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The Strategic Review for Southern Africa is an accredited on-access journal listed in the IBSS index. It has since 1978 been a platform for strategic and political analyses of themes and socio-political developments that impact on or provide lessons for Southern Africa. As a multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary journal, the Strategic Review facilitates vigorous and enlightened debate among scholars, policy makers, practitioners, students and activists in order to contribute to the wider global discourse on changing strategic and political dynamics within and beyond nation states.

The journal publishes two regular issues a year (May/June and November/ December) with a possibility of one additional guest special issue per year as need justifies, subject to editorial group approval. Issues are available mainly as an open access online platform licensed under creative commons. Printed copies can be ordered. All submissions are subject to double-blind peer review by at least two appropriately qualified reviewers.

The Strategic Review invites submissions sent electronically to:
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conforming to author's guide.

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Editorial

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The Russian war against the Ukraine has added to the many challenges already facing the African continent. African countries have, for instance, had to deal with geostrategic (re-) positioning in times of new multilateral shifts and realignments. Some of these consequences were the thematic reference point of our issue no. 1/22 while issue no. 2/22 specifically focused on the evolving Indo-Pacific as another trans-continental dynamic. This issue continues in this vein and offers a special focus on African security and the situation in the (Eastern) DRC. It illustrates our intention, to recognise significant trends and developments on the continent and especially their relevance for the Southern African region.

Understanding the *AU Kampala Convention,* formally known as the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, as a contribution to geopolitical security is the subject of the article by *Seun Bamidele and Innocent Pikirayi*. It stresses the need for enhanced national and regional collaboration to fully implement the treaty framework in favour of more geopolitical security. The dynamics unfolding in the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* are at the centre of the following three articles: *George Abel Mhango and Angelita Kithatu-Kiwekete* take stock of the *Force Intervention Brigade* as a new form of peacekeeping/peace enforcement created by the UN as part of MONUSCO and its mission to stabilise the precarious balance of powers in the Eastern DRC. As they conclude, the mixed results of the hybrid operations "moderates the kind of impact that could be expected from such a robust brigade, thereby leaving the United Nations, African Union, and sub-regional organizations with serious issues to ponder in relation to the future of peacekeeping on the continent." *Kristof Titeca* explores the constellation following the Russian intervention in the Ukraine regarding *The Struggle for Influence in the DRC.* As he argues, the "neo-Cold War" provides new manoeuvring space and opportunities for political leverage vis-à-vis the Western governments which is fuelled more by anti-Western sentiments than direct Russian pressure. While playing the "Russian card" seems, for the time being at least, to be off the table, it remains an ace up the sleeve. This directly relates to the role the DRC's neighbours in the Great Lakes region, specifically to the

East of it, can play and *Cori Wielenga, Samuel Igba and Patrick Hajayandi* assess *Why Burundi intervenes in the DRC.* As they suggest, beyond the country's own interests a motivating factor to be considered is also "the context of Pan-Africanist considerations, including that of African integration, African self-reliance and agency, and African ownership of and control over its own resources."

The focus of this issue is complemented by a *debate article by Abiodun Adiat* on the challenges to decolonise *Knowledge Production and Power Relations in African Studies.* As he maintains, this is unfinished business with many African scholars at universities in Africa not yet applying a postcolonial lens. As the section title suggests, we invite others to enter the debate with contributions on the subject. Finally, *Masilo Lepuru* critically engages in a review essay with a widely acknowledged recent book on *post-Apartheid South Africa.* Eleven years after Marikana, the biggest massacre since Sharpeville, we also invite others to participate in a debate on the subject.

With the coup in Niger and its far-reaching implications not only for the Sahel region, the BRICS Summit in South Africa, and the elections in Zimbabwe, as well as the build-up for elections in South Africa and Namibia next year, a *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* (nomen est omen) faces no fear or risk of running out of relevant subject matter to contemplate. Our next issue (no. 2/23) will, therefore, include some analyses of the post-election situation in Zimbabwe. But we welcome other submissions that engage with relevant subjects. Since this is the grist of intellectual efforts, we would also like to encourage more contributions that interpolate today's socio-political, -economic, and -cultural realities for the debate section.

THE KAMPALA CONVENTION AND CHALLENGES TO GEOPOLITICAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The AU Kampala Convention aims to ensure that the states that have signed the treaty protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their regions to establish geopolitical security, which is threatened by the inevitability, volume, and heterogeneity of forced displacement. This article interrogates the link between the Kampala Convention and the minimisation of interstate conflict through a political will to tackle the challenge of forced displacement amongst member states, the cooperation and integration of which would contribute to geopolitical security. Thus, using secondary data, the author determines how addressing large-scale forced displacement in the region can improve geopolitical security. Thus, based on an extensive review of relevant IDP issues in Africa, attention is paid to displacement trends on the continent, factors precipitating displacement and the flow of IDPs across the region, a current analysis of the AU Kampala Convention framework, the challenges to African geopolitical security, and responsibility sharing amongst African states. The authors concludes that there should be synergy between host and displaced communities for integration and the provision of opportunities for IDPs to regain their livelihoods. Therefore, African states need to adapt and implement, as a matter of urgency, national, regional, and international policies to solve the challenges of internal displacement in Africa and

ensure geopolitical security.

Keywords: internally displaced persons, Africa, conflict, governance, African Union

1. Introduction

The AU Kampala Convention was formulated to ensure that African nations protect and assist their internally displaced persons (IDPs). Moreover, by signing the treaty the member states are encouraged to cooperate and integrate into solving an issue, thereby contributing to geopolitical security by minimising the risk of interstate conflict and enhancing each nation's territorial security.

In this exploration of the link between the Kampala convention and the challenges to geopolitical security in Africa, the article explores the forced internal displacement trends in Africa; the AU Kampala Convention framework for protecting and aiding IDPs; the effect of displacement on African geopolitical security; and displacement and responsibility sharing in Africa.

Despite the AU's treaty to manage displacement—the Kampala Convention Policy Framework for Africa (KCPFA)—the continent is still being affected by various streams of population distribution and redistribution arising from the aforementioned factors. Therefore, the question is not only what the peculiarities associated with the drivers of displacement in the African region are, but also what the efforts of national governments to address them entail. Other questions are:

- How well-equipped is the AU's KCPFA to address and regulate displacement in the region?
- Through what innovative ways can African countries demonstrate regional and sub-regional solidarity and responsibility sharing in response to protracted situations of displacement?
- Are there legal instruments or mechanisms to hold African states accountable for their failure to deliver according to the displacement governance framework?

This article attempts to answer these questions.

2. Forced internal displacement trends and patterns in Africa

Existing studies on IDPs in Africa paint a picture of frustrated and desperate people in overcrowded tents and camps in many communities in several countries. This situation has been exacerbated by the continued rise in the number of IDP people during the last two decades (UNHCR, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021). Suffice it to say that the variety of drivers of displacement and the range of destinations have also expanded. In addition, the sub-Saharan African region hosts the world's largest population and concentration of IDPs (Adepoju, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021; Orendain & Djalante, 2021). This reality has placed IDPs at the forefront of development and humanitarian discussions, especially in Africa where large numbers of people have been displaced internally and across national borders through conflict, violence, and natural disasters. However, over the years, deteriorating political, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions have also become drivers of displacement in Africa (Owain & Maslin, 2018; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

As the year 2020 ended, 40.5 million people were forcibly internally displaced across 149 countries globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021). Disasters triggered more than 30.7 million newly registered displacements, which comprise 75% of the total number; the remainder, around 9.8 million, were displaced by conflict and violence (IDMC-GRID, 2021). Forced displacement is a global phenomenon, which affects host communities and countries mostly negatively. Furthermore, forced displacement according to the World Bank (2021), is not only a humanitarian concern but also a development challenge.

The term "forced displacement" is appropriate in the context of this article because IDPs are mostly displaced due to persecution, conflict, generalised violence, and human rights violations (D'Orsi, 2012; UNHCR, 2015; Adeola, 2021). In other words, forced displacement refers to the involuntary, coerced movement of people away from their homes and home regions.

Although forced displacement policy is determined by many host communities or countries, displacement governance at the national and regional levels in response to tackling the continental issue of IDPs is not always effective (Global Protection Cluster, 2010; Abebe, 2010; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). Thus, the majority of IDPs who are hosted in communities in African countries often find themselves in poorer areas, which themselves may also be vulnerable. Moreover, forced internal displacement is generally less costly and therefore more accessible to the relatively poor than intercontinental

displacement.

Africa is characterised by a long history of diverse forced displacement patterns across many states (Crisp, 2010; Kidane, 2011), and campsites are often not limited by national boundaries. Conflicts, violence, and disasters have a larger role in shaping postcolonial forced displacement in much of Africa compared with other drivers such as socio-economic conditions. Moreover, Africa's IDPs stretched from the Lake Chad Basin through the Great Lakes region to the Horn of Africa (Guistiniani, 2011; IDMC-GRID, 2021; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). The Horn of Africa (comprising Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan) which has been known for decades as a geographical space of internal dissidence and intrastate conflicts, offers an advantageous landscape for terrorist groups and networks to flourish (Mulat, 2020; Adeola, 2021). Repeated political conflicts and ethnoreligious insurgency have displaced thousands of people from the region.

In 2019, East Africa and the Horn of Africa region were home to 8.1 million IDPs. This figure later dropped to 6.3 million, representing a 22% decrease in just two years, compared to the Eastern, Southern, and Western African regions monitored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) respectively (IOM-News-Global, 2019; Cantor & Maple, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the decrease, large numbers of forcibly displaced people continue to pose a challenge in Africa. Moreover, a large increase of forcibly displaced people is recorded in sub-Saharan Africa, which reached a new high of 6.8 million from conflicts and violence, and 4.3 million from disasters in 2021. This increased sharply from 2019, representing 27.4% of forcibly displaced people globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Disaster-induced forced displacement took place in many African countries because of floods destroying thousands of buildings and homes, damaging roads and bridges, upsetting food and irrigation systems, and disrupting education and health services (IDMC-GRID, 2021; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). Moreover, in the ECOWAS region, more than 11.1 million people were internally displaced between 2018 and 2021 because of the violent Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, and herdsmen-farmers conflict. This was more than in any other region in Africa, outpacing the world's worst conflict zones (Adeola, 2021). In South Sudan, which has one of the youngest populations in the world, 271,000 people have been forcibly displaced because of conflict and violence.

The IDMC-GRID recognizes five countries as experiencing the most forcibly displaced individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC) with 2.2 million displaced people due to conflict and violence and 279, 000 due to disasters; Ethiopia with 1.7 million due to conflict and violence and 664,000 due to disasters; Somalia with 293,000 due to conflict and violence and one million due to disasters; South Sudan with 271,000 due to conflict and violence and 443,000 due to disasters; and Mozambique with 592,000 due to conflict and violence and 25,000 due to disasters. By the end of 2020, nearly 2.3 million people had been forcibly displaced in the DRC (IDMC-GRID, 2021). In addition, Somalia, a small country in East Africa, had over one million of its citizens living in IDP camps over 10 years (2011–2020) most of which camp residents were young men and women who had been forced to endure the unsatisfactory conditions of camp life (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Apart from forced displacement occasioned by conflicts, violence, and disaster, poor socioeconomic conditions such as low wages, high levels of unemployment, rural underdevelopment, poverty, and the lack of opportunity have also fuelled forced displacement in sub-Saharan Africa. However, nearly four in five displaced persons (79%) living in IDP camps in sub-Saharan Africa come from communities ravaged by conflicts and violence in different forms or environmental crises due to climate change. The majority of these come from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the DRC, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic (Cazabat, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021).

As far back as the 1980s and 1990s, countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, and even Namibia were already hosts of IDPs, with different camps located in different communities. Several million Mozambicans, fleeing a civil war that devastated their country, were hosted by virtually every available community in the country. Tanzania has also hosted successive waves of externally displaced persons who were refugees from countries such as Burundi, the DRC, Mozambique, and Rwanda with large numbers of camps in different locations. In the Great Lakes region, large numbers of displaced people from Uganda, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda have been accommodated in a highly complex pattern of camp life for two decades (Adeola, 2019; Cazabat, 2020).

Several decades after independence, Africa is still one of the main continents generating and hosting displaced persons in the world, with the highest numbers of IDPs (24.1million) in the world and 11.1 million forcibly displaced people in the sub-Saharan African region in 2020 alone (IDMC-GRID, 2021), has established thousands of IDP camps (Beyani, 2006; Wile´n & Williams, 2018). Thus, forced displacement has assumed unprecedented proportions, posing socio-politico-economic challenges

for policymakers wanting to address the situation. Moreover, long-term forced displacement has geopolitical consequences for a country (Wile´n & Williams, 2018).

3. The AU Kampala Convention framework for protecting and aiding IDPs

Over the years there have been national and regional responses to the growing challenges of forced displacement and IDPs. In addition, the management of forced displacement is systematically incorporated into the development agenda of various regional and national actors. Regionally forced displacement regimes, as an object of both academic enquiry and development discussions, have received increasing attention in the last two decades. The management of displaced persons is one of the most critical challenges for African states: it requires well-planned government policies that are implemented through cooperation with host communities and states (AU PAP, 2019; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

The legal basis for regional displacement protection varies, depending on the region and the circumstances. Nevertheless, in many countries in Africa forced displacement is an integral part of the agenda for tackling regional economic crises in the past decade. There are various displacement policy frameworks and regimes in the African region, which include policies developed by the AU and various sub-regional communities. The AU Kampala Convention, however, is a coordinated framework for dealing with forced displacement comprehensively.

