

# **SOUTH AFRICA'S APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN BURUNDI AND THE DRC: PROMOTING HUMAN SECURITY?**

**Cheryl Hendricks**

**Department of Politics and International Relations  
University of Johannesburg, South Africa**

## **Abstract**

This article is a critical reflection of South Africa's approach to conflict management in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are countries in which South Africa has been extensively involved and which now serve as models for conflict management across the continent. The article highlights that though these interventions are often viewed as success stories South Africa's approach falls short of its intended objective of promoting human security. The article contends that South Africa's narrow focus on the state and war elites leaves key conflict generating issues unresolved and reinforces militarised authoritarian state structures. It has therefore paid lip service to creating more inclusive conflict management processes. South Africa has largely failed to pioneer new ways of managing conflict that could lead to safer, resilient and prosperous societies.

## **1. Introduction**

Africa's investment in peace and security over the last two decades has undoubtedly yielded many peace dividends. The number of civil wars decreased by half (although on an upward trend again from 2013), many countries gained the status of being democracies (from three in 1990 to 25 in 2013), human development indicators improved, income *per capita* increased and there is a promise of abundance through new gas and mineral finds (August 2013). These achievements give cre-

dence to the assertions of 'Africa Rising'. However, without diminishing these accomplishments, they remain tenuous in the face of persistent instability in African countries deemed post-conflict. There is a rise in election-related violence, mounting terrorism and insurgency attacks, relentless gender based violence and expanding local and transnational conflicts across the continent. According to the Institute for Security Studies, African conflicts are becoming "increasingly fragmented and the number of actors, particularly non-state factions, involved in conflicts is rising" (Cilliers and Shunemann 2013: 3). Persistent insecurity on the continent, and the ineffectiveness of peacebuilding interventions to prevent the relapse of states into conflict, necessitate that we revisit the dominant approaches to managing violent conflict in a bid to discern why they are not yielding sustainable human security. This article contends that a key part of the explanation resides in the propensity towards stabilising states instead of building peaceful resilient societies, pursuing dated methods in the face of new challenges, continued linear modelling and a seeming inability to rethink and transform conflict management mechanisms and processes.

South Africa is at the forefront of Africa's peace and security endeavours. After 1994, it was able to quickly transform itself from international villain to Pan-Africanist peacemaker and it has since played an instrumental role in both shaping and setting the normative agenda of the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community's (SADC) peace and security architectures as well as undertaking in-country conflict management interventions, or what Van Nieuwkerk (2014) refers to as 'Peace Diplomacy'. Scholars have provided detailed accounts of South Africa's engagement in peacemaking and peacekeeping, and to a lesser extent, its experiences with peacebuilding (Shillinger 2009; Miti 2012; Neethling 2003; Landsberg 2012; Hendricks and Lucey 2014). Their work highlights several factors. These include, for example, the motivation for South Africa's engagement (foreign policy, history, values and principles, economic and military stature, commercial interests, moral legitimacy, and so forth); South Africa's preferred forums for intervention (bilateral, trilateral and multilateral institutions and processes); its role as a 'reluctant hegemon'; the strengths and weaknesses of specific interventions, noting in particular its lack of resources, dated equipment, domestic challenges and exportation/imposition of its own conflict resolution model. Some others seek to compare the approaches of the different administrations (*viz*, Mandela,

Mbeki and Zuma).

Few of these studies reflect on the assumptions, conceptions and methodology underpinning South Africa's approach to conflict management or provide human security impact assessments of its interventions. South Africa's interventions were largely hailed as success stories, but what was meant by success in these contexts? Evidence is mounting that the countries in which it has intervened remain fragile and/or have relapsed into conflict. Yet, South Africa continues to be "the interlocutor and destination of choice for African leaders and rebel leaders eager to cut deals" (Van Nieuwkerk 2014: 3).

It is important to begin to pay closer attention to South Africa's conflict management approach for a number of reasons. First, it is called upon to manage conflicts in many African countries. Second, it has labelled itself as projecting the African voice and perspective in the global arena. Third, it seeks to create a different relationship from that which currently exists between the international community and its 'beneficiaries' (that is, it claims to be driven by the principles of equality, local ownership, demand, and so forth). Fourth, in conjunction with other international actors, its interventions have a direct effect on the orientation and sustainability of peace and security on the continent as a whole.

Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) represent some of the first spaces in which South Africa engaged in extensive conflict management activities. These interventions appear to have influenced the blueprint for the way in which conflicts are being resolved on the continent (South Africa was involved in Angola and Lesotho prior to this, but these interventions are not held up as models). South Africa's intervention in Burundi and the DRC included, bringing belligerents/warring-parties together to sign peace agreements; the formation of inclusive transitional governments; the deployment of peacekeepers, multi-party elections after a specified period; and the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction/peacebuilding programs that concentrate on rebuilding state institutions and infrastructure. These generally constitute the mainstay of the roadmaps designed to steer countries towards peace. However, though the scale and intensity of the conflicts in Burundi and the DRC have subsided, more than a decade after their transitions, these countries are far from being peaceful and prosperous.

This article is a critical reflection of South Africa's approach to conflict management in these two countries. In particular, it concentrates on the neglected aspects by South Africa, contending that its

narrow focus on the state and war elites leave key conflict generating issues unresolved and reinforce militarised authoritarian state structures and regimes, rather than the democratic human security-centred states it envisaged. Indeed, South Africa has failed to introduce the key components of its own transformative processes into the peace facilitation process and to draw some learning from the experiences of those sectors of the society that were central to creating the changed relations between state and society. South Africa, has therefore largely failed to utilise its strategic position in conflict management on the continent to pioneer new ways of managing conflict that could lead to building safer, resilient and prosperous societies: there is a disjuncture between its stated construct of peace and what it actually delivers.

## **2. Key drivers, actors and mechanisms of South Africa's engagement in conflict management in Africa**

The *Draft White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy* (2011) clearly spells out its motivations and orientation noting that its foreign policy embraces the philosophy of *Ubuntu* (humanity), promotes the values of human rights, democracy and reconciliation, strives to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment and, importantly, wants to create human security.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, reiterated that South Africa's foreign policy is based on the "values and principles enshrined in our constitution, notably human dignity, the achievement of equity, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy and respect for the rule of law" (Mashabane 2012). South Africa has also been unequivocal about the place of Africa in its foreign policy objectives. It firmly roots its own peace, security and development as intrinsically linked to that of the continent and labels its policies as 'pan-Africanist' and 'Afro-centric'. South Africa sees its responsibility as transforming the "global system of governance from power-based to rules-based", ending the marginalisation of the poor throughout the world (South African Government 2011), promoting the *African Agenda* and being the "voice of the continent internationally" (Landsberg 2009: 2). The *Draft White Paper* asserts that South Africa will continue to "play

a leading role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction" working through multilateral forums like the United Nations (UN), AU and SADC (South African Government 2011).

In addition, the *Draft White Paper* mentions the impending establishment of South Africa's own development agency, the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA), although years later this has yet to materialise. The envisaged role of this institution is to provide policy direction and coordination for South Africa's developmental engagements and "develop partnerships that drive innovation around development co-operation in Africa and developing countries to create self-sufficient societies..." (Casoo 2012). Clearly, on paper and in its pronouncements, the South African government views itself as a "progressive agent for change" (Landsberg and Kondlo 2007: 1), "peace broker", "bridge-builder", a partner that has a "unique history, position and advantage to play a major role in Africa's development" (Casoo 2012) through establishing different relations of engagement (based on mutual respect and equality) and through innovative approaches that will create the desired human security in Africa. *South Africa's Revised White Paper on Peace Missions* (still in draft form) is guided by its foreign policy vision of "a better South Africa in a better world". This proposed White Paper highlights that South Africa's approach to peace and security is guided by the UN, AU and SADC mandates. The principles guiding its participation in peace missions are: "clear mandate, consent, impartiality, minimum use of force, credibility, legitimacy, national and local ownership, entry, transition and exit strategy, adequate means, transparency and unity of effort".<sup>1)</sup> The *Revised White Paper* also includes a commitment to mainstreaming gender in peace missions and the promotion of gender equality, which was not in the first adopted *White Paper on Peace Missions* (South African Government 1999). In December 2013, South Africa's contribution to peace missions consisted of approximately 2 190 experts, military and police personnel deployed in the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (1 303 troops and four experts), the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (804 troops, 44 police and 15 experts) and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) (17 police) (South African Government's Department of International Relations and Cooperation 2014).

