Karim and five of his officers surrendering on 5 April 2007 to the FARDC *Structure d'Integration Militaire* (SMI). They also handed over weapons and prepared themselves for demobilisation. This has resulted in a much more stable Ituri, paving the way for smaller armed groups to join the demobilisation process.

North Kivu and the Mixage process

In North Kivu, the problem with Nkunda and the *Forces Democratiques pour le Liberation du Rwanda* (FDLR) is becoming a serious threat to stability in the eastern DRC. Discussions between FARDC and Gen Nkunda resulted in a commitment by

Map 1: Mixed Brigades deployment



A MONUC official used this map during an informal briefing on 2 May 2007 in Pretoria, and gave consent for its use in this situation report.

Nkunda to mix his forces with the non-integrated FARDC brigades. The mixing process of two of dissident General Laurent Nkunda's loyalist brigades with three FARDC brigades has been ongoing now since the start of 2007. The mixage is an effort to address the serious security problems posed by Nkunda's forces in the troubled Kivu provinces since 2004. In this respect, the FARDC's representatives held fruitful talks with the belligerent Nkunda and his aides in December 2006 in Kigali. The talks, brokered by General Numbi and facilitated by the Rwandan government, also enjoyed the support of the highest authorities in Kinshasa. After serious deliberations, both sides decided to reintegrate the brigades (rebel brigades of Nkunda and the FARDC brigades) by mixing and renaming them under a new structure, in a process called mixing. In essence, the mixing process aims at equally combining Laurent Nkunda's 81st and 83rd brigades, and the rest of the combatants, with the FARDC's 110th and 116th Brigades, as well as the 1st Reserve brigade. An estimated 4,500 to 5,000 of Nkunda's troops, according to Nkunda's figures, are due to be combined with a similar number of FARDC troops. The new names for the six brigades after the mixing process are Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo and Foxtrot (in process), and they will be deployed across North Kivu province. See Map 1: mixed brigades deployment.⁴

The mixage process was almost completed on 23 March 2007 with the passing out parade of Delta and Echo Brigades. The mixed brigades will be deployed as follows:⁵

Table 1: Mixed Brigades deployment

Name	Compromising	Mixage	Commander	Current Deployment
A Brigade	83 Brigade (Nkunda) 110 Brigade (FARDC)	Kitchanga	Colonel Mosala	Nyanzale
B Brigade	110 Brigade, 1 Reserve Brigade (FARDC) Colonel Makenga's Troops	Chengerero	Colonel Makenga	Rwindi
C Brigade	81 Brigade (Nkunda) 1 Reserve Brigade (FARDC)	Mushake	Colonel Yav	Masisi
D Brigade	116 Brigade (FARDC) 83 Brigade (Nkunda)	Kitchanga	Colonel Padiri	Goma
E Brigade	116 Brigade (FARDC) Left over	Kitchanga	Colonel Faustin	Walikali

This mixage process came as a surprise to MONUC and the international community because they were never consulted on the program. MONUC is observing the process but not supporting it. They are expected to launch limited military operations against FDLR before going to *brassage* in the national program.

MONUC identified more than 300 children among the Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta Brigades during initial phases of mixage. After calls from MONUC, orders for separation of all children were issued by FARDC Chief of Staff, the Land Forces Commander, Air Force Commander and 8th Military Region Commander. Following these orders and continuing advocacy, 52 children were eventually removed from the Echo Brigade. To reach children still within the mixed brigades, a special operation was conducted to separate children, but only 37 children were released. Resumption of mixage for Foxtrot has so far led to separation of 17 children. In total, 106 children were removed from mixed brigades.⁶

There are a lot of unanswered questions; why follow this process when there is an established *brassage* process? What was the deal between Kinshasa and Kigali? Why did Nkunda not go to South Africa as originally planned and what is the Chief

of the Army, General Amisi and the Chief of the Air Force, General Numbi doing in North Kivu? It is believed that General Numbi is personally in command of the mixage process. A possible answer is that Kinshasa thought that by bringing Nkunda's soldiers into the FARDC, they could isolate Nkunda. Nkunda sent his combatants to be mixed into five brigades but kept control over his people. It means that Nkunda is now controlling not only his own two brigades but also the six mixed brigades. This process is of great concern to analysts focusing on the East of the DRC. A possibility exists that mixage can lead to a new war between Hutus and Tutsis in North Kivu. Nkunda has now basically taken control of six mixed brigades, although he has not been given a position in the FARDC.