Regional displacement governance can be defined as the norms and organisational structures that regulate and facilitate the responses of states and other actors to forced displacement. Its primary purpose is to ensure that member states work collectively in ways that would enable them to fulfil their objectives better than they would be acting alone (Cantor & Maple, 2021). The AU is one of the first continental organisations to develop a comprehensive instrument binding many African nations to agree to protect and assist IDPs (AU, 2009; 2019).

The current AU overarching approach to forced displacement is articulated in two policy documents: *the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (AU Kampala Convention)* (African Union, 2009), and *the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (UNHCR, 2004). The compilation of these policy documents was necessitated by increasing forced displacement within and from Africa, owing to deteriorating political,

socioeconomic, and environmental conditions on the continent (UNHCR, 1998). The Kampala framework recognises that forced displacement is one of the major concerns of the 21st century, and as articulated by the framework the AU's position on forced displacement is that well-managed displacement has the potential to yield significant benefits to host communities and states.

The 2009 initial AU Kampala Convention primarily addressed the emergency of sub-Saharan African forced displacement (AU, 2009; AU, 2017; AU, 2019). It adopted the regional approach to displacement proposed by the UNHCR Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which addresses all aspects of displacement and IDPs: the organisation of legal displacement, the fight against irregular displacement, and the relationship between displacement and development.

The thematic pillars of the AU Kampala Convention are: (1) improving protection management (2) combating irregular displacement, (3) organising mobility and legal travel, (4) promoting international protection, and (5) strengthening the link between displacement and development. The Convention explicitly exhorts member states to commit to a partnership between communities or countries of origin and host displaced people in a comprehensive, holistic, and balanced manner in a spirit of shared responsibility and cooperation (AU 2017; AU 2019).

To protect and assist IDPs, the AU adopted the Kampala Convention on 23 October 2009 as a normative framework. The Convention which was ratified in 2012 by 15 states (thereafter, other states signed and ratified the treaty), was the first continental instrument to bind governments to commit to the protection and assistance of people displaced by conflict, violence, and disasters (IDMC-GRID, 2021Adeola, 2019). Like the Convention, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) (2018–2030) provides comprehensive policy guidelines to AU member states (AU, 2019; Adeola, 2021). These frameworks address member states' regulation of the access of displaced persons to their communities and territories, and the treatment of these people.

The Kampala Convention aims to facilitate the protection and assistance of IDPs in Africa and thus tackle issues such as brain drain, brain waste, and the security risks attendant on forced displacement. It also aims to criminalise and prosecute those involved in arms and drug trafficking in Africa. Moreover, the AU Kampala Convention calls on member states to harmonise national legislation with the regional conventions to ensure assistance to and the protection of the rights of displaced persons, including rehabilitation in host communities, thereby fostering mutual cultural acceptance and respect (AU, 2009). Thus, regional institutions and displacement platforms are gradually

becoming acknowledged political players on the continent.

Several other regional initiatives are of relevance to the issue of displaced populations. The Kampala Convention was established with the support of all Western, Eastern, Northern, and Southern African member states. Moreover, regional communities such as the ECOWAS, the East African Community (EAC), and the SADC have pursued displacement policies, albeit with varied impetus and impact (Regasa & Lietaert, 2022). ECOWAS can be considered a forerunner in sub-Saharan Africa in the introduction of norms for the free movement of persons. However, it is the 2009 AU Kampala Convention that was the turning point in the management of forced displacements in sub-Saharan Africa with its adoption of a common approach to displacement for member states, which symbolised a willingness to start a dialogue of equals with host communities and states.

All the member states of the AU have by now signed and ratified the Kampala Convention, thereby indicating acceptance of its additional protocols. These protocols include the 2008 Great Lakes Protocol on Internally Displaced Persons; the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons; the Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity; the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children; the 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons; and the 2005 document titled "Addressing Internal Displacement: A framework for National Responsibility". There is also the AU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Displacement Problems in Africa (2009), which provides for specific measures for IDPs in the continent (AU 2019; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

Similarly, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the East African sub-region has established several initiatives to address forced displacement. It aims to maximise protection and save lives while working towards sustainability and increasing government ownership/capacity to respond to people's needs by reinforcing the displacement management abilities of domestic governments' (African Development Bank, 2018). The IGAD comprises Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, which cover one of the world's largest areas known for producing and hosting forcibly displaced people—up to 11.1 million (Cazabat, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021).

The countries that are signatories to all the above-mentioned protocols and agreements experience the common challenges of displaced populations either in

search of economic opportunities or refuge from civil strife, war, and disasters such as floods and drought. Moreover, the Kampala Conventions and their attendant protocols not only seek to enhance the protection/assistance of displaced persons in Africa but also their governance.

Despite these initiatives, there are still major limitations to their application to the displacement realities on the ground, and although progress has been made in protecting and assisting displaced persons in Africa, especially among host communities and states, an alarming gap remains between policy making and policy implementation. In addition, there is a dearth of national policies and strategic plans on diaspora engagement, with existing policies rarely harmonised within regional and continental frameworks. There should be a concrete mechanism for responsibility sharing whereby the duty of receiving, protecting, and assisting the displaced is assigned to host countries and any new responsibilities to the many countries with much greater capacity. Lastly, the AU should work with sub-regional institutions to address managing forced displacement and displaced people.

4. The effect of displacement on African geopolitical security

Large, spontaneous, and unregulated displacements can have a significant impact on national and regional stability and security. This hinders the ability of African states to exercise effective control within their territories and creates tension within host countries and local host communities (Abegaz, 2020). In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, porous host communities sharing the same border are prone to violent conflicts. Consequently, security has become an issue that requires the concerted efforts of all the states found in this region (Masresha, 2020; Gemeda, 2020).

The regional geopolitical significance of displacement has greatly increased in recent times, as Africa has continued to spawn larger numbers of displaced persons than at any other time in history (Cardona-Fox, 2019). Every nation in Africa currently faces the difficulties of balancing the increasing national and regional displacement of people and socio-economic development/rehabilitation aspirations (Orchard, 2019). As identified in the previous section, the root causes of displacement in West Africa and other countries like Rwanda, Mozambique, Somalia, and the DRC are conflicts: violence, religious and ethnic insurgency, climate change, natural and man-made disasters, and struggles for scarce resources (Dieng, 2017).

The growing imbalance between the levels of socioeconomic development on

the one hand, and political and social inclusion on the other, remains a key threat to stability. Thus, in addressing the challenge of displaced persons, a coordinated national and regional approach is needed, which would contribute to geopolitical security, and which is critical for Africa's future growth and development. Unmanaged displacement may pose geopolitical security threats because most displaced persons move to areas in close geographical proximity to those already experiencing conflicts, violence, disaster, or other drivers of forced displacement (Terminski, 2013; Sackey, 2020). Moreover, displacement caused by conflicts and violence has destabilising effects on national and regional security, with adverse consequences for the ability of host communities to protect displaced persons and the security of their nationals (Yigzaw & Abitew, 2019).

The impact of large influxes of displaced persons in neighbouring host communities in Africa can be both negative and positive, and the dynamic between positive and negative factors is complex and varied, depending on the context. It is generally recognised that humanitarian, political, security, and development challenges during the time of displacement and the period after durable solutions have been identified, either in the home community, neighbouring host communities, or elsewhere (Wanninayake, 2019).

A noticeable negative aspect of displacement is that when displaced persons arrive in large numbers in poor host communities, they place an enormous strain on public services, infrastructure, and the public purse. There is, thus, always a persistent climate of suspicion and tension, resulting in intimidation, extortion, and harassment of the displaced persons by the host communities (Brauch, 2011; Chakroborty & Narayan, 2014). The displaced people are thus confronted with material hardship, psychosocial stress, and gender-based violence, amongst other sources of suffering. Crisp, (2012) observes the following:

> [T]hese conditions lead them to engage in negative coping mechanisms and survival strategies, such as prostitution, exploitative labour, illegal farming, manipulation of assistance programmes, sundry crimes and substance abuse. (page)

Protracted displacement can thus result in direct security concerns including the presence of armed elements within the displaced population, and the spillover of violent conflict across host communities. In the same vein, there are indirect security concerns, as tensions rise between local populations and displaced persons over the allocation of scarce resources (Hafner, Tagliapietra & Strasser, 2018). While today's

displaced persons are mostly victims of internal conflict and violence, for some host communities displacement has become a survival strategy of exploitation (Hampton, 2014) which also leads to feelings of insecurity in the host community. Thus, in much of the continent, geopolitical stability is directly and indirectly affected by violence and conflict, poverty and social inequities, political and economic restructuring, human rights abuses, population pressure, disasters, and environmental degradation. According to the IDMC-GRID, the DRC, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Mozambique experience this insecurity the most (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

The roots of insecurity in Africa's displaced persons' camps and settlement areas are varied and numerous. For example, internal security is threatened because many displaced persons come from situations of civil war and take their weapons with them. These are then used by some for crimes like armed robbery and poaching (Crisp, 2012). Moreover, displaced persons' camps located within and outside the boundary of the country of origin can provide sanctuary to rebel organisations, a base from which to carry out operations and fertile grounds for recruitment (Falobi, 2014).

Limited resources, weak public institutions, and long land borders severely impede the control of displacement in many African host communities and countries, resulting in large numbers of undocumented displaced persons (Ladan, 2013). Moreover, even the official figures from the IDMC-GRID on displacement in Africa are alarming and indicate that the continent is at the top of the list of the world's top ten countries with forcibly displaced people (IDMC-GRID, 2021). According to the IDMC-GRID (2021), an unprecedented 40.5 million people around the world have been displaced from their homes, of whom 30.5 million are under the age of 24. There are also an estimated five million stateless people who have been denied nationality and access to basic rights such as livelihood, health care, housing, education, and security. In addition, over 27.4% of the world's displaced persons come from sub-Saharan Africa, which makes it the second largest region in the world after East Asia experiencing this challenge (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Internal conflict and insecurity in Somalia, South Sudan, the DRC, Rwanda, and Mozambique have caused millions to flee their home areas, thereby causing the displaced population in Africa to increase by 2.1 million in 2021. Therefore, the sub-Saharan African region hosted the largest displaced population in the world with 6.7 million (69.4%) (IDMC-GRID, 2021). In addition, by 2021, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda hosted the largest number of displaced persons globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Although most of Africa's displaced persons do not directly engage in conflicts and violence, this should not lead scholars to neglect the possible security consequences that often follow the flows of displaced persons. It should be noted that protracted displacements, as can be seen in some African countries, are the result of political actions, both in the home and in the host communities. In addition, displaced persons from home communities can increase the risk of subsequent conflict in host communities, although this is neither a natural nor an inevitable consequence of involuntary population displacement (Olagunju, 2006).

Displaced persons' camp management systems in conflict-prone African countries are under increasing pressure because of the large, constant displacement of persons. Moreover, building the capacity to distinguish between persons with legitimate reasons for entering and staying at the camps and those who do not and therefore pose a security threat, is a challenge to camp management mechanisms and personnel (Omole, 2012). Furthermore, the lines of violent conflict frequently run across state boundaries, owing to the various ethnic and cultural ties between affected communities as most vividly seen in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. Therefore, the issue of camp and host-community security needs the implementation of the principles of the Kampala Convention whereby collaboration between member states could provide solutions. In addition, the threat faced by humanitarian actors attempting to protect and help vulnerable persons is another indicator of the security issue, which needs a solution.

5. Displacement crisis and responsibility sharing

The Kampala Convention's call for collaboration between member states in addressing the displacement crisis reflects the justice in sharing responsibility for regional issues (Lomo, 2000). Thus, in protecting and assisting displaced persons in African host communities, member states could also address security concerns in displacement camps stemming from violent regional insurgency (UNHCR, 2019). Moreover, past experiences show that regional bodies can play an effective role in establishing harmonised systems and policies as well as collaboration mechanisms to address displacement challenges and can address the gap between regional policies and implementation (Omole, 2012).

Security and protecting/assisting displaced people are thus not mutually exclusive. What is needed is an integrated response to the displacement crisis to enable host communities to identify persons entering their territory and thus not only respond to protection and assistance needs but also security concerns in line with the Kampala

Convention (Sullivan & Stevens, 2017). The Kampala Convention imposes a range of obligations on its member states, most importantly the principle of non-refoulment, which prohibits them from returning displaced persons to a situation of risk (AU 2009) and implies ensuring security where they are hosted.

Responsibility sharing includes the equal bearing of costs associated with protecting and assisting displaced persons (Okon, 2018) by national governments, regional bodies, displacement organisations and international agencies, which should also ensure their integration, return, and rehabilitation in African states. Thus, in responding collectively with a financial and political commitment to large-scale movements of displaced persons on the continent, solutions to the displacement crisis across Africa can be found. Moreover, as indicated by constant development-oriented displacement programme failure without national and regional cooperation and commitment to protecting and helping IDPs, is the crux of the protracted displacement in the region and resultant geopolitical insecurity. As Robinson (2003) explains, protecting and assisting displaced persons is not only a legal obligation but also a moral responsibility.

On many occasions, particularly at moments of acute displacement crisis in Africa, compliance with regional displacement policy has proven to be costly for national governments, making their response reactive rather than proactive. Moreover, the leaders of these governments argue that the responsibility to host displaced people is disproportionate to their resources (Crisp, 2012; Mikulak, 2018). Thus, while low- and middle-income countries host most of the displaced people, protection and assistance are ultimately paid for by the governments of high-income countries, and only a few countries make financial commitments. For responsibility sharing to be meaningful, Mikulak (2018) contends that states must commit to contributions they can deliver with the backing of relevant institutions in fulfilling their commitments.