South Africa's policy on conflict prevention and/or conflict resolu-

tion is not captured in any White Paper, but can be gleaned from its adoption of the many protocols, declarations and statements that highlight the need for "the prevention, management and resolution of conflict through non-violent means" (Kibasomba 2002). It explicitly draws from its own experience of peaceful negotiations in the early 1990s with a firm belief that seemingly intractable conflicts can be resolved through mediation: what is needed is an "all inclusive process", "long-term solutions", "building trust" and that parties "take ownership of the process" (see Ebrahim 2014). Its approach in Zimbabwe was labelled as 'quiet diplomacy', which refers to a "combination of soft diplomatic approaches, behind the scenes engagements aimed at achieving pacific settlements" (Mhango 2012: 16), instead of employing sanctions or other forms of aggressive behaviour to settle disputes: based on the assumptions of gentle persuasion and/or what Kurt Shillinger sees as being "talking leads to peace" (Shillinger 2009).

Post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding represent another important aspect of South Africa's conflict management repertoire. These activities have included, for example, assistance with security sector reform, public sector reforms, elections, infrastructure and economic development. South Africa has therefore sought to go beyond peacemaking and peacekeeping to assist with creating the conditions for sustainable transitions. This article will, however, show that its activities in this regard have been rather lacklustre and haphazard and that it is far from its envisioned role of introducing game-changing approaches and pursuits. The latter part of this article will analyse South Africa's engagement in Burundi and the DRC and discern in how far it has lived up to its own ideal of a human security oriented approach.

### **3. South Africa's interventions in Burundi**

Burundi's post-colonial history, much like its counterparts in the Great Lakes region, is steeped in violent conflict. State formation based on exclusionary politics, ethnicity, patronage, authoritarianism, militarism (with vestiges in colonial rule), account for its bloodied past. From 1962, when it gained independence, until 1992 when President Buyoya, under international pressure, oversaw the adoption of a new constitution, Burundi witnessed varying episodes of political instability. These included, for example, assassinations of successive prime ministers (1962-1965), an attempted *coup* (1965), successful military *coups* re-

sulting in military rule in 1966 (Micombero), 1976 (Bagaza), and 1987 (Buyoya) (Curtis 2012). The deep-seated cleavages of this society were evidenced in the genocide of 1972 that led to the death of about 250 000 people (Lemarchand 2008) with Hutu (which constitute approximately 80 per cent of the population) and Tutsi launching counter accusations for perpetration. This catalytic event was "followed by increased repression and purges of Hutu from political, military and economic structures" (Curtis 2012: 79). In the multi-party elections of 1993, President Melchior from the *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi* (FRODEBU) emerged victorious. But, political instability and ethnically based violence surged when the first democratically elected and first President of the Hutu ethnic group was assassinated, leading to the death of some 20 000 people (predominantly Tutsi).

In November 1993 the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) deployed a small monitoring and mediation team led by Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah (Mauritanian Foreign Minister). He was able to secure an agreement in January 1994 in which President Cyprien Ntaryamira, a representative of the Hutu, heading a multi-party cabinet government was selected and in which "Tutsi were able to gain 40% of the seats" (Khadiagala 2007: 53). This agreement, however, did not stem the violence.

Conflict escalated after Ntaryamira, alongside the Rwandese President Habyarimana, died in a plane crash that then also triggered the genocide in Rwanda. Another Convention was negotiated and signed in September 1994 that gave 55 per cent of cabinet positions to those of Hutu descent and 45 per cent to Tutsi representatives, but this division of power was seen by some Hutu as an "erosion of their democratic gains" (Khadiagala 2007: 53). This led to a split in the FRODEBU party and the formation of the National Council of the Defence of Democracy (CNDD). Members of the Burundi National Recovery Party (PARENA), of former President Bagaza, also "refused to sign the Convention and share power with those they believed were responsible for the massacres of Tutsi" (Curtis 2012: 81).

The Regional Peace Initiative (consisting of Heads of State in the Great Lakes Region) then took the lead in resolving the conflict in Burundi. In November 1995 they mandated President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania to mediate a power-sharing agreement (and this Khadiagala noted also marks the beginning of the trend of elder statesmen mediating conflicts in the region). He acted as the facilitator in the Arusha

negotiations, until his death in 1999. The conflict was primarily constructed as being "political with ethnic overtones" (Ayebare 2010: 82) and thus to be resolved by an ethnically based power-sharing arrangement. Nyerere sought to bring the parties that had participated in the elections in 1993 to a negotiation table — which he succeeded to do in 1998. However, by then there were many more parties and some key formations were absent from the talks, namely the National Council for the Defense of Democracy — Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) and the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (Palipehutu) — National Liberation Forces (FNL) (a predominantly refugee group formed in 1983), who continued with their violent incursions. After the death of Nyerere, South Africa's President Nelson Mandela, as another elder statesman who had led his own country to a peacefully negotiated settlement, was asked to be the facilitator. Under his mediating team, the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* was signed, in 2000, by the Government of Burundi, the National Assembly and 17 political parties, seen as the *G7* (Hutu based parties) and *G10* (Tutsi based parties). They included the CNDD and Palipehutu (though not their armed wings), hence the need for cease-fire agreements in 2002, 2003 and 2006 (led by Jacob Zuma and the latter by Charles Nqakula). The purpose of the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accord* was to:

put an end to the root causes underlying the recurrent state of violence, bloodshed, insecurity, political instability, genocide and exclusion, which is inflicting severe hardship and suffering on the people of Burundi, and seriously hampers the prospects of economic development and attainment of equality and social justice ... and to shape a political order and system of governance ... founded on the values of justice, democracy, good governance, pluralism, respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual, unity, solidarity, mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation amongst the different ethnic groups ... (*Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* 2000).

The Agreement, in its five Protocols, addressed the nature of the conflict, democracy and good governance, peace and security for all, reconstruction and development, and guarantees on the implementation of the agreement. The conflict was viewed as "fundamentally political with extremely important ethnic dimensions" and "it stems from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power" (*Arusha*



*Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* 2000). It was therefore conceptualised as a struggle of political elites for access to state power and resources, mobilising ethnicity to achieve their aims, that is, an instrumentalist view of ethnic relations. These elites were brought together to work out a resolution to the conflict, that is, the same minds that created the conflict were brought together to resolve it.<sup>2)</sup> Civil society and women's organisations were present at the signing of the document, but not part of the negotiations. Burundian women, working with South African women and with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), pushed for representation, but were only given observer status. However, the agreement was inclusive and comprehensive in terms of whom it addressed (the citizens of Burundi) and the issues it covered and it set principles that needed to be part of a new constitution. The agreement spoke to the core aspects of human dignity, social justice and human security for the people of Burundi as a whole. It called for an end to ethnic exclusion and gender discrimination (but it did not set a quota for women's representation) and for the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). There was therefore the presence of a different mind within the negotiations (the mediator) that shifted the agreement away from narrow interests to address broader human security concerns — this was arguably South Africa's greatest contribution to the resolution of the conflict.

The Agreement paved the way for the development of a new constitution and sought to ensure a power sharing in which the "G7 parties would have more than half, but less than three-fifths of the ministerial portfolios, and 60% of the seats in the National Assembly. Senate would be divided equally between the G7 and G10 members but the president of the Senate would come from the G10" (Curtis 2012: 84). It also stipulated that "a high majority was necessary to pass legislation and amend the constitution, thus preventing the domination of a single ethnic group" (Bouka 2014: 3). In addition, the Agreement called for the reform of the army through integration of the different armed factions into a single army and a stipulation that the army "could not comprise of more than 50% of a single ethnic group" (Bouka 2014: 3). The transitional government was inaugurated in November 2001 and Pierre Buyoya of the *Union pour le Progrès national* (UPRONA) became president and Domitien Ndayizeye (FRODEBU) vice president, they would then swap positions.

South Africa was also instrumental in creating an enabling en-

vironment for the functioning of the transitional government. It deployed 701 soldiers on a bilateral basis for VIP protection and to ensure the safety of the political leaders returning from exile (given the history of assassinations in this country, this was deemed a necessity). After a period of two years the mission came under the umbrella of the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB) (2003-2004). The UN deployed after the signing of the ceasefire agreement and South Africa's peacekeepers then fell under this mission, remaining in the country until 2009.

A new constitution was inaugurated in 2005, embodying the principles of the *Arusha Peace Accord* (and in which women now gained a 30 per cent quota), and this paved the way for multi-party elections in which the former CNDD-FDD rebel leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, gained the majority of votes and became, and still remains, President in early 2015.

South Africa unquestionably played a major role in securing and ensuring a peace agreement in Burundi. But did this peace agreement address the root causes of the conflict it had identified? What were the unintended consequences of the peace agreement? What were the peacebuilding initiatives that it introduced to sustain the peace? How far did it promote an alternative approach to conflict management and human security?

The agreement brokered by South Africa was far-reaching, but its approach was not new: it remained state and elite-centric (there was little consultation with the citizens of Burundi, that is, no national dialogues) and it drew on old ideas and practices of power sharing (within Burundi itself and the international community at large). The idea that peace processes must be 'inclusive' did not extend to the inclusion civil society. In this context it meant government, political parties and rebels, irrespective of their level of popular support and certainly hierarchised by their perceived monopoly of coercive power. These forms of negotiations inadvertently created modern routes to political power via excessive violence perpetrated on citizens predominantly in rural areas: access to power through the *coup* phenomenon was replaced by access to power via rebels negotiating and legitimating themselves.