The February 2007 Human Rights Assessment Report by MONUC said operations by the FARDC and mixed brigades against FDLR had led to increasing allegations of human rights violations against civilians. The population in North Kivu lives in fear of what will happen to them and how the operations of the so-called mixed brigades against FDLR will affect them. There is renewed human rights violation in the areas where mixed brigades are deployed, namely in Rutshuru and Masisi Territories. Cases of arbitrary executions, forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and lootings are reported to MONUC and other humanitarian organizations. The population is directly targeted by the FDLR, FARDC and mixed brigades as a reprisal for alleged collaboration with one or the other party to the conflict. A good example is the Buramba massacre of 9 March 2007 where 15 people were executed

If this issue is not resolved soon, the east of the DRC can easily return to chaos. The mixed brigades have started a campaign against the FDLR in North Kivu and claimed to have killed 22 FDLR soldiers in operations in the Rutshuru-Rwindi, Rutshuru-Nyamilima and Musake. The operational planning and logistical support of these mixed brigades are poor and they are not supported by MONUC.

The renegade Congolese General Nkunda on 9 May 2007 threatened to withdraw his troops from the mixage process, sparking fears of renewed violence. "The mixing has failed on a logistical and an organisational level," said Patient Mwendanga, who heads Nkunda's National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) party. An advisor to President Joseph Kabila lamented the "orchestrated failure of the mixing," remarking that Nkunda's men had never intended to integrate into the army and that the former general continued to "exploit" ethnic issues⁷.

Meanwhile, FDLR active in eastern DRC accused Nkunda and Rwandan President Paul Kagame of trying to "set up a satellite state" in the Kivus.⁸ FDLR spokesman Anastase Munyandekwe said Nkunda "has recruited thousands of fighters in Rwanda and he is now ready to proclaim himself master of North Kivu and South Kivu. Kagame cannot openly send his men to occupy the two Kivus," he said, adding that the aim was to create "a Rwandan satellite state in the east of Congo." According to a foreign diplomat in the region requesting anonymity, "the situation appears irresolvable. Nkunda had a maximum of 3,500 men before the integration. He has provided 7,000 and says he has 2,000 more. It is clear that he has recruited from the hundreds of demobilised Rwandans," he explained, referring to military information.

During the first week of May 2007, it became clear that the mixage process had failed; the question now is how to rescue the situation. The appointment of Brigadier General Mayala, commander of the Ituri Military Region as the new military commander of the 8th Military Region (North Kivu) signals a movement in the Kinshasa Government that could either bring North Kivu to rebellion or the final disarmament of the FDLR. In essence, Kabila has placed a proven commander in North Kivu who is loyal to Kinshasa in the event of a rebellion by Nkunda. Nkunda in the meantime has used the mixing process to establish his troops in strategic locations in North Kivu. They currently hold positions in Rutshuru, which is a strategic access point on the east side of Virunga National Park, and on the Masisi to Goma road. This sets the stage for a potential showdown with either the forces loyal to Nkunda or the FDLR.⁹

The impact of the FARDC/Mixed Brigades/FDLR conflict has now spread to South Kivu. On the night of 26 May 2007, a group of 10 to 12 militiamen, believed to be “FDLR/Rastas,” attacked the villages of Nyabuluze and Muhungu in the South Kivu Province, killing 18 civilians, among them women and children, and wounding 27. An estimated 20 people were also abducted in the same incident. Notes were left on the bodies of the victims, in which the attackers claimed that these atrocities were in reprisal to the operations led against them by FARDC. As the perpetrators attempted to raid Chihamba, a third village in the same area, a patrol of UN Pakistani peacekeepers opened fire, forcing them to flee into the nearby forests, and “thereby preventing another bloodbath.”¹⁰

It is possibly time for MONUC and the FARDC to re-evaluate their strategy and draw up a new plan to bring stability to North and South Kivu.