Sharing of responsibility includes ensuring the voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration of displaced persons equally (Mikulak, 2018; Adeola, 2019) by providing safe, legal pathways for them to reach the host state or community and restart their lives (Maduka, 2012; Mikulak, 2018). Therefore, states bordering conflict and crisis zones should not be left to be the only ones taking responsibility for the displaced as has been the case in Uganda, the DRC, South Sudan, and Mozambique. Moreover, collective action requires a range of complementary analytical, political, legal, and operational mechanisms rather than a centralised allocation of responsibility (Mikulak, 2018; Cantor & Maple, 2021).

Although shared responsibility for protecting and assisting displaced persons,

finding and promoting predictable, comprehensive, long-term, and durable solutions to the problem—as indicated by the AU Kampala Convention, which provides a framework for cooperation—it appears that the needed regional approaches for joint camp management and information gathering and sharing are not deeply rooted in practice. However, the DRC, Uganda, South Sudan, and Mozambique along with some other African countries are leading the way with progressive policies embracing approaches that enable displaced persons to become self-reliant and support host communities (Cantor & Maple, 2021; Mikulak, 2018).

6. African governments and the management of displacement, insecurity, poverty, exploitation, and conflict

According to United Nations 2019 statistics, 25 million Africans have been forcibly displaced due to catastrophic events like conflicts and natural disasters, amongst other calamities.[1] These call for action because many people end up being displaced for a long time before they eventually resettle in their homelands. Therefore, governments must find a way to salvage the situation. Moreover, the provision of necessities, such as food, clothing, and hygiene products is not sustainable in the long term. Thus, the African government need to embrace models that will provide long-term solutions not only to poverty but also insecurity and displacement itself.

A cue can be taken from the Government of Uganda, which manages displacement by creating opportunities to enhance refugee integration and moving past the mere provision of basic needs to offer refugees freedom of mobility and access to education and employment. In addition, over time, displaced people are eligible to access plots of land (Katende, 2019), which has reintegrated and empowered them with sources of income, thereby combating poverty and making refugees productive. Furthermore, adopting these strategies increases safety in IDP camps and the country in general. The Tanzanian government has also moved beyond protecting and assisting refugees by giving them the chance to become naturalised citizens if they opt not to return to their country of origin.

African governments should strengthen the frameworks and mechanisms in place by learning from previous shortcomings and addressing present challenges and loopholes in line with the landmark Kampala Convention (Diop, 2020). However, only

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1   https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/05/how-address-africas-staggering-displacement-crisis

33 African Union member countries have ratified the convention since its formation over a decade ago (AU, 2022) because some states are not yet willing or capable to take up the responsibilities attached to managing the problem of displacement (Guistinian, 2011). Therefore, African governments are called to adopt and implement the Convention, which is linked to the international legal obligation to protect and assist displaced people and contribute to geopolitical security in host communities with limited spaces, amenities, and resources that might be marginalised because they are in rural areas. Moreover, more local governments need to assist in settling and integrating IFPs and refugees (Diop, 2020) to increase tolerance and cooperation between the host and displaced communities. More government funding should therefore be directed towards supporting host communities in fulfilling the mandate of the Kampala Convention.

There is a need to strengthen government institutions in tackling the crisis that arises from displacement. In addition, it is necessary to ensure the adaptation and implementation of national, regional, and international policies in line with the Kampala Convention and provide guidance to states that are not in a position to formulate policies on displacement due to a lack of capacity for implementation, internal conflicts within decision-making bodies, or conflict between the host and displaced community.[2] In the same vein, regional integration is vital and should be encouraged, because when neighbouring countries have good relations despite internal conflicts, there will be peaceful coexistence, and security in the event of forced displacement will be ensured.

7. Conclusion

This article focused on how the Kampala Convention indicates how collaboration between national and regional actors can effectively tackle the displacement crisis in Africa and ensure geopolitical security by sharing the responsibility for adopting and implementing the framework provided by the treaty. Thus, governments and societies might demonstrate a shift in mentality whereby people from other cultures are accepted through a cooperative and collaborative approach to increasing, large-scale, internal displacement.

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2   https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2022/03/24/displacement-diplomacy-five-ways-to-im-prove-policy-and-practice-on-internal-displacement-in-africa/

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Peace Enforcement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Reflections on the Force Intervention Brigade

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Abstract

In the past two decades, the world has witnessed a speedy evolution of peacekeeping mandates. In Africa, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has become the biggest testing ground where United Nations missions have transformed from traditional peacekeeping to a novel complex of peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The crescendo of this evolution is exemplified by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2098 that authorized, within MONUSCO, a Force Intervention Brigade to neutralize all armed groups working contrary to the objectives of peace and stability in the eastern part of the country. This paper assesses the Force Intervention Brigade in order to determine whether its operations have matched the expectations set by its proponents. It argues that contrary to the promise, FIB operations have been impeded by political and strategic factors which have far-reaching implications on the form and structure of future peace operations on the African continent.

Keywords: peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace operations, MONUSCO, force intervention brigade, UN Security Council, Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. Introduction

State formation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been circumscribed by peace operations of one form or another right from independence in 1960. Indeed, the country's journey to statehood has been stymied by state inadequacies and the persistence of conflict especially in its eastern parts comprising North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri regions. The DRC has played host to three UN peacekeeping missions at different stages of the country's state building trajectory. The first mission, the United Nations Operations in Congo (ONUC), was in response to the first Congolese war in 1960 and the mission lasted five years. The second mission was the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) which was deployed in 1999 to monitor the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement following the second Congolese war of the 1990s. MONUC operated for a decade and was in turn transformed into the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2010. A common thread in the experiences of the missions has been the inability of the UN to act decisively to protect civilians and its own personnel.

In March 2013, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment, within MONUSCO, of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to neutralise all negative forces in eastern DRC (UN Security Council 2013a). The authorization of FIB activities as part of the MONUSCO mission has been met with mixed reactions from scholars and analysts who consider the development as a path-breaking dynamic in contemporary UN peace operations. The concerns about the brigade have been both legal and strategic. From the legal dimension, concerns revolving around the blurring of the distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement have created the basis for reflections on the meaning of traditional peacekeeping principles of neutrality and impartiality. While the legal implications of the FIB operations have been widely discussed by some scholars (Muller 2015; Whittle 2015), others have challenged the conventional analysis of the FIB that focuses more on strategic challenges of the mission, in favour of more novel frameworks of analysis. This is evident in the work of Piiparinen (2016) who argues that the FIB can be understood as a sovereignty-building entity that improves the image of the DRC government both domestically and among its regional peers. Yet others have hailed the FIB as an entrenchment of rapid reaction capacity in peace operations that can provide a template for the consolidation of efforts to institutionalize the logic of proactive crisis management on the African continent (Murithi 2016; Mutisi 2015; Saunders 2013).

This paper aims at assessing the FIB in order to determine whether its operations have matched the expectations set by its protagonists. The point of departure in this paper is that earlier attempts to assess the FIB have underestimated the political context in which the mission subsists. Despite having a broader mandate which provides for both unilateral and joint operations with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in the fight against rebels, the FIB can only go as far as the DRC government permits. Consequently, the experiences of the FIB clearly indicate a path towards frustration and resignation as the DRC government seems lukewarm to the idea of stepping up joint operations against rebels. Hence, we argue that the ambition of robust operations inherent in Resolution 2098 that authorized the FIB operations has not matched reality as the operational context reveals complex political hurdles facing the MONUSCO in its engagement with the DRC government. The challenges revealed in the operationalization of the mission have serious ramifications on the logic of hybrid peace enforcement operations which is currently gaining ground within the African Union.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section sets the context and the rationale of the study. The next section discusses the evolution of Chapter VII mandates for UN missions in the eastern DRC in order to understand how 'enforcement actions' have gradually paved way for an 'enforcement mission' in the shape of the FIB. This is followed by a discussion on the institutionalization of peace enforcement in MONUSCO with particular focus on the context and process that birthed the FIB. Thereafter, we offer an assessment of the FIB by highlighting its promise and limitations. In the final section, we reflect on the implications of the FIB on future peace operations on the African continent.

2. Evolution of chapter VII mandates for UN missions in the eastern DRC

A closer look at the peacekeeping landscape in the eastern DRC reveals a gravitation of mandates over time from traditional peacekeeping towards more robust peacekeeping which includes active use of force. From ONUC through MONUC to MONUSCO, one can notice that the UN has been treating certain cases in the missions as meriting a Chapter VII response albeit with cautious phrasing such as *using all necessary means*. Nevertheless, to understand the 'robust turn' in UN peace operations in depth, the groundbreaking recommendations from the Report of the Panel on United Nations

Peace Operations (also referred to as the Brahimi Report) serve as a critical benchmark. The report emphasised that the need to enhance "political support, rapid deployment with a robust force posture and a sound peace strategy" in a bid to avoid mistakes that led to Somalia, Rwanda, and Srebrenica in the 1990s (UN General Assembly 2000, 4). In fact, it argued that this recommendation was made with the DRCmission (then MONUC) in mind (UN General Assembly 2000, para 4). Consequently, this paved way for the UN to begin authorizing 'enforcement actions' in successive Security Council resolutions.

To appreciate the progression of robust peacekeeping mandates in the DRC, one has to begin by noting the limitations inherent in MONUC, a mission that was tasked with monitoring the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (an observer mission). However, the escalation of violent conflict in the Kivus and Ituri regions in 2000 prompted the UN, through Security Council Resolution 1291, to qualify the situation in the DRC as a threat to peace and security, consequently authorizing MONUC to use force to protect UN officials. Again, in May 2003, the Security Council passed Resolution 1484 that authorized a robust international response, a French-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF), to stop massacres in Bunia in the northeastern Ituri district (UN Security Council 2003a). Similarly, Security Council Resolution 1493 was aimed at the protection of civilians, humanitarian, and UN personnel "if the circumstances warrant it" (UN Security Council 2003b). This paved the way for the deployment of a larger and more robust, fully equipped brigade in Ituri. In fact, Resolution 1493 was the UN's first attempt (albeit with less clarity) to authorize actions aimed at protecting civilians in the DRC.

Another significant change in posture by the UN came with the adoption of recommendations from the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004 which, inter alia, attempted to clarify peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The report emphasized the need to distinguish between "operations in which the robust use of force is integral to the mission from the outset" from "operations in which there is a reasonable expectation that force may not be needed at all" (UN General Assembly 2004, 211 and 214). And while acknowledging the need to adopt robust approaches that accord UN missions a Chapter VII mandate to use force not only in self-defence but also for the protection of civilians (PoC), the report further stressed the need for mandates that would take into consideration changing circumstances on the ground (UN General Assembly 2004).

The impact of the High-level Panel's report was immediately felt when in October

2004 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1565 that expanded MONUC's mandate to include the monitoring of the 2006 elections and dealing with threats posed by particular groups, but this time without applying the conditional clause 'if the circumstances warrant it' (UN Security Council 2004, para 6). It can be argued that starting from the Security Council Resolution 1565 onwards, the posture of peacekeeping began to gravitate towards a more systematic and multi-dimensional peace enforcement and, at times, including both peace enforcement and peacebuilding.

However, despite these reforms, MONUC's capacity to protect civilians was seriously limited due to the restrictive definition of the mission's overall mandate which leaned more towards politico-military reforms. This was evidenced by the eruption of more crises in June 2004 when rebels loyal to Laurent Nkunda overran Bukavu in South Kivu in full view of 1,000 MONUC troops who were fully armed. The troops only protected their premises and about 4,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) that sought refuge in their compound (Boutellis 2013). In response, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1649 which mandated MONUC to "use all necessary means within its capabilities" particularly in "areas where its armed units were deployed, to deter any foreign or Congolese armed group from attempting to use force to threaten the political process and to ensure protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence" (UN Security Council 2005, para 11). This would eventually pave the way for MONUC to decisively use its attack helicopters in 2007 against Nkunda's advances on Goma, while allowing the government armed forces to gain ground.

Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that the operationalization of the expanded mandate created some challenges between MONUC and the Congolese government as the latter felt that the new mandate was quickly evolving into an excuse for external interference in domestic political affairs. This was reflected in 2008 when, following a renewal of hostilities between the FARDC and the Rwandan Hutu militias and supporters of dissident general Laurent Nkunda, the DR Congo government remonstrated the overreaching nature of MONUC's actions. Specifically, the concern was triggered by MONUC operations under UN Security Council Resolution 1856 which authorized the mission to "deter any attempt at the use of force from any armed group", urging the mission to take "all necessary operations to prevent attacks on civilians and disrupt military capability of illegal armed groups" (UN Security Council 2008, para 3f). Hence, the arrest of Nkunda in the government's backyard and the subsequent arrest warrant for Bosco Ntaganda, who had replaced Nkunda in the FARDC, were met with indignation by Kinshasa.

Despite this impasse, the UN effectively reconfigured MONUC into the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Congo (MONUSCO) Security Resolution 1925 under Chapter VII of the UN charter with primary focus on the protection of civilians, security sector reforms, and oversight of the electoral process (UN Security Council 2010). As a Chapter VII mandated mission, MONUSCO was capable of exercising a latitude of enforcement operations in the eastern DRC. The transformation of MONUC into MONUSCO occurred at a time of increased consensus about robust peacekeeping evident in the adoption of the Capstone Doctrine in 2008, and the New Horizon Document in 2009, both of which emphasised the need for multidimensionality and enhanced capabilities for UN peacekeeping operations (UNDPKO 2008; UNDPKO 2009). However, the stabilization approach adopted by MONUSCO, which aimed at building the capacity of state institutions—especially security forces of the DRC—so that they could assert control over the so-called 'islands of stability' or liberated areas, was criticized heavily following the fall of Goma in 2012.