Ethnic political engineering featured as a core variable in the distribution of power, entrenching and reproducing it contrary to the instrumentalist view that guided the understanding of the conflict. To date political parties remain ethnically based, however, the ethnic tensions that had dominated this society for much of its post-colonial life seem to

have dissipated. Burundi after the elections in 2005 seemed to be well on its way to building a peaceful resilient society. It became one of a few countries on the UN Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. South Africa, too, is a member of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Indeed, after stabilising Burundi (through peacemaking and peacekeeping) South Africa, post 2009, seemed to abandon Burundi, for its presence became minimal. This could be interpreted as South Africa normalising its relations with the country through, for example, bilateral commissions. More likely, it was South Africa handing Burundi back to the Regional Initiative and entrusting the UN Peacebuilding Commission and the newly elected government (which also insisted that the peacekeepers leave) to carry out the work of democratisation and building human security-centred societies — this would also be in line with its emphasis on local ownership. After using its political and military tools, in very conventional ways, to see Burundi through to an election (the inauguration of a new government), it therefore spent little effort on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding which would have provided it with more opportunity to assist with the transformation of the society. Its retreat opened the space for other international actors, predominantly non-African, to enter.

In addition to the South African government, South African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and women's organisations also played a key part (some independently and some in partnership with government) in conflict management through, for example, research, sharing experiences and implementation support. The presence of these organisations was, however, ephemeral and they, too, disappeared post 2009. They could have made deeper linkages with their Burundian counterparts, as well as with civil society organisations from other African countries that were present, to carry on with support where needed. The only NGO that has had a sustained presence is the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). They have been working on issues of land (which remains a contested issue) and on promoting peace and reconciliation through strengthening the capacity of civil society to engage in conflict prevention and promoting dialogues (see Hendricks and Lucey 2013b). This is not to contend that South African NGOs have a superior wisdom or that their experiences were similar, but that they had an opportunity to, together with local and continental counterparts, begin to share experiences and collaboratively fashion more appropriate ways to build their societies.

Fifteen years after the adoption of the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement*, Burundi remains poor, underdeveloped, its people hungry and there is a worrying trend of authoritarianism, militarism, human rights abuse and a closing of the political space for civil society. Since 2010 the country has been experiencing low levels of violence that could intensify as the country approaches elections in May 2015. Certainly the transition in Burundi was far less than it promised to be. It may have provided a very necessary degree of stability, but it is a far cry from being peaceful, democratic and a country in which its citizens enjoy human dignity. Curtis points out that "while there are new faces in Burundian political and security structures, the nature of the state remains the same, including the central position of violence and control within it" (Curtis 2012: 87). South Africa had an occasion to assist with the construction of alternative norms, values and principles through the *Arusha Peace Agreement* and the constitution making process, but it did so without ensuring the necessary changes in the edifice of the society and it has therefore been relatively easy for Burundi's government to slip back into old authoritarian practices.

#### **4. South Africa's intervention in the DRC**

The DRC's post-colonial story, similar to its neighbour Burundi, is one of conflict fuelled by the politics of exclusion, neo-patrimonialism, authoritarian rule, militarism and underdevelopment. Within a week of independence from Belgium in 1960, the province of Katanga threatened to secede, plunging the country into a civil war. International proxy wars and national elite power struggles ensued including that between the Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and President Kasa-Vubu leading to the assassination of Lumumba in 1961. Mobutu Sese Seko's *coup* in 1965 ended the first few years of instability. Mobutu's authoritarian rule, characterised by a combination of fear and patronage provided more than 30 years of apparent stability until he, too, was ousted in 1997. Marriage (2009) had noted that "informalised politics and economics" and the "normalisation of violence" were a key part of the functioning of the state and the lived experiences of people. These ingredients also accounted for Mobutu's rapid downfall in the post-Cold War and Washington consensus era.

International and local pressure to open up the political space led to a national dialogue in 1990 and to the adoption of multi-party politics.

However, these events were eclipsed by the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 that had a profound impact on the stability of the DRC. Many Rwandese of Hutu origin, including the *Interahamwe*, fled to the Eastern DRC. Some reorganised themselves into the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and, in turn, Rwanda began to support groups like the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), although the latter was primarily sponsored by Uganda. The conflict in Rwanda was therefore displaced into the DRC creating an interdependent and regionalised conflict in this sub-region.