This is probably the key to the successful reconstruction of the DRC. If the DDR process is not completed, the SSR process cannot start. How to support the DRC in future was discussed in detail at the last two meetings of the Contact Group¹¹. All role players have acknowledged the fact that DDR and SSR are important but still, there is a lack of coordination between players. At the last Contact Group meeting in Brussels on the 17 November 2006, it was suggested that the European Union takes the lead in the coordination process on behalf of all the external role players. The EU delegation explained their intention to play an overall coordinating role in the SSR sector of the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹² This had been announced on 15 September 2006 through a European Union Council declaration. A draft paper was circulated during the Contact Group meeting of 17 November 2006 by the EU delegation outlining some general principles of the EU approach, such as proposing an intensive coordination between Congolese authorities and third parties through Kinshasa based “*comités de suivi*”¹³. It was suggested that three “*comités de suivi*” be created: army, police and justice, each “*comité*” presided over by a competent Congolese minister. Global supervision will happen through a broader commission, to be presided over by the future Prime Minister. All relevant partners could sit in these “*comités*”. The EU also stated that they were ready to provide logistic support to these “*comités de suivi*”.

The UN delegation pointed out that the EU intentions for a coordinating role could perfectly fit into the UN approach. As the UN are working on a global, well defined exit-strategy, which foresees a continued post-transition UN role, other partners could take the lead in specific sectors, such as justice and the army. On the other hand, the UN intends to remain active in the police sector. While MONUC will continue to provide short-term support to the integrated brigades of the FARDC, mainly in the east of the country and aiming at joint operations with the FARDC, MONUC does not intend to play a major role in defense sector reform.¹⁴

In the above mentioned “*comités de suivi*”, MONUC will participate and promote transparency and good governance in the three sub-sectors. This was generally accepted although MONUC had reservations stating that it still has a UN mandate to adhere to.

Several delegations insisted on the importance of Congolese ownership of the whole SSR process and the need for an overarching Congolese vision / framework to which the three “*comités de suivi*” should refer to continuously. It is indeed important that the international community as well as the Congolese authorities have a clear and a similar understanding of the global direction and aims. It is thus clear from the discussions in Brussels and the position of different role players that there is still no consensus about coordination. Since President Kabila has now appointed his cabinet including the Minister of Defence, a Secretary of Defence and confirmed the Chief of Defence Staff, it is important to start a SSR process.

What is happening in the meantime with FARDC and the DDR process? According to the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) to date, the project has demobilized almost 94,000 ex-combatants. CONADER has closed all Orientation Centers (OCs) and is using mobile units to handle the final wave of

demobilization under the “*plan de relance*”, which was supposed to be completed by 31 December 2007. This plan expects to process up to 44,000 ex-combatants. The project was expected to reach a maximum of 118,000 ex-combatants demobilized by the end of 2006. This however did not happen and is still ongoing. Assuming a total number of 11, 000 demobilized soldiers and a 77% reintegration coverage rate, the total number of reintegration beneficiaries will be 9,000. Some 25, 000 children associated with fighting forces have been demobilized through special projects implemented by UNICEF and specialized NGOs. These special projects were scheduled to close by 31 December 2006, at which point, an estimated caseload of 8.700 children will still remain. Political constraints to completing the DDR and army integration process continue to this day; for political reasons, groups such as the Republican Army and residual troops and others refuse or are unable to enter the process and continue to pose a security risk in the country. 25,000 ex-combatants in Kinshasa and 11,300 in other military regions have not gone through the *Le Programme National De Desarmement, Demobilisation et Reinsertion* (PNDDR) process and with the “*plan de relance*”, 36, 000 ex-combatants still have to be processed. All of the PNDDR’s budget of 200 million dollars was either disbursed or has been committed for ongoing project activities. The available budget is only sufficient to cover demobilization of and reinsertion payments for 103,000 ex-combatants and reintegration support for 68,500 ex-combatants.

What does this mean in practice? The integrated combatants have been organized into 14 brigades, deployed mostly in the east of the DRC. Most of these brigades are in bad shape. The brigades are not staffed according to the original planning. Most of the soldiers have to dedicate most of their time to survival, leaving hardly any time for training. Commanders also need logistical support to deploy the brigade in operations against rebels and militia. Living conditions in the brigades and of the dependents must also be improved in a substantive way in order to maintain security. Recent conflict in North Kivu has shown that the integrated brigades do not have the capacity to counter the rebels without the support of MONUC. To try and address this problem, MONUC has proposed together with the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) a support plan that consists of the following elements:

- a consolidation of the *brassage* by financially supporting the integrated brigades and their dependents,
- a conceptual approach to give advice to the Congolese authorities on the future format of new military at the organizational level,
- support at the tactical level by temporarily funding every brigade, estimated at \$290, 000 per month per brigade for salaries and
- operational and logistical assistance provided through the UNDP rapid response mechanism.