3. Institutionalizing peace enforcement in MONUSCO: The FIB

While peacekeeping decision making has traditionally been top-down, the context and process behind the passing of Security Council Resolution 2098 reveals a bottom-up decision-making process. In fact, the proposal for a neutral force to intervene in the eastern DRC conflict was mooted by African regional and sub-regional organizations long before the United Nations entered these discussions (Koko 2013; Lamont & Skeppstrom 2013). The continued deterioration of the security situation in the eastern DRC following the carnage by the M23 in 2012, motivated a search for a more lasting solution to the notoriety inflicted by the rebel group. The M23 went on a rampage in the Kivus between May and November 2012 defeating the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), a group under UN sanctions whose leaders and members included perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. This assault culminated in the capture of Goma, the capital of north Kivu where 1,500 MONUSCO troops and 7,000 FARDC soldiers were stationed (Dehez 2013). The M23 only withdrew later after international condemnation and prospects of peace talks.

While political solutions were a necessity, there was a deep conviction that a military intervention would be crucial in establishing an environment where appropriate political reforms would thrive. This view was consistently emphasized by both the

International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In fact, the first reference to the need to have a neutral force in eastern DRC came from the ICGLR through a declaration of the heads of state and government regarding the security situation in eastern DRC dated 15 July 2012. The declaration directed the "appropriate structures of the ICGLR to work with the AU and the UN for an immediate establishment of a Neutral International Force to eradicate the M23, FDLR and all other negative forces in the eastern DRC and patrol and secure the border zones" (ICGLR 2012a, para 4). Four other declarations followed in quick succession between August 2012 and November 2012 where the ICGLR kept laying the ground for the Neutral International Force (NIF). For instance, on 8 August 2012, the ICGLR established a sub-committee comprising ministers of defence of Angola, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania with the mandate to work out modalities for operationalizing the NIF (ICGLR 2012b). A month later, on 8 September 2012, the ICGLR emphasized the need for the NIF to function within the mandate of the AU and the UN (ICGLR 2012c). At this point Tanzania had already pledged troops to the new initiative, and this motivated the ICGLR to encourage other member states to follow this gesture.

When the city of Goma fell to rebels in November 2012, the idea of the NIF became irresistible to both the ICGLR and the SADC. In a declaration issued on 24 November 2012, the ICGLR noted that there was growing support for the NIF as South Africa was also ready to provide logistical support to the arrangement. The ICGLR further requested Tanzania to provide a force commander for the NIF (ICGLR 2012d). At an extraordinary summit of the SADC on 8 December 2012 which the chairperson of the ICGLR also attended, the SADC acknowledged the groundwork that ICGLR had made with regard to the NIF and further committed to deploying its standby force under the arrangement of the NIF (SADC 2012, para 7, iv-v). The force would comprise troops from South Africa, Tanzania, and Malawi operating under the leadership of a Tanzanian force commander. It is argued that the SADC did this at the invitation of the DRC which was uncomfortable with the initial proposal in the ICGLR where Uganda and Rwanda were likely to have influence over such a force (Stearns 2013a).

Significant efforts were made in December 2012 to iron out the operational quagmire that the NIF would face in the absence of an enabling peace enforcement mandate. Hence, following some consultations in December 2012 and a harmonization meeting involving the UN, AU, ICGLR, and SADC in January 2013, there were indications that

the NIF would be absorbed into MONUSCO. In fact, as early as 19 October 2012 the UN had already taken note of the intention by the ICGLR and the AU to deploy the NIF in eastern DRC and was also aware of the need to harmonize modalities within MONUSCO to accommodate peace enforcement operations (UN Security Council 2012). This prospect was strengthened by the signing of the Peace and Security Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (hereafter referred to as PSC framework) on 24 February 2013 by all ICGLR member states, South Africa, the UN Secretary General, the AU Chairperson, and the SADC Chairperson (African Union 2013). The framework emphasized the need for security sector reforms in the DRC and urged stronger regional and international oversight mechanisms, and further called for a strategic review of MONUSCO operations to make the mission better able to support the Congolese government in addressing security challenges.

Drawing on the momentum of the PSC framework, the UN Secretary General's special report of 27 February 2013 alerted the Security Council on the threat that the situation in the DRC posed to international peace and security in the region, further stressing the need for a new strategy to address the situation. The report built its recommendations on the earlier consultations with the AU, ICGLR, and SADC and proposed the establishment of a "dedicated intervention brigade" within MONUSCO to undertake "peace-enforcement tasks of preventing the expansion of, neutralizing and disarming armed groups, to be carried out together with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement efforts" (UN Security Council 2013b, Para 60).

The UN Security Council responded by adopting Resolution 2098 on 28 March 2013 which, inter alia, established the Intervention Brigade "on exceptional basis" within MONUSCO to operate for an initial period of one year with three infantry battalions, one artillery, one special forces, and a reconnaissance company with headquarters in Goma, under direct command of the MONUSCO Force Commander (UN Security Council 2013b). The resolution further mandated the brigade, operating either with the FARDC or unilaterally, "to prevent the expansion of all armed groups, neutralize these groups, and to disarm them in order to contribute to the objective of reducing the threat posed by armed groups on state authority and civilian security in eastern DRC and to make space for stabilization activities" (UN Security Council 2013a, para 12b).

The resolution further defined the Brigade's operations as "robust, highly mobile and versatile" while being "in strict compliance with international law, including

international humanitarian law and with the human rights due diligence policy on UN-support to non-UN forces (HRDDP)" (UN Security Council 2013a, para 12). The resolution also recognized the need for the intervention brigade to ensure protection of civilians and mitigate risk before, during, and after any military operation, especially its targeted offensive operations. It is important to note that this mandate has been unaltered in subsequent resolutions that have been renewing the mandate of MONUSCO and the FIB as evidenced in UN Security Council Resolutions 2147, 2211, 2277, 2348, 2409, 2463, 2502, 2556, 2612 and 2066 (UN Security Council 2014a; 2015a; 2016a; 2017a; 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2020; 2021; 2022) .

The adoption of Security Council Resolution 2098 was met with caution and unease among traditional troop-contributing countries such as Argentina, Guatemala, and Pakistan as the countries pondered the increased risk that the whole peacekeeping mission would be exposed to, given the combat posture that the intervention brigade would adopt (Dehez 2013). There is also evidence that the United States, France, and the United Kingdom were initially cautious about the idea of having an intervention brigade that would only multiply the violence in circumstances when the numbers of the brigade (3,069) were insufficient to "change the balance and solve the issues" (Hogg & Charbonneau 2013).

However, across the African continent, Resolution 2098 was generally welcomed by an aura of optimism as it had a grain of an 'African solution' to the internationalized conflict in the eastern DRC. Even before the arrangement was tested on the ground, there seemed to have been a plan to fast track the notion of rapid crisis management within the African Peace and Security Architecture. In this regard, in May 2013, South Africa asked the AU at its 50th anniversary to consider creating a new force under the AU Peace and Security Council that would be called the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) and would comprise 1,500 elite troops drawn from a pool of 5,000 highly trained soldiers who could mobilise within 14 days (Saunders 2013). The idea was to institutionalize the principle of an intervention brigade within the African Union's Standby Force in order to make it precedential in future responses to conflict situations, thereby giving the countries contributing troops greater latitude with regard to deployment of forces on the continent (Roux 2013; Saunders 2013). But questions would remain, especially regarding the sustainability of such a force since the AU Peace and Security Council was already struggling to operationalize the African Standby Force (ASF). Another challenge would be how to link with the broader multinational UN missions on the continent given that the ACIRC was being proposed to be a permanent

arrangement. The lack of traction of the idea at continental level became even more apparent in the failed deployment to Burundi of the 5,000 strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) in January 2016 which was premised on the notion of a rapid reaction force. While the African Union gave Burundi 96 hours to accept the mission or face a forceful deployment of MAPROBU under Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act, the plan collapsed after Burundi rejected the call and threatened to treat the AU mission as an invasion force (ICG 2016). This reflected deep divisions among AU members regarding the legitimacy of a mission capable of circumventing a host country's consent, hence, raising further doubt about the feasibility and utility of such an 'interventionist' arrangement.

4. An assessment of the intervention brigade

4.1 The early phase: Initial exploits

The FIB began operations in earnest in July 2013 with its first mission being the neutralising of the M23 rebels. The brigade provided direct combat service support to the FARDC through use of rocket and air support, and heavy artillery (Namangale 2015). Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) were also used to acquire intelligence owing to the expansive terrain that the brigade had to navigate. The use of drones proved to be an important political deterrent because it raised the potential costs for any foreign group bent on supporting the M23 (Dehez 2013).

By October 2013 the brigade had dislodged the M23 from Goma, Kiwanja, Kibumba, Rumangabo, and Rutshuru. On 7 November 2013, the M23 surrendered and agreed to peace talks that led to an agreement with the DRC government on 12 December 2013 in Nairobi. The defeat of the M23 significantly improved the image of MONUSCO, especially in Goma, where its reputation was initially dented by the perceived lack of teeth to enforce its mandate of protecting civilians (Stearns 2013b).

Following the neutralization of the M23, the DR Congo government embarked on a new demobilization program called the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (PNDDR III) whereby most ex-M23 combatants were sent to camps that reportedly lacked appropriate community support structures such as food, water, shelter, and basic services. This move was condemned by the international community as forcible displacement. Consequently, PNDDR III received a cold shoulder from the donor community leading to starvation in the camps, and

this discouraged other ex-M23 combatants from participating in the demobilization program (Human Rights Watch 2015; UN Security Council 2014b).

In March 2014, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2147, which extended the mandate of the MONUSCO mission. The Security Council acknowledged the initial success of the intervention brigade and further authorized the brigade to neutralize the FDLR and other negative forces (UN Security Council 2014b). In April 2014, the intervention brigade joined the FARDC in another operation (codenamed Sukola 1) to neutralize the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Muslim fundamentalist rebel group fighting against the Ugandan government but using eastern DRC as its launchpad. The group had been famous for inflicting terror on civilians in North Kivu. The joint operation was largely successful. However, the situation quickly mutated such that a number of small armed groups claiming to be the ADF continued to wreak havoc at community level by settling scores and advancing political motives. According to the Secretary General's report to the Security Council dated June 2015, these attacks continued in the Beni territory of North Kivu where about 347 civilians were killed between October 2014 and June 2015 (UN Security Council 2015b).

4.2 The ambivalent phase: The politics of joint operations

When the attention of the joint operations shifted to the FDLR rebels in early 2014, Kinshasa was not keen to take this route since there had been a history between the government of Joseph Kabila and the rebel group, whereby the DRC used it mostly as a proxy against Rwandan influence in the eastern province. Thus, as the FIB was preparing for the operations against the FDLR, the rebel group suddenly announced that it would surrender and disarm, causing MONUSCO to get suspicious about the timeliness of this decision to lay down arms. The UN Security Council Resolution 2147 (2014) noted with deep concern reports that the FARDC was collaborating with the FDLR at local level. This might possibly explain why the FDLR was able to get timely information on the impending joint operations of the FIB and FARDC.

On strategic level, the DRC government began dragging its feet on the operation against the FDLR, hailing the surrender as a step in the right direction. In a joint communique of 2 July 2014, the ICGLR and SADC gave the FDLR six months to voluntarily disarm and surrender (ICGLR-SADC 2014, para 12, ii). But there was pessimism from Rwanda since similar offers for demobilization of the FDLR had fallen through on multiple occasions in the past (Fabricius 2014). Indeed, at the expiration of

the deadline, the demobilisation was not successful because the FDLR only used it as an opportunity to reorganize and assume a posture that would make the ex-Rwandan *genocidaires* more capable of negotiating with Kigali, thereby throwing Rwanda's commitment to the PSC framework off balance.

Consequent to the failed demobilisation, MONUSCO began preparations for joint military operations with FARDC against the FDLR. But despite calls by the UN Security Council for Kabila to sign a military plan authorizing a joint operation against the FDLR, Kinshasa seemed lukewarm to the idea, instead opting to launch unilateral operations against the rebels. In this regard, the DRC government embarked on a broad reorganization of the FARDC in the eastern DRC. In a deliberate move to frustrate MONUSCO, the DRC government appointed two generals (Sikabwe Fall and Bruno Mandevu) who were blacklisted by the UN for alleged human rights abuses to lead the anti-FDLR operations (Vogel 2014). The DRC government did this knowing fully well that MONUSCO would disengage from the campaign on account of its adherence to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

By early 2015, the government had publicly taken a defiant stance arguing that it would no longer tolerate any interference in the sovereignty of the DRC by MONUSCO and the broader international community (AFP 2015). This followed the breakdown of talks between President Kabila, former MONUSCO chief Martin Kobler, and several diplomats. Consequently, FARDC launched unilateral operations (codenamed Sukola II) against the FDLR in February 2015 after the government rejected a call by the UN to sack the two generals, arguing that it was DRC's sovereign decision to maintain them (Nsabimana 2015). In May 2015, the DRC government spokesperson, Lambert Mende, insisted that the ball was in MONUSCO's court to address its own concerns; otherwise, the DRC was making progress in its unilateral action against the FDLR to the extent that half of the rebels had allegedly been neutralized. He further challenged that since the MONUSCO and the FIB had a mandate to act unilaterally, they were at liberty to launch their own operations against the FDLR (Clottey 2015).