The Eastern DRC became a site of struggle as rebel groups (both foreign and local Mai Mai) began to occupy and wreak havoc in this area. It had long been a contested space as *Banyamulenge* (Rwandese of Tutsi descent who had earlier settled in the area) came into conflict with both the local government and the local community over issues of citizenship and land. The announcement in October 1996, by the local governor in the Eastern DRC that the *Banyamulenge* should leave, coupled with the declining legitimacy of Mobutu Sese Seko's government appears to have been triggers for the violence that engulfed this countryside. The Alliance for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, led by Laurent-Desire Kabila and backed by Rwanda and Uganda, emerged in this context. Their march to Kinshasa showed how derelict, perilous and ungoverned the DRC hinterland had become. Mobutu Sese Seko's legitimacy had declined and he and his decrepit security forces were unable to maintain control. Kabila and company, in May 1997, seven months after the start of the rebellion, literally walked into State House and took over. Kabila's control over the state was, however, highly unstable (especially after he sought to get rid of his backers, Rwanda and Uganda) and by 1998 the DRC was back in a civil war. In September 1998, President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia was mandated by SADC to mediate the conflict (Swart and Solomon 2004). The *Lusaka Cease-fire Agreement* was brokered in 1999 calling for an end to hostilities and an inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) that would lead to a negotiated settlement and to democratisation. According to Rogier, the Agreement called for an 'inclusive' transitional administration hence, "the negotiations should not only include the Government of the DRC and the main rebel groups (at the time RCD and MLC), but also opposition political parties ('the so-called non-armed opposition') as well as representatives from civil society. All

parties were supposed to participate with equal status in the talks" (Rogier 2009: 27). The idea of an ICD was to be a continuation of the national dialogue "thwarted initially by Mobutu Sese Seko and thereafter by Laurent Kabila" (Swart and Solomon 2004: 20). But, this agreement did not hold for long as fighting by rebel groups continued and Kabila used all sorts of shenanigans to delay the implementation of the proposed dialogue. It was only after his assassination by his body-guard, in 2001, and the appointment of his son Joseph Kabila, that UN peacekeepers could be deployed and that negotiations could begin to take place in earnest. The conflict in the DRC "involved three Congolese rebel movements, 14 armed groups and countless militia; killed over 3.3 million Congolese; and destabilized most of Central Africa" (Auteserre 2008). It also led to the displacement of millions of Congolese. The DRC drew international attention due to the excessive violence against ordinary citizens and the extent of gender based violence and has generated much scholarly debate on "new wars" and "rape as a weapon of war". What was South Africa's role in managing this conflict? Can its approach be considered as inclusive and human security oriented, and what has the impact been on the lives of ordinary citizens?

South Africa was, and remains, a key actor in conflict management in the DRC. It has played the roles of peacemaker, peacekeeper, peacebuilder and peace-enforcer. South Africa was first called on to mediate the conflict between Mobutu and Kabila in 1997, but no agreement could be reached because Kabila had in essence achieved a military victory. South Africa's attempt to "secure an orderly transition" was instead met with Kabila proceeding to ban opposition parties and to rule by decree (Swart and Solomon 2004). However, by the time Kabila signed the *Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement* (July 1999), he was already faced with an imminent threat of military defeat. In December 1999, the OAU appointed former President Masire, of Botswana, to facilitate the dialogue, but his work, as previously mentioned, could only begin in 2001. This then, too, is when South Africa re-entered mediation processes in the DRC (Miti 2012). With President Mbeki's supervision and stewardship talks took place in South Africa from February 2002 to April 2002 (Sun City 1) that led to a signing of an agreement between the DRC government and with Ugandan backed rebels, but not with those backed by Rwanda, leading to a stalemate (Khadiagala 2007). South Africa, who had made a heavy financial investment in the hosting of these talks, then stepped up and engaged in shuttle diplomacy to get

the talks back on track. With UN support, Masire received additional mediation assistance from Moustafa Niasse (former Senegalese President) and Haile Menkerios (Eritrean Ambassador to the UN) and South Africa played more central roles in the negotiation process (Khadiagala 2007). Sun City 2 talks took place from October 2002 to December 2002 leading to the *Global and All Inclusive Peace Accord* that was signed into effect in 2003. Though South Africa was not appointed as the official mediator, its role in providing the resources for the negotiations to take place and in assisting in getting the parties to sign an agreement and to remain bound by it was crucial.