A team consisting of Belgium and South African military personnel is currently in the DRC busy with an evaluation of the status of the 14 integrated brigades.

It is thus clear that the DDR process must be completed including the Republican Guard, the FARDC Kinshasa Garrison and the residual of Bemba’s DPP. Only if this process is completed can the process of SSR start. What is foreseen to happen? An all-inclusive approach: SSR is not only about the reform of army, police and justice but should also include governance aspects while the intelligence sector; border control and customs should also be included in a global approach. It is indeed important that the international community as well as the Congolese authorities have a clear and a similar understanding of the global direction and aims. The Congolese Government has taken ownership of the Government Contract; a document outlining the government strategic plans, issued in February 2007. The Prime Minister, Antoine Gizenga listed the following priorities for the Armed Forces¹⁵:

- The establishment of a chain of payment for the armed forces;
- The support to the creation of integrated brigades and to dependents of military personnel;
- The drafting of a white paper on the reform of the defence;

- The elaboration of a locally anchored project for small arms and light weapons;
- The establishment of a capacity of civilian surveillance of the defence sector by the new parliament;
- The elaboration of key laws aimed at regulating the army (laws concerning the Supreme Council of Defence, military expenditure, military organisation and the functions of the army);
- The support for a regulation of the military tribunals in conformity with international standards;
- The continuation of the support to the creation of integrated brigades;
- The promotion of assistance to demobilized ex-combatants through the organisation of training sessions and the provision of subsidies to programmes aimed at implementing and successfully achieving the integration process.

On the operational and strategic level, it is important to compile “white papers” for the three sub-sectors, defence, police and justice. While the Congolese authorities should draft these white papers, the external role players could give advice. There is an understanding that Congolese authorities would start with the white paper on defense sector reform, but they should also be encouraged to draft white papers on police and justice sector reform. The completion of the DDR process, the MONUC proposal for post-conflict reconstruction and consensus on coordination between the external role players on how to move forward with SSR will be key in the next few months on the successful start to the SSR process.

On the tactical level, Nkunda and the mixed brigades as well as the FDLR must be addressed. The approach should be two phased, addressing Nkunda first and then FDLR. Nkunda can be taken on by a joint FARDC/MONUC military operation. MONUC however must first appoint a new Force Commander for its Eastern Division that can lead the operation. If MONUC do not have the capacity to deal with Nkunda, the support of a European Battle Group is a possibility. Dealing with FDLR needs action on both the tactical level, military actions and on the strategic level, political opening in Rwanda. If these two issues are not addressed soon, the Kivus can erupt again.

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- 1 Henri Boshoff is a Military Analyst at the Institute for Security Studies.
 - 2 See H Wulf, “Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries,” in C McCartney, M Fischer and O Wills (eds), *Security Sector Reform. Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series, No. 2, 2004.
 - 3 *SouthScan*, 23 March 2007.
 - 4 Informal briefing by MONUC official on 2 May 2007 at the ISS Situation Report in Pretoria.
 - 5 Interview with EUSEC Officer 14 March 2007 in Kinshasa.
 - 6 Informal briefing by MONUC official on 2 May 2007.
 - 7 *Daily Intelligence Digest*, Erinys International, 10 May 2007.
 - 8 Ibid.
 - 9 *Daily Intelligence Digest*, Erinys International, 21 May 2007.
 - 10 Ibid.
 - 11 The Contact Group consist of the following states, Belgium, United Kingdom, France Nederland, United States, The European Union, World Bank, United Mission in DRC (MONUC), Angola and South Africa.
 - 12 Interview with EUSEC officer on 14 March 2007 in Kinshasa.
 - 13 Committees establish to follow-up the activities in three sectors, Army Police and Justice.
 - 14 Interview with MONUC DDR Officer on 13 March 2007 in Kinshasa.
 - 15 Democratic Republic of Congo Government, Annex Governance Contract, March 2007.