For MONUSCO and the international community, this was a missed opportunity to sustain the momentum and consolidate the gains that the FIB had made in pushing out rebel groups. Consequently, the period between February 2015 and January 2016 witnessed some significant reversals in the security situation especially in North Kivu where the ADF and other rebel groups intensified raids on communities as they capitalised on the security vacuum (Maloo 2016). And in one controversial instance which revealed the impact of the fallout between FARDC and MONUSCO, 21,000

people were displaced from Miriki village in South Lubero (North Kivu) following the killing of 16 members of their community by FDLR rebels in night raids. This happened within a kilometre of both FARDC and FIB positions in North Kivu (UN News 2016a). Although this FIB contingent consisting of South African troops claimed to have known about the attack and fired several flares in the hope that their FARDC counterparts would take action, their failure to respond decisively raised concerns about their commitment to protection of civilians. Under intense pressure, the UN deputy force commander admitted that the mission's response was slow, inadequate, a failure of duty, and promised to investigate the incident (AFP 2016).

The assessment of the situation by the UN Secretary General's report to the Security Council in June 2015 revealed that despite some progress in the unilateral operations of the FARDC against the FDLR, the Congolese army had yet to focus on the epicentre of the group's operations in North Kivu where its leadership was based, and gross human rights violations were still being committed. The report further observed that in most of the areas where initial gains were made, the FDLR elements were returning especially in the mining zones and were setting up illegal taxation systems (UN Security Council 2015b); and as noted by the UN Group of Experts, most of the period between 2014 and 2015 saw the FIB confined to logistical support and intelligence sharing (UN Security Council 2016b).

It is important to note that on 28 January 2016 the UN signed a technical agreement with the DRC government to resume joint military operations, thus paving way for two major operations (Usalama 1 & 2) under the broader Sukola 1 operation primarily targeting ADF positions. While these operations were initially successful, it was observed that FARDC had the tendency to withdraw from its positions prematurely, thereby leaving a security vacuum which would eventually be filled by the returning ADF rebels (UN Security Council 2016b). However, during this period of renewed joint operations, the FARDC simultaneously undertook unilateral operations mainly targeting the ADF positions south-east of Beni. Meanwhile, Sukola II operations against the FDLR which were launched unilaterally in February 2015 by FARDC continued without FIB involvement until September 2017 when operation 'Phoenix Rising' was jointly undertaken by FARDC and FIB against the FDLR south of Nyazale in Rutshuru territory (UN Security Council 2017b, 7).

4.3 Fatigue in the forgotten war

While the FIB operations have been largely affected by high-level politics, allegations of sexual abuse by the troops have also emerged during the brigade's operations. Specifically, in March 2016 the United Nations Response Team uncovered initial evidence of transactional sex, sex with minors, and paternity claims involving members of the Tanzanian contingent of the FIB stationed at Mavivi village near Beni in North Kivu (UN News 2016b). These revelations came on the heels of UN Security Council Resolution 2272 on sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers which, inter alia, calls for the repatriation of a military unit "when there is credible evidence of widespread or systematic sexual exploitation and abuse by that unit", and replacement of such personnel where the troop-contributing country has not taken appropriate steps to investigate the allegations (UN Security Council 2016c). While the UN promised to thoroughly investigate the cases, the outcome has not been made public. These allegations not only compromised the integrity and professionalism of the FIB, but also compromised the credibility of the FIB as a mentoring force to a DRC army famed for human rights abuses and unprofessional military conduct.

At regional level, it is important to assess expectations from role players (the member states) regarding the FIB's continual presence in the DRC. What has been taken for granted thus far is the initial expectation that both ICGLR and SADC had in conceiving such a force and whether their position(s) have remained static. For instance, it is not clear whether any thought was given to the implications of an enduring military campaign without a clear exit strategy. Combat fatigue and public opinion in the troop-contributing countries points to a general concern regarding the longevity of the operations especially where the whole concept of the 'FIB as a force multiplier' for the Congolese army begins to lose utility in the wake of rising cases of casualties in the brigade. For instance, the rebel attack on Tanzanian FIB troops at their Semuliki base in Beni on 7 December 2017, which killed 14 peacekeepers and injured another 53, has been labelled as the worst ever attack by an armed group on a UN mission (UN News 2017).

5. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that the FIB represents a strategic shift in UN missions on the continent as exemplified by a commitment to the development of

rapid response capacity for early and decisive action during conflict. Most importantly, however, it demonstrates the UN's readiness to operationalize the subsidiarity principle in more nuanced and innovative ways than has been the case in the past. Similarly, the PSC framework, which has become the aorta of UNSC resolution 2098, presents the African Union and its sub-regional organizations with a crucial political space for leveraging peacekeeping decision making in the DRC. It shows that regional players have the capacity to affect the shape and function of peace operations on the continent. Nevertheless, designing solutions and affecting the content of UN resolutions is not an end in itself; implementing them to their logical conclusion remains a key challenge for most missions, and the DRC experience is no exception. While it is easier to decide to intervene, it is more complex to sustain the intervention, remain focused on the goal, justify tangible progress, and to exit the scene when clear outcomes have been achieved.

Whether the FIB represents a maturation of peace operations on the continent remains a subject of debate given the political and strategic hurdles that MONUSCO is experiencing in garnering cooperation from the DRC government. Although the FIB registered important successes against M23, political challenges that have circumscribed its subsequent operations depict the bluntness of the context within which the initial exploits have to be interpreted. While the mandate of the FIB will continue to reflect an option for unilateral action against rebels, it remains unlikely that the troop-contributing countries to the FIB and the DRC government would be willing to see the operations engaging this higher gear. Hence, the only realistic option available for MONUSCO is to continue cooperating with the DRC government as uneasy bedfellows if FIB's joint operations with FARDC are to continue. This already moderates the kind of impact that could be expected from such a robust brigade, thereby leaving the United Nations, African Union, and sub-regional organizations with serious issues to ponder in relation to the future of peacekeeping on the continent.

Acknowledgement

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Russian Influence, anti-Western Sentiments, and African Agency: The Struggle for Influence in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Abstract

Russia has been trying to extend its influence over Africa over the last years; a process which became intensified due to the Russia-Ukraine war. Through the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this article shows that although Russia plays an active role in this quest for influence by offering incentives (such as shipments of weapons), anti-Western sentiments in the DRC are at least as important. These sentiments have been magnified by the M23 rebellion and perceptions of Western complicity in this crisis. This has resulted in pressure within the Congolese administration, particularly from the security forces, to "shift to Russia," as well as Western efforts to counter this influence. At the same time, this 'neo-Cold War' has offered opportunities for political leverage by the Congolese government to exercise pressure on Western governments—something which has not always been successful.

Keywords: Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia, M23, Geopolitical

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1. Introduction

Much has been written about the way in which the Russia-Ukraine war has negatively impacted the African continent. It became particularly clear in the rising of energy and food prices—the latter the highest since the 2008 global financial crisis (Okou et al. 2022)—have led to a sharply increased food insecurity on the continent (Yohannes-Kassahun 2023). Critical imports—such as wheat, fertilizers, and steel—have been disrupted, particularly for those countries heavily dependent on food imports from Russia and Ukraine (Kumar Sen 2022). Other than this, it has also been shown how the flow of development finance to Africa has been negatively affected, with increased borrowing costs (Kumar Sen 2022). All the above factors show how these external elements, provoked by the Russia-Ukraine war, constitute major threats to African economies (Yohannes-Kassahun 2023). As Kappel (2022, 25) puts it: "Africa is once again being dragged into an externally induced crisis, with hunger and poverty continuing to rise."

Equally important is that some have warned of a 'new cold war', or a 'neo-cold war', as Adibe (2022) calls it, in which both the West and Russia battle for influence in Africa. Russia's main approach is by focusing its renewed efforts to gain influence over the continent through diplomatic efforts, disinformation campaigns, or the use of the Wagner group. Yet, this also must be understood through the perspective of Africa. In this context, it is equally important to point out that African governments are not only passive actors, but also possess some agency. As Adibe (2022) argues, this Russian-Western struggle for influence can potentially increase African governments' political leverage by "bigger latitude for bargaining with both sides." What does this 'neo-Cold war' look like for both governments and populations in the continent? This article engages with the question by looking at the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In doing so, the article wants to highlight two important aspects. First, that the Ukraine-Russia war and the intensified engagement of Russia in Africa offer a range of opportunities for African countries—in particular the DRC. As will be shown, the increased presence of Russia in national and international politics is as much a product of Russian influence as it is of the way it can be used by African actors—in this case the DRC government. Second, although Russia engages in a propaganda war with regard to the West, it finds fertile ground in anti-Western feelings—both in the way in which Western powers are understood, and in Western policy decisions fueling these perceptions. As historian Nathaniel Powell (2023) argued, "French and Western

backing for illegitimate and unaccountable governments is key to understanding the 'success' of Russian propaganda campaigns. They are pushing on an open door." This also is the case in the DRC.

Central in all of this—and in line with the recent literature emphasizing the agency of African governments in the international system—is that African countries are not passive actors in their relations with Russia. They are not only 'victims of misinformation', or of overall Russian influence, but also have their own agenda in the way in which they relate to Russia and the war in Ukraine. This is to some extent similar to the situation during the Cold War—something Nelson Mandela wrote about in his autobiography: when writing about the (correct) accusations of Western powers of his collaboration with Russia, he stated the following: "The cynical have always suggested that the communists were using us. But who is to say that we were not using them? (…) I did not need to become a Communist in order to work with them." (Mandela 1994, 74). The same can be argued in the current circumstances. In the words of Muhidin Shangwe (2020): "The challenge facing Russia in Africa begins with the fundamental question of what Moscow can offer—that others cannot, if I may add." In other words: what can African governments get out of their relations with Russia and/or juxtaposition of the West and Russia? And how do the West and Russia react to this?

In order to answer the above questions, this article first looks at the Russian efforts for influence in the DRC. It then looks at how these efforts happen in an overall receptive environment, as the M23 rebellion in particular has created strong anti-Western sentiments, eventually translating into pro-Russian ones. The final section shows why the Tshisekedi government has not done so: because of the 'Lumumba scenario', a fear that such a geopolitical shift would be fatal for the regime. In doing so, the article unpacks the negotiations and motivations of various sets of Congolese actors on this issue, and what this means for the relations between the government and the international community: it shows that this struggle for influence has created a degree of leverage for the Congolese government.

This article is based on more than 30 interviews I conducted with a range of individuals: Congolese policymakers focused on security and foreign policy, international diplomats, journalists, analysts, and civil society actors. Most of the interviews were conducted in Kinshasa in October 2022, while others were conducted online between October 2022 and May 2023.

2. Russian Inroads in the DRC

Russia has been particularly active over the last years in trying to extend its influence over Africa (Harchoui and Lechner 2022)—this has been documented extensively for CAR, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Sudan. In these countries, Moscow has been both extending its political, security, and economic influence and working in the fields of mining, energy, and security—with Wagner being its most visible, but not the only, way in which it has extended its (security) influence (Africa Confidential 2023, 10-11). With its minerals and ongoing conflict, the DRC at first sight seems a good partner for Russia. A number of leaked documents—from 2018 (Proekt 2019) and 2019 (Harding and Burke 2019)—also confirm the DRC as a country of interest for Russia, and for Wagner in particular.

Indeed, there has been increased recent Russian activity in the DRC after years of inactivity. In June 2018, a military and technical cooperation agreement between the DRC and Russia was ratified. This agreement had been dormant for 19 years after having been signed by Laurent Kabila in 1999, but was ratified the day after Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov had visited Kinshasa. The agreement provides for a range of issues such as arms delivery, advisory missions, and the training of military specialists in Russian schools. Since the signature of this agreement, Russia has explicitly expressed a desire to develop military cooperation, engage with the armed groups in the east, and is waiting for a formal request from Kinshasa (Liffran et al. 2022).

Particularly striking is what happened next: in February 2021, Russia had delivered a large consignment of weapons to the DRC—namely, 10,000 Kalashnikov guns and around three million cartridges of ammunition. What was especially remarkable about this delivery was that it was a gift, paid by the Russian government, and delivered in four aircrafts of 83 tons each. The Russian embassy confirmed the gift in a recent Facebook post, and stated it was notified to the Security Council (Ambassade de Russie en RDC Congo 2022a) —something which was confirmed by diplomatic sources. This weapons delivery was seen as a way to smoothen the military cooperation agreement.

While Russian inroads into the African continent cannot be generalized, it is useful to point out the similarities with the neighboring Central African Republic (CAR). The engagement with the CAR really took off a few years earlier and started in similar fashion: also here, Russian engagement primarily started through the gift of a major consignment of weapons (early 2018) (Forestrier 2018). This donation was accompanied

by 175 military instructors (UN Security Council 2018, 7–9), which turned out to be Wagner troops and which effectively meant the beginning of Wagner's operations in the CAR. While the military consignment to Kinshasa didn't bring in Wagner troops, there was another similarity: the presence of the Russian diplomat Viktor Tokmakov, who was initially based in the CAR where he was widely considered one of the architects of Wagner's activities in the country. In 2021 he was posted to the Russian embassy in Kinshasa—a posting which was at the time widely seen as a prelude to the arrival of Wagner.

A further illustration of the above dynamics was the August 2022 visit of Congo's minister of defence, Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga, to Moscow to attend the 10th Conference on International Security. On the sidelines of the conference, he met a number of his Russian counterparts such as the deputy minister of defence, Alexander Fomin. During his visit, Kabanda declared that "[t]he Russian Federation, as a good friend, has always refrained from blackmailing us, blaming us or imposing subjective sanctions" (Seyes 2022). According to reports, he even "went so far as to express a 'strong desire' for 'multifaceted support' from Moscow against the armed groups present in the eastern DRC" (Boisselet 2022). On the Russian side, the head of Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Anatoly Punchuk, reassured "Minister Gilbert Kabanda of the availability of his country to equip the FARDC [Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo] and train Congolese officers" (Politico 2022).