In what has been a rare phenomenon, civil society was allowed to participate in the negotiations and to be a signatory to the Accord. Women's representation, however, was questionable. Congolese women, drawing on the international gender related instruments, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform of Action and *UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, had from 1998 actively campaigned to be part of peace processes. In February 2002 they developed the *Nairobi Declaration* calling for women and gender related issues to be included in the peace process and for a 30 per cent quota for women in any new political dispensation (Mpoumou 2004). Women had been excluded from the Lusaka talks and only 40 of the 340 delegates (11 per cent) at Sun City 1 negotiations were women, and similarly only 10 of the delegates at Sun City 2 were women (Mpoumou 2004). UNIFEM had sponsored another 40 women to act as independent 'experts' at Sun City 1 and the ANC Women's League and South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) played a key role in exchanging their experiences with women from the DRC, as they had done in Burundi, and in providing them with logistical support and in assisting them to get their concerns read at the dialogue.

The Agreement reached did not specify affirmative action or a quota for women's representation and only made vague reference to the need to "ensure women's involvement in economic, social and cultural decision-making and their representation in local, regional and national institutions" (Mpoumou 2004: 122). The result has been a 'lost opportunity' for women's political representation and a continued struggle to increase women's participation and to address their issues, particularly that of gender based violence and basic human rights. To date, women have only succeeded in gaining nine per cent of parliamentary seats. The South African representatives engaged in peace-

making and peacebuilding in the DRC, clearly failed the women of the DRC, both at the level of ensuring their representation in the negotiations and in the institutions that were to be formed to govern their lives. Here they did not draw on their own experiences for promoting women's representation. It consequently also neglected to provide meaningful continued support (either by government or NGOs) to the women's organisations in the post-conflict phase: there has consequently been no peace for women in the aftermath of this conflict (Meintjies *et al* 2002). What South Africa was intent on was getting all the 'warring parties' to sign an agreement that set out a transitional power sharing arrangement that could take the DRC towards an election. The *Global All Inclusive Agreement*, Rogier states "reflected a deal between the principle warlords as to how they would share power at the government level during the 24 month transition period, at the end of which elections should be held" (Rogier 2009: 35). Here, too, then we see South Africa strengthening what was fast becoming an international practice of small rebel groups attaining access to national political power or integration into military establishments through terrorising peasants in far-flung rural areas. It remains quintessentially the 'politics of the belly'<sup>3)</sup> rather than any ideologically driven social movements accessing power to bring about social change: hence the fractious nature of the post-conflict political environment.

The agreement sought to deal with rebel armies, who had perpetrated horrendous acts of violence, by integrating them into the national defence force through Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) programs. Here the emphasis was decidedly on stabilisation without thinking through the consequences of having a national army made up of antagonistic parties and previous plunderers. The result has been a continuous circulation of rebel turned soldier, turned rebel and the continued pillaging, by the security sector, of the people they are meant to serve. Although the DRC was able to have elections in 2006 and 2011, post the signing of the *Global All Inclusive Peace Initiative*, it has never enjoyed human security.

Autesserre points out that:

There were more people internally displaced in 2010 than at the end of 2006. Armed groups, including the Congolese army, relentlessly commit horrific violations of human rights. The Congo has dropped



twenty places (from 167 to 187) in the Index of Human Development, officially becoming the least developed country on earth. Overall, current conditions for the populations of the eastern Congo remain among the worst in Africa (Autesserre 2012: 203).

Clearly the peace agreements were not sufficient to create sustainable peace. They needed other peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions for this. But these peace agreements, too, had their own limitations. For example, the *Cease-fire Agreement* and the *All Inclusive Agreement* did not deal with issues related to citizenship and land — to the factors that were key conflict causes at local level. They failed to advocate for local dialogues that would resolve conflict issues at the levels at which they were being generated. They also initially failed to adequately deal with the regional fears, needs (access to resources), and incursions and to estimate what it would take to restore governance and security beyond that afforded to previous warlords, especially in the East — "local, national and regional dimensions of violence remained interlinked" (Autesserre 2009).

South Africa, much like other donors, was therefore equally guilty of simply acting at the national and regional level and ignoring local level conflicts, of preferring incumbent governments and of legitimating the illegitimate for the sake of a largely negative peace — this has contributed to the continued instability in the DRC.