Soon after this, President Felix Tshisekedi disavowed some of his minister of defence's comments to the Western donor community, by assuring them that he had gone "off script" in Moscow and had been talking from a personal, rather than a government, perspective. The President later repeated in an interview with the Financial Times that 'switching to Russia' was not on the table (Khalaf et al. 2022). In doing so, Tshisekedi was trying to make sure that he did not upset Europe and the United States who are important partners for the Tshisekedi government.

Yet, the visit was indicative of both rapprochement between Moscow and Kinshasa and the way in which a potential arms deal was central to this. Indeed, arms export is seen as one of Russia's main strategic goals in Africa (Adibe 2019), as well as one of its main advantages (by African countries): many African governments have had longstanding security relations with Russia "as an arms supplier, provider of military assistance, and source of private military companies" (Aden and Marsh 2022, 111).

Moreover, there is a strong demand in Kinshasa for weapons as well: the Tshisekedi

government recently approved an ambitious military spending plan for the 2022–2025 period, worth 3,455 billion US Dollar (Africa Intelligence 2022). The DRC is therefore actively looking to buy weapons and is having contacts with a wide range of actors. Actors within the Congolese security administration point out how Russia is considered a particularly attractive partner in this context: the Congolese army is equipped with weapons from the post-Soviet era, and Russia is therefore seen a one-stop shop to buy arms, allowing to buy weapons cheaper and at a larger scale. Moreover, Russia is seen as being an 'easier' partner. In the words of a former security official: "they wouldn't go through all these hurdles which the West imposes."

Indeed, throughout 2022, contacts between Russia and Congo further intensified, indicating that an arms deal was being explored: a delegation of Russian MP's visit the Congolese parliament "for security issues" (ACP 2022), and there were a series of high-level meetings between the Russian ambassador and the Congolese government (such as separate meetings with the President and DRC's first lady) (Présidence de la République 2022, Ambassade de Russie en RD Congo 2022). The visit of a team of Rosoboronexport (Russia's defence industry export agency) in October 2022 further suggested the negotiation of an arms deal (Africa Intelligence 2022). There also were a number of other forms of Russian engagement, such as the August 2022 launch of the the Yango ride-hailing app in Kinshasa, own by Russian IT Giant Yandex (and which is also present in a range of other African countries).

Notwithstanding these Russian efforts, these contacts haven't so far materialized into much—other than reports about orders of military helicopters from Moscow (Africa Intelligence 2022) – something which was vehemently denied by the Russian embassy (Ambassade de Russie en RDC Congo 2022a) – or much (unconfirmed) rumors about the arrival of Wagner (Schlindwein 2023). Yet, this doesn't mean that this will not happen at all. In the next sections, the article will outline in which ways the Russia debate is being held among several actors, both within the Congolese administration, and in relation with Western actors. In doing so, it will be shown how Russian efforts for influence are almost secondary to strong anti-Western sentiments in the DRC, combined with a need for weapons. Both issues became amplified by the M23 crisis, allowing Moscow to tap into this.

3. The M23 Crisis as Amplifier of anti-Western Sentiments

Russian efforts for influence are less important than the strong anti-Western sentiment

held by many in the DRC. In March 2023, a renewed offensive of the M23 rebellion broke out in the North Kivu province in Eastern Congo. The renewed activity of the rebel group, which had been largely dormant for about 10 years, led to a major humanitarian crisis, with over 450,00 people displaced, and many killed (Mednick 2022). Notwithstanding mounting evidence showing Rwandan support to the rebel group, the international community did not condemn Rwanda for a long time. Congolese felt that very little action was taken to support their sovereignty—a point made more starkly by comparison with the invasion of Ukraine, which began soon after. In the words of an army commander I spoke with: "We also condemned Russia's invasion in Ukraine. Our problems are the same, we also were invaded by a neighboring country, Rwanda. But the West never acknowledged the aggression on the DRC."

The U.N. notification regime for the DRC, which requires all weapons exports to the Congolese government to be reported to the U.N. sanctions committee, has proved to be a contentious issue. The requirement was established through a 2008 U.N. Security Council resolution that ended the weapons embargo for the Congolese state but kept it in place for armed groups (UN Security Council 2008). A new U.N. resolution in June 2022 (UN Security Council 2022) further weakened the notification requirements and applied only to a smaller group of light weapons and military training provided by third parties (Liffran et al. 2022).

Although weakened, the notification requirements led to major frustrations among the Congolese. It was felt that this stopped the Congolese government from buying the necessary weapons to defeat the M23 rebels. Many considered this an "embargo, but framed differently," in the words of an army commander:

> "They force this embargo on us in an intelligent way: they tell us, in order to get weapons, you need to register them. But this is not acceptable for a sovereign country: how can a country that is fighting armed groups; that is fighting against terrorists, why do we need to do so? Why do we need all these authorizations? (…) Us Congolese, we do find this unjust: this is just a weapon embargo of which they changed the name."

Part of this perception is a product of widespread misunderstanding of the notification regime, but it is also a result of political instrumentalization. There's a broad consensus among analysts that what is needed is primarily a structural reform of the Congolese army to address its weaknesses; buying more weapons will not solve its

problems (Boisselet 2022). Blaming the notification regime has allowed the military to externalize its responsibility and shift attention to access to weapons sales, putting the blame on the West.

Despite this degree of instrumentalization, the qualms expressed about the notification regime infringing on the DRC's sovereignty are widely shared. The U.N.'s conditions tapped into a sense of national pride and are considered a humiliation and means for the West to exert continued control of the DRC. These feelings have a long history in the country, understanding the "West" to include not only the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, but also the United Nations and its peacekeeping force in the DRC, MONUSCO. Many Congolese feel that these actors impose a whole barrage of conditions on the DRC that do not help the Congolese, but rather further suppress the country's development and the military's ability to secure the country. The U.N. notification regime is perceived to be just the latest manifestation of this. Among Congolese army officials, the MONUSCO conditionality policy—which involved human rights screening of officers before the military could receive MONUSCO support and involved MONUSCO maintaining an undisclosed "black list" (Verweijen 2017)—also added fuel to the fire, as did the EU and U.S. sanctions against senior army officers (Human Rights Watch 2016).

Russia itself actively played a role regarding this in the DRC by amplifying the message that the West and the UN tried to keep Congo under control. It has also, at least rhetorically, opposed the notification regime (Africa Intelligence 2022), calling it an 'arms embargo' on social media (Ambassade de Russie en RD Congo 2022c, 2022d): though, while Russia could have voted against the notification regime at the U.N. Security Council, it didn't, choosing instead to abstain.

These anti-Western feelings were amplified by particular policy events, as described in the following two paragraphs:

First, all of this happened in a context of strong frustration with the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO which is deemed largely ineffective by many Congolese and which has led to violent protests against the UN (Kniknie 2022). These feelings have been fueled by a statement by UN secretary general Antonio Guterres, who had stated in a TV interview with French media that the UN peacekeepers are "unable to defeat M23." In his words: "The truth is that the M23 is today a modern army, with heavy equipment that is more advanced than the equipment of MONUSCO" (La Libre 2022).

A second event was the decision of the European Union—through its European Peace Facility—to give 20 million Euro to the Rwandan Defence Forces for their

deployment in Mozambique (Council of the EU 2022). The prospect of the EU aiding Rwanda, with mounting evidence of Rwandan support to M23, majorly upset the Congolese government and broader Congolese public.

4. From anti-Western to pro-Russia Sentiments

These events have inflamed anti-Western sentiments in the DRC—particularly against the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, which the general public accuses not only of inaction toward M23 and Rwanda but also of active support of the rebellion and its foreign backers.

In the current geopolitical context, these tensions have translated into pro-Russian attitudes. After Guterres's statement, a high-level security official told me that it had generated frustration in security circles and a readiness to shift to a new partner. "If that's what you're saying, what are you doing here?" he said. "Please take your baggage, and leave—we'll find another way to solve the M23 question. Why should we be helped by people who said they're not capable of helping? That's how we're orienting ourselves to Russia. What Wagner did in [the Central African Republic], they can also do here in the DRC."

Russia has become both an avenue to protest the West and an instrument to exercise pressure. Several diplomatic sources relayed an incident in which President Tshisekedi, meeting with EU diplomats after news broke about the EU security assistance for the Rwandan Defence Forces, asked them, incredulously, "You don't understand you are pushing us towards Russia in this way?" In other words, contested policy choices by Western countries or the UN have led to the threat of siding with Russia.

Similarly, some Congolese interlocutors told me that the Tshisekedi regime had made the "Russia threat" to obtain more weapons from the West to combat M23, but the move did not result in greater arms provision. Overall, though, the geopolitical landscape is in flux, and the Congolese government's exercise of the "Russia option" is at least as much about the way it can be leveraged in relations with the West as it is of its actual Russia policy. This dynamic was also evident in the 2018 ratification of the long-dormant Russian military agreement; the move came at the very end of the Kabila regime, and, while strengthening ties with Moscow, it also was a rebuke to Western criticism of Kabila's extended rule (Wondo 2018).

This shift from rhetoric to reality is being reinforced by the perception that the West is, as a Congolese security adviser told me, "demanding a lot, but doesn't give

much." This feeling is particularly strong with regard to the United States, which is particularly important for President Tshisekedi, as they played a central role in his appointment as president (Gramer and O'Donnel 2019), and whose support is seen as a major counterbalance to former President Kabila's link with China. Yet, Tshisekedi expressed frustration with the supposedly 'special' partnership, which—it is felt—hasn't translated into much concrete investments (Africa Intelligence 2022). A security official summarized this as: "Why have endless meetings with the West—including the UN— why not do as Mali and CAR have done, and switch to Russia?" A few interlocutors, for example, expressed appreciation for what happened in Mali—where coup leader Colonel Assimi Goïta invited Wagner into the country—and wanted Congo to do the same.

These statements do not only signal anti-Western sentiments, but also a degree of opportunism. An often-heard statement with interlocutors across the spectrum was: "We've tried the EU, the US, China, why don't we try Russia?"—something that ties in with what is considered the voluntaristic attitude of the Tshisekedi government in its foreign relations—for example, by actively involving neighbouring countries to tackle the conflict in the East. Although this foreign policy is intended to diversify the international support networks of the Tshisekedi government, away from the networks of President Kabila (who, for example, relied heavily on China), there is a perception that this level of voluntarism happens in a rather haphazard manner, by relying on a short-term calculation which is not sufficiently thinking through the long-term consequences. In the words of an analyst, "the rather naive idea of making friends with everyone, not thinking through how this jeopardizes relations with other."

Western governments have tried to address this potential pivot to Russia in a number of ways. On the one hand they've used the carrot: it is, for example, widely accepted that France was the main driving force behind the decision to lift the highly unpopular notification regime against the DRC in December 2022 (Security Council Report 2022), with the French minister of state for development visiting Kinshasa the day after (France Diplomacy 2022). In doing so, they hoped to get back into Kinshasa's favor. On the other hand Western governments have also used the stick. In its weakest form, Western countries have expressed concerns about the DRC-Russia rapprochement publicly and directly to the Tshisekedi government. The issue was, for example, raised by Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo in a bilateral meeting with President Tshisekedi during the UN General Assembly last fall (Africa Intelligence 2022). It also came up during US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Kinshasa

in August 2022 (Amunga 2022). At its strongest, interviews showed how Western diplomats exercised pressure on Kinshasa not to switch to Russia, for example, by threatening with countermeasures such as a review of their ongoing collaborations.

In this overall context, frustrations with the West remain—particularly within the Congolese security sector. Security officials see weapons as a central issue: the West is very hesitant to supply weapons, instead preferring to supply non-lethal equipment. In the words of an army commander, "None of this would happen with Russia: sanctions, demands, human rights—none of this business would be present." It is therefore no surprise that the defence minister—who, as mentioned above, made particularly favorable statements on Russia—is a retired army general, and is mostly advised by army officers.

Interviews with security officials throughout the years signal how many of the military contacts with non-Western nations were driven by what they perceived as anti-Western sentiments. A high-level functionary who was involved in these negotiations, for example, explained the common thread through these as "see what the West proposes to you; it's terrible; we're here to help you when you want", which another interlocutor summarized as "let's hate the West."

The moment Russia intensified its efforts across the continent, and particularly from the eruption of the Russia-Ukraine war, these sentiments particularly turned towards Russia, with military commanders strongly pushing for a Russian intervention. A few examples (of different army commanders) to illustrate this:

> "Russia and other Asian countries have proven to be better partners for Africa: they have introduced a new concept in relations, we now talk about win-win (…) Which African country has developed with the mechanisms put in place by the Western bloc, of which Europe is the executor of the strategy? On the other hand, let's look at Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, recently CAR, Mali, etc., countries that work with Russia and China. I would not think twice, I would deal with Russia, China, and other Asian countries."

> "What is happening in Mali, I can't believe it. It is so noble and, in the current African context, very unexpected. They are right to say that the time has come for Africans to reclaim their independence. We are at a turning point."

Another senior commander called Putin "the absolute Master."

Civilian interlocutors working in the security sector did express more nuanced views—often anti-Western, but not necessarily pro-Russia. Here is one example:

> "Let's use the determination of the Ukrainians to resist against our aggressors before relying on Russia which will do absolutely nothing. Putin will never decide to attack Rwanda for us. So stop dreaming and supporting a meaningless carnival. The DRC is a giant. Unfortunately it has become a dwarf due to lack of self-esteem."