South Africa, since 1999, has long been involved in peacekeeping in the DRC. It deployed as part of the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC — renamed MONUSCO in 2010 with new mandate to protect civilians) — deploying approximately 1 300 peacekeepers, with a large number of these being women. However, it is South Africa's role, since March 2013, alongside that of Tanzania and Malawi, as part of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) that is setting it apart from other troop contributors in this country. This Brigade is tasked with "neutralising armed forces" and has been relatively successful at disarming the M23. This brought some hope that through these peace-enforcement methods the problem of rebel forces could be dealt with swiftly. However, rebel groups like the FDLR have been operating in the area for a very long time and are likely to put up much more resistance than the M23, including attacking the local population. Moreover, this military solution to political and economic issues will not be able to guarantee peace.

What happens when the FIB leaves, will the DRC's National Defence Force be able to maintain control? There is fear among the local population that these new methods may work well in the short run, but will be far more damaging in the long term. It is certainly not an innovative response to the complex security, political and economic issues that has plagued this country. South Africa must put much more of its efforts into creative peacebuilding solutions.

Though South Africa is a big advocate of peacebuilding, it has done surprisingly little in this regard in the DRC. Its efforts at peace-making and peacekeeping are not substantively followed through in terms of peacebuilding. A study on South Africa's peacebuilding efforts in the DRC, conducted by Hendricks and Lucey (2013a), revealed that South Africa had signed approximately 32 Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the DRC government through their bi-national commission, but not much had been done to deliver on these MOU's. Its peacebuilding work has concentrated on security sector reform, capacity building and economic development. It has engaged in activities such as the development of a Master Plan for the reform of the armed forces; training of the army and police, immigration officials, diplomats and notably of civil society to engage in SSR (through a few workshops conducted by an NGO, the Institute for Democracy in Africa — IDASA); assisting with the collation of census data; printing election material and assisting with the logistics of getting ballot papers to voting stations; refurbishments of government buildings and rehabilitation of ports, business ventures in retail and mining and so forth (Hendricks and Lucey 2013a). These varied engagements by South Africa show no signs of an overarching strategy on its part in relation to peacebuilding — it claims to be demand driven, but ends up being *ad hoc* and piecemeal (Hendricks and Lucey 2013a). South Africa has concentrated on state-building, rather than peacebuilding and consequently neglects working on issues of national cohesion, truth and justice and strengthening civil society organisations. Laurie Nathan (2009) has noted that "deep rooted conflict cannot be solved quickly or easily". South Africa must therefore put in the necessary time and resources if it is to develop alternative more sustainable conflict management approaches on the continent.

## **5. Conclusion**

This overview of South Africa's engagement in conflict management has shown that in theory its approach is located within the human security paradigm and that this does filter into the peace agreements it brokers. In practice the implementation has been centred on warlord pacts and state-building, largely ignoring local level concerns, conflicts and Track Two and Three peacemakers and peacebuilders. The end result has been continued conflict, militarisation, authoritarianism, increased poverty, in short, human insecurity! Similarly to Burundi, the DRC's peace process has delivered far less than it had promised. It simply reconfigured access to the spoils of the state and rebuilt state structures and political parties that had previously been the very source of insecurity.

South Africa had a rather naïve and romanticised view of how politics was performed, that is, that state institutions and legal frameworks will do what they are envisaged to do, rather than be facades and/or empty shells for politics and decision-making that is still largely confined to state house and army headquarters. Without fundamental (not the cosmetic ones to date) changes to state society relations in these countries peace will always be fragile. It has not succeeded in creating safer self-sufficient societies or in substantively advancing human dignity, equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, democracy and respect for the rule of law — those laudable principles that are supposed to drive its engagement on the continent.

South Africa has to broaden its conception of local ownership of peace processes so that it is able to take on board the views and interests of all citizens in the policies and programmes being designed to change their lives. It must be seen to be doing things differently — to be truly concerned with the people of a country and not only with their governments. It can and should draw on the extensive expertise located in its civil society to create more diverse and sustainable networks and relationships that can foster exchange of experience at local levels. Two NGO organisations of note, ACCORD and Gift of the Givers are doing sterling work in terms of local level and humanitarian interventions, whilst others are primarily engaged in research and once-off capacity building activities. This work needs to be scaled up because South Africa's innovation and difference is likely to emanate from these interventions rather than those at the state-to-state level. The envis-

aged SADPA should think through how these cooperative efforts between non governmental institutions and government departments can be better coordinated and facilitated. At present they remain *ad hoc*.

## Endnotes

1. The Revised White Paper has not yet been adopted by Parliament. This was cited in "Presentation on the Revised White Paper on Peace Missions" made by the Department of International Relations to the Parliamentary sub-committee on 12 February 2014.
2. To draw on a well-known quote by Albert Einstein — "we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created it".
3. A Cameroonian expression made famous by Jean Paul Bayart.

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