In this overall context, the broader public seems to generally hold pro-Russian attitudes. This was illustrated starkly by a nationwide poll conducted in January 2023, which showed that Russia has by far the most support among a roster of foreign countries and international organizations—61 percent of Congolese expressed a "good" or "very good" opinion of the country (GEC 2023).

Last, also among the general population, anti-Western sentiments on occasion translate into pro-Russia ones, although this is not necessarily widespread. Some manifestations of pro-Russia feeling appeared during demonstrations in support of the Congolese army in their fight against M23; some demonstrators—including a delegation of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the party of President Tshisekedi (Kabumba 2022)—held placards in support of Putin (CongoLeo 2022), asking him to intervene. In Kinshasa, various small demonstrations were held in support of Russia last year (Kakule 2022), and dozens of young people demonstrating against French President Emmanuel Macron's arrival in Kinshasa on a visit in early March 2023 were holding pro-Russian placards.

This environment is fertile ground for misinformation on social media, particularly against individual Western actors. A widely shared video purportedly showed the French ambassador being chased from the Congolese parliament, and another popular post showed images of a French plane stationed in the eastern Congo supposedly supplying weapons to M23. Both were incorrect and have been debunked in a number of publications (France 24, 2022a, 2022b), but they are indicative of the national mood.

5. The 'Lumumba scenario'

So, with all this pro-Russia sentiment, why hasn't the Tshisekedi government developed closer relations with Russia—for example, buying more weapons from Russia? There's

been pressure on the president to do so from a variety of constituencies within his administration. Yet, here the potential long-term consequences seem to play a role and are an important reason why the Russia option is not being pursued more thoroughly. Regime insiders and analysts cited one name—or, rather, one scenario—over and over: the "Lumumba scenario". In brief, Patrice Lumumba, DRC's first prime minister after independence, turned to Russia after not getting the support he needed from the West; it ultimately led to his assassination. Insiders claim that the current regime fears a similar scenario. The president and many other officials in the Congolese government don't feel that they are receiving the support they need from the West, therefore they are considering turning to Russia. They don't fear that pivoting to Russia would result in Tshisekedi's assassination, but they do worry that it would ultimately result in their losing power: the West would undoubtedly reduce its support (both politically and economically) for the regime, and this would threaten the power of President Tshisekedi, while the networks of former President Kabila, a potential rival, remain strong.

This helps explain why Tshisekedi now holds the Russia dossier so tightly. Throughout 2022—particularly in the second half of 2022—the various bodies working on foreign policy and security within the Congolese administration were full of discussion on the issue, but by the end of the year the dossier had largely disappeared from these fora. Instead, it became firmly controlled by the presidency. Since then, an increasing number of other actors have gotten involved in the DRC. Turkey, Russia's main competitor in Africa's arms market, has started delivering weapons to the Congolese government, as has South Africa (Ilunga 2023). The Congolese government has also started working with around 400 private Romanian soldiers and has bought Chinese military drones (Schlindwein 2023; de Rohan Chabot et al. 2023)

Russia may not even be in a position to provide the support the DRC would like. It's questionable whether the Wagner Group could send troops; their operations are already stretched thin in Africa, and it would be difficult for them to relocate from the Central African Republic, Mali, or Libya to the DRC. The Russian presence in Congo is also limited, generally. Its embassy, for example, has only five diplomatic staff members (Ambassade de la Fédération de Russie en République Démocratique du Congo 2023), a particularly small number compared to other missions. That being said, there is much more to Russian engagement than Wagner alone as its engagement in other African countries has shown.

Moreover, there is the question of how long the Tshisekedi government will remain on good terms with the Western diplomatic community. There are increasing concerns

on a range of governance issues such as the level of corruption in the Tshisekedi regime (including the direct entourage of the President) (Fayol et al. 2022), the auctioning of the oil blocks in protected areas, or a contested deal with the controversial businessman Dan Gertler (who is under US sanctions since 2017). The upcoming elections will be crucial—something which was explicitly expressed by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken upon his visit to Kinshasa in August 2022 (Ching 2022). But also here, there are already major worries looming (Congo Research Group and Ebuteli 2022). It remains to be seen how, and if, the relation with the West will hold in these circumstances.

6. Conclusions

This article has aimed to unpack the ways in which the struggle for influence between Russia and the West manifest themselves in the DRC. In doing so, it has made two main points: first, Russian support is rather a result of anti-Western sentiments than direct Russian pressure. In the DRC these sentiments have been magnified by the M23 rebellion and perceptions of Western complicity in this crisis. This has resulted in pressure within the Congolese administration, particularly from the security forces, to "shift to Russia."

Second, Russia was not only an avenue to protest the West, but also an instrument to exercise pressure. Increased geopolitical rivalry therefore allowed Kinshasa to increase its geopolitical leverage, although not always successfully. For example, a number of Congolese interlocutors argued the 'Russia threat' (i.e., to switch to the Russian side) was used unsuccessfully by the Tshisekedi regime to obtain more weapons from the West. Similarly, the argument was used by Kinshasa to force Western countries to call out Rwanda on the M23 issue which was perceived by some Congolese interlocutors to be more successful.

For now, the 'Russia card' seems to be off the table for Kinshasa. No Russian weapons have transpired, but a range of other weapon deals such as with Turkey (Ilunga 2023) or China (Bociaga 2023). Symbolically, the Congolese minister of defense met the Ukrainian vice-minister of defense on 11 February 2023 in Kinshasa where they stated their intent to improve their bilateral collaboration (Politico 2023). While a Russian weapons deal might be off the table, pro-Russian sentiments are not, both within and outside of the Congolese administration.

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Why Burundi intervenes in the DRC: Self-interest or Pan-Africanist considerations?

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Abstract

Questions have abounded as to what Burundi's motives and interests have been in sending troops and spearheading the intervention in the eastern DRC. With reference to the case of Burundi's intervention within the framework of the East African Community's (EAC) response to the growing conflict in the eastern DRC, this article considered a broad range of what Burundi's motives and interests might be. This included security and stability, both nationally and regionally, regional political dynamics and the position of Burundi within this, and trade and business opportunities.

However, this article argues although all of these have explanatory power, some of the complexity and nuance of the intervention is missed if we do not place it within the context of Pan-Africanist considerations, including that of African integration, African self-reliance and agency, and African ownership of and control over its own resources.

Keywords: Burundi, peace intervention, pan-Africanism, Great Lakes Region, DRC

1. Introduction

Burundi was the first country to offer troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2022 as part of East Africa's peace mission after a wave of attacks from the rebel group known as Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23). On 4 March 2023, Burundi's armed forces deployed troops to the eastern DRC according to the framework of the East African Community Regional Force (EACRF). The troop deployment is part of the implementation of the Nairobi agreement and the Luanda roadmap on the peace process in the DRC. The peace process was initiated as an attempt to find a solution to the security and humanitarian crisis caused by M23. Although the objective of the rebel group is not expressed in clear terms, the M23 seeks to control the eastern part of the DRC, an area which is endowed with a lot of strategic minerals. This area is located near the border between the DRC and two of its eastern neighbours, Rwanda and Uganda. Notably, Burundi and the DRC are both member states of the East African Community (EAC) and they share a significant borderland that includes Lake Tanganyika and the whole western part of Burundi. Peace initiatives in the Great Lakes Region have typically understood the conflict in individual states as being part of a regional problem with cross-border implications.

Questions have abounded as to what Burundi's motives and interests have been in sending troops and spearheading the intervention in the eastern DRC. Peace missions in Africa emerged in the 1990s and grew ever since with justifications ranging from national security to other more people-centred approaches justified by United Nations and African Union peacebuilding principles. Drawing from international relations theory, justifications for interventions can be located within realist, liberal, and constructivist frameworks. Typically, analyses concerning justifications for interventions tend to be situated within realist assumptions, with an emphasis on national interest and state security concerns. But from a more constructivist perspective, critiques of interpretations based solely on self-interest have been growing. These critiques include that the realist approach is too state-centric, reductionist, cynical, and—as applied to the African context—misses what might be termed pan-Africanist considerations. These pan-Africanist considerations include a growing sense of African agency, which perhaps manifests in the form of a kind of African loyalty, or banding together, and resistance to interference from 'outside'.

With reference to the case of Burundi's intervention within the EAC's response to the growing conflict in the eastern DRC, this article considers a broad range of

what Burundi's motives and interests might be. This includes security and stability, both nationally and regionally, regional political dynamics and the position of Burundi within this, and trade and business opportunities. But it also considers the colonial legacy and the ways in which, as is argued by decolonial scholars, the colonial legacy lives on in every aspect of how African states and societies function. Through such a pan-Africanist and decolonial lens, we can bring nuance to the more typical realist interpretations of Burundi's intervention, by understanding the unique relationship, and loyalty, that Burundi has to the DRC, the Great Lakes region, and the East African community more broadly.

This article begins by situating our discussion on Burundi's motives and interests within realist and constructivist frameworks, including a discussion on pan-Africanist considerations. It then briefly explores intervention on the African continent in relation to two aspects: invited versus uninvited intervention and external versus internal intervention. This is followed by a brief mapping of the context of Burundi's intervention within the unfolding situation in the DRC. Burundi's motives and interests are then explored along the following four themes: security and stability, both nationally and regionally; regional political dynamics and the position of Burundi within this; trade and business opportunities; and what we're terming pan-Africanist considerations and the colonial legacy.

2. Theoretical approaches to understanding the deployment of peacekeeping forces in Africa

There are several driving factors that can cause a state to get involved in the political and domestic affairs of another state in international relations. All driving factors can be located within a variety of theoretical perspectives—namely, the realist perspective, the liberal perspective, and the constructivist perspective.

From a realist perspective, the number one reason why a state would interfere in the affairs of another state is national interest. States are seen to be the most important actors in the international arena, and territorial integrity and military might are emphasised in order to protect the state as an entity. In the context of Burundi's intervention in the DRC, it can be argued that Burundi seeks to protect its national interests because the conflict in a neighbouring state can lead to instability in Burundi and, as such, constitutes a national security threat. Critiques of the traditional realist perspective have included that it is state-centric, reductionist, and cynical (Hendricks

2015, 9).

From a liberal perspective, the individual and not the state, is at the centre of the international system, and individuals are seen to be the building blocks of state power (Moravcsik 2001). This makes establishing institutions that ensure the rights and liberties of individuals a very important task. Liberals are concerned about militaristic foreign policies because wars are expensive and require building militaristic powers that can fight foreign states but can also hurt and oppress citizens on the flip side (McDonald 2009). The flaws of the liberal school include the blindness to inequality, the assumption that there are universal truths, and generalization which results in the use of a one-size-fits-all methodology to approach challenges (Keohane 2012; Wendt 1995). Both the liberal and realist theories are critiqued by the constructivist theories for their over-reliance on objectivity, amongst other things.

From a constructivist perspective, it is understood that our reality is constructed based on intersubjective relations (Wendt 1995). In terms of intervention, while the realist perspective can help us understand Burundi's intervention in DRC to a large extent, it misses some of the complexity and nuance underlying the multifaceted relationships that African neighbouring states have with one another and the continent. Manifestations of this can be seen in the emphasis by the African Union and individual African states on 'African Solutions to African Problems', the principle of subsidiarity, and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). These considerations not only place people at the centre of intervention as opposed to placing the state at the centre, but also speak to issues of African agency, African resistance to external 'interference', pan-Africanist interests, and the decolonial concern of addressing the ongoing colonial legacy.

3. Pan-Africanist considerations

In terms of understanding these pan-African considerations, an understanding of the historical contexts and its link to the current realities and aspirations of African states is necessary. Aneche (2019, 70) argues that while classical African regionalism was based on pan-Africanism born out of a shared commitment to decolonize—from the colonial administration, and later neo-colonial shackles—modern-day African regionalism is focused on achieving continental unity, collective self-reliance, economic transformation, and creating an agenda for solving African developmental challenges. Understanding the pan-African drivers and aspirations can bring nuance and complexity to understanding the relations between African states. Pan-Africanism is an intellectual,

political liberation movement relating to the aspiration of people of African descent around the world (Walters 1997, 34). The goal of pan-Africanism was the education, liberation, and unity of Africa.

Pan-Africanism was historically concerned with anti-colonial struggles or national wars of liberation, the decolonisation of Africa, the abolition of all forms of racial segregation and discrimination, and the rejection of economic dependence, neo-colonialism, and imperialism (Tageldin 2014). Post-independence Africa saw the drive for integration and unity continue through the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Amongst other reasons, this drive was a response to the last vestiges of colonialism, as well as to spur political and economic progress on the continent; it was also a political instrument to deal with coloniality and global apartheid as it affects the continent.

For decolonial scholars, the arrival of colonialization in Africa did not leave just the legacy of colonial administration, it also brought several structures with it that have been woven into African societies, including into its knowledge systems, governance, and cultures (Grosfoguel 2011). Decolonial scholars critically discuss these interwoven structures, which they argue have remained after the end of colonialism, particularly in control of the economy, authority, gender, sexuality, and control of subjectivity and knowledge as discussed by Quijano (2000) and reiterated by other decolonial scholars (Grosfoguel 2011, 11). They argue that decolonization through "delinking" is necessary—namely, to restructure the five-century political and economic system of "global apartheid: an international system of minority rule whose attributes include: differential access to human rights; wealth and power structured by race and place; structural racism, embedded in global economic processes, political institutions, and cultural assumptions; the international practice of double standards that assume inferior rights to be appropriate for certain "others", defined by location, origin, race, or gender (Booker and Minter 2001).

From a pan-Africanist and decolonial perspective, it is argued that, firstly, African conflicts have their roots in the colonial legacy, and that the colonial legacy would need to be addressed for the deep roots of the conflict to be resolved. Secondly, it is argued that international intervention is intertwined with political and economic self-interest, approaches to resolving conflict that are Eurocentric, divorced from African realities, and therefore less likely to be sustainable. The resistance to the International Criminal Court by African states is an example of the ways in which international intervention is increasingly being perceived to be 'interference' (Finnemore 1996; Jones 2001).

Increasing attention is being given to African agencies, including through the emphasis by the African Union and individual African states on 'African Solutions to African Problems', the principle of subsidiarity, and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The catchphrase "African solutions to African problems" was coined by the eminent political economist George Ayittey in response to the behaviour of the international community in the crisis in Somalia (Institute for security studies 2008). This phrase which became famous after the neglect Somalia faced in the wake of its Civil War in 1991, explains an approach to conflict across the continent that points to the development of ideas, concepts, approaches, and practices in peacebuilding by Africans. The logic here is that, when Africans develop their own ideas, they will be more committed to their implementation due to the resulting sense of ownership. This has been a major policy direction for the African Union and other sub-regional blocks across the continent. In this sense, Burundi's intervention in the DRC represents an Africa-led approach to conflict in a neighbouring state which is arguably justified under the African Union by the ill-defined principle of subsidiarity.

The principle of subsidiarity prioritizes local actors first and suggests that higher authorities will not get involved in matters unless the local authorities are unable to manage them (Djilo and Handy 2021). It is a concept that originated in the EU. The concept is still to be defined in Africa, as there are practical and legal matters that affect the application of this principle. This challenge is exacerbated by the undefined nature of the relationship between sub-regional blocks and the AU, especially with regard to operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The 2011 Kenya-in-Somalia case is an example of the application of this because it was justified by Kenya's proximity to the problem, apart from the threat to Kenya's national security (Throup 2012). Kenya had waited for AU intervention which did not come. Kenya's intervention in Somalia is almost similar to Burundi's deployment of forces into DRC. However, in the case of Burundi the military deployment was decided in agreement with the Congolese authority at both the bilateral and regional levels. In Kenya's case, Somalia expressed discontent with what it considered a unilateral decision by Kenyan authorities (Throup 2012).

Another justification under the Africa Union is the R2P. The responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing is an important global principle since the adoption of the UN World Summit Outcome Document in 2005 (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect n.d). The African Union (AU) as it is called today emerged out of the need to build the

right structures for accomplishing the responsibility to protect. The creation of the AU out of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) saw the organisation's development of the appropriate structures for peace interventions that have the potential to respond to African challenges (Khadiagala 2017). The R2P is justified on the basis that interventions by African states and regional bodies are based on the R2P principle, as an intervention on a larger international scale might come too late after major damages have already been done. Examples are the cases of the Rwandan genocide which received zero international responses in the first 100 days, resulting in the killing of thousands of people (Bellamy and Dunne 2016). Another example is the Somali conflict which was ignored for several years before a concerted international effort saw a transitional federal government established in 2013 (Loubser 2012).

4. Burundi's motivations and interests in intervening in the DRC

From a recent historical perspective, the intervention by Burundi in the DRC is not a new phenomenon. Burundi armed forces were involved in the 1996 war that led to the toppling of Mobutu's regime. They fought alongside the Rwandan and Ugandan troops. This coalition of armies together with a remnant of Congolese rebels operating under the leadership of Laurent Désiré Kabila, formed the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL). Under former President Pierre Buyoya, the Burundian army also played a role in the 1998 Second Congolese War (known as the First African World War as it involved around nine countries fighting in support of or against Laurent Désiré Kabila who was trying to get rid of Rwandan and Ugandan forces). At the same time, then Burundian rebels from the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) were supporting Laurent Désiré Kabila's troops as they fought against the Rwandan, Burundian, and Ugandan forces. This type of collaboration cemented ties between former rebel officers from the CNDD-FDD and officers from the Congolese Army, the FARDC. When the CNDD-FDD came to power in Burundi, the wartime ties remained between officers from both sides, and today these relationships still influence some of the decisions and actions taken by both governments regarding the security situation in the Great Lakes Region.

The Burundi troops deployed to the DRC have the mission of securing the areas left by the M23 rebel group during its withdrawal from the region of Masisi, Sake, and Kirolirwe, among others. Members of the EACRF from other contributing countries have been committed to securing other areas, depending on the unfolding dynamics in

North Kivu and on the movements of M23.

In this section three of the themes that capture Burundi's motives and interests are explored that could perhaps typically be understood as falling within the traditional realist framework—namely, security and stability, both nationally and regionally; regional political dynamics and the position of Burundi within this; and trade and business opportunities.

Security and stability

Arguably, the primary driving motivation for Burundi's intervention is that of security and stability. The instability in South and North Kivu represents a serious threat to security and stability in the region, especially along the border that Burundi shares with the DRC and because of existing tensions across the Great Lakes Region (International Crisis Group 2022). Burundi's political leadership is particularly sensitive to potential threats from the DRC. In the past there have been several skirmishes on Burundi territory, particularly in the western provinces of Bubanza, Bujumbura, and Cibitoke. During the attacks lives were lost, and properties were destroyed or looted. The attacks were carried out by armed groups under Burundian rebel leaders such as General Aloys Nzabampema (Deutsche Welle, 11/27/2022) with his FNL faction and other rebels claiming to belong to Red-Tabara. The proliferation of armed groups in the proximity of the border area is a common security threat for both countries.

In addition to armed groups, there is a perceived inability of the central government in the DRC to impose its authority at the periphery (Defis Humanitaires, 4/4/2023). The power vacuum prompts neighbouring states to take additional security measures. This explains why there is a lot of interest in ensuring that the security situation in the shared border area is under control and the pragmatic steps that the Burundi government has made to maintain safety for the citizens are implemented. The steps include, among other things, the deployment of troops along the border and the bilateral agreement with the DRC government to collaborate in tackling the problem of armed groups.

Since 2015 and following the electoral and political crisis that erupted in Burundi, an armed group known as RED-Tabara was created with the claimed intention of restoring the Arusha Peace Accords and the Rule of Law in Burundi. The armed group is made up of Burundi refugees who, with the support of Rwanda, managed to establish an operation centre in South Kivu, around the cities of Uvira, Fizi, and the surrounding mountains. The latest action from Red-Tabara was carried out in 2021

when it launched a mortar attack against the Melchior Ndadaye International Airport in Bujumbura and then returned to the DRC where its fighters have a rear base (News24, 19/9/2021). There have been other attacks in Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces in the past, but all ended unsuccessfully. However, every attack carried out, whether successful or not, increases a sense of insecurity for the local population and they cannot continue with their daily work in a normal way. For this reason, the government of Burundi has concluded a bilateral agreement between Burundi and the DRC armies to carry out joint operations aimed at eradicating armed groups like Red-Tabara (Deutsche Welle 2022).

The second security-related factor or issue is related to the spillover effects of violence that are linked to the ongoing fighting in the east of this country (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2015). Since 1998, the consequences of violence in eastern DRC have prompted the exodus of thousands of Congolese people, some of whom sought refuge in Burundi. According to the UNHCR, even today Burundi still hosts more than 85,000 Congolese refugees on its soil. As one of the most densely populated countries in the Great Lakes Region, the presence of Congolese refugees on Burundi's small territory increases the already unbearable demographic pressure the country is experiencing. According to recent statistics, Burundi has above 400 people per square kilometre with a territory of only 27,834 square kilometres (The Global Economy n.d). The big number of Congolese refugees living in Burundi represents an additional burden to a country which is struggling to find sustainable solutions against problems of food insecurity, shrinking arable land, and environmental challenges linked to increased use of firewood as observed in Musasa, Kinama, Kavumu, Bwagiriza and Nyankanda—the main camps with Congolese refugees (Mpabansi 2023). These are located in the northern and eastern provinces of Burundi.

Regional politics and the position of Burundi

The second factor is related to regional politics. The Democratic Republic of Congo recently became a member State of the East African Community (EAC). Reasons behind the DRC's move to seek membership in this regional bloc include the benefits of a regional security architecture which is being developed along with the establishment of an EAC standby force. As a member of the EAC, Burundi is under the obligation to offer support to a member state in a difficult situation. During the various meetings held by EAC heads of state and governments, it was agreed to combine efforts aimed

at stabilizing the eastern provinces of the DRC which have been plagued by violence for several decades now. EAC efforts to support the DRC could be understood in the framework of applying African solutions to African problems which has a regional and continental dimension. Burundi's intervention is a contribution to these regional and continental efforts towards peace in the DRC. These dynamics of regional integration are increasingly playing a role in determining the evolution of bilateral and multilateral cooperation inside and outside the EAC. Burundi takes this evolution into consideration as it has serious implications regarding the country's positioning in the region.

When the DRC joined the EAC in March 2022 there was a lot of hope regarding opportunities that would open in different economic and cooperation sectors (Mwangangi 2022). For the DRC becoming an EAC member state made a lot of sense as the country has a shared border with five out of six members of the community (Byeirs 2023). This had direct implications for the improvement of the security situation, the development of collective projects aimed at improving economic and trade infrastructure, and other activities related to regional integration (Buchanan-Clarke 2022). However, since the renewal of M23 attacks in North Kivu, there have been voices criticising the decision made by President Felix Tshisekedi to join the EAC. Those opposed to this decision have been expressing anger at the attitude of the Rwandan government which is accused of supporting the M23 rebel movement. The rebel movement is accused of being responsible for the loss of many lives and a massive exodus of the population from North Kivu (Githui-Ewart 2023). Since the renewal of M23 attacks, several military and diplomatic incidents occurred between the DRC and Rwanda and worsened the already strained relationships (Adunimay 2022).

They include, for instance, the severing of diplomatic relations through the closing of the Rwandan embassy in the DRC and the suspension of Rwandair flights to Kinshasa. In January 2023, the Rwandan forces shot at a Congolese warplane, thus escalating tensions between the two countries (Reuters 2023). It is believed that Rwanda and Uganda's governments represent key allies of the rebel movement which is wreaking havoc in eastern DRC. The position or attitude of both governments (Rwanda and Uganda) is considered hypocritical by a number of Congolese political actors and members of some civil society organisations. This explains why some of the peace initiatives have not been successful, as they are hindered by mistrust between the different government leaders in the region. Paul Simon Handy from ISS notes correctly that "the region's political culture is dominated by short-term alliances that conflict with Tshisekedi's vision of cooperative security" (Handy 2023). He also points to a serious

problem of competition between regional blocs such as EAC, SADC, or ICGLR over who leads peace initiatives, which becomes a barrier to achieving any tangible results.

Political tensions, and diplomatic and military incidents imply that the DRC has to develop alternative ties with other neighbours. It is in this perspective that Burundi comes into the picture. The focus on Burundi as a regional ally has implications for the evolution of the security and stability in Eastern DRC. First of all, if the DRC can be assured of a reliable ally along the border with South Kivu with the military capability to address the security challenges, it can focus on the situation in North Kivu. Burundi represents this possibility and has demonstrated its willingness and ability to do so by deploying troops to protect the border area. But Burundi, in doing so, is also ensuring its own security while fighting armed groups believed to be sponsored by the Rwandan government. Since 2015, there were reports of Burundian refugees from camps in Rwanda being given military training to attack Burundi via the DRC (Anderson 2017). This has led to political tensions between Burundi and Rwanda. At some point the tensions were so high that even the borders between the two countries were closed.

Even though in recent days the Burundi-Rwanda diplomatic ties have been renewed, there is a sense from the DRC that Burundi is still a more reliable ally than its neighbours in the north. Apart from the alliances created to boost security in the region, particularly in the East of the DRC, there are economic considerations, this time on behalf of Tanzania which is eyeing a regional trade expansion. The economy of Tanzania has been booming for several years and the government is looking for new markets. With its population of around 95 million people, the DRC represents an important market for Tanzanian and other East African products. Burundi is located between the two countries and will, in the near future, have to play the role of not only a transit zone for trade operations between Tanzania and DRC but also look for its own opportunities in this vast untapped market. Burundi's active involvement in the geopolitics shaping the relationships between Tanzania, the DRC, and other regional actors is based on how the country could benefit from the evolving political, security, and economic dynamics in the EAC and Central Africa regions.

Trade and business opportunities

Besides security challenges, there are economic and trade issues that the DRC could solve in collaboration with the EAC as a whole and with each of the community members, particularly those connected to the DRC (Buchanan-Clarke 2022). With a

population of around 95 million people, the DRC represents a huge market for the EAC. Being the most integrated economic bloc in Africa (East Africa Community 2020), the EAC is also in a position to offer the DRC many advantages in terms of trade facilities, infrastructure development, and ease of doing business.

Burundi is strategically located between the DRC and Tanzania and can play a pivotal role in enhancing trade links between the two East African giants. The development of a project known as the Central Corridor aims at connecting the region through transport infrastructure, especially roads, rail, and waterways. Due to the landlocked position of Burundi, it is important for the country to be an integral part of the Central Corridor project. It is precisely in this framework that the railway connecting the port of Dar es Salaam to Kindu in the DRC is being developed with sections of the railway passing through Musongati, Gitega, and Bujumbura in Burundi (Xinhua 2022). This will play a significant role in opening-up new transit roads and markets for Burundian producers (agriculture, mining, manufacturing, etc.). It is in this perspective that Burundi is playing an active role in ensuring that the Eastern part of the DRC is secured. The absence of stability and security in the region is an obvious hindrance to all the ambitious projects the countries within the EAC are developing at bilateral, multilateral, or regional level.

5. Pan-Africanist considerations in relation to Burundi's intervention

In a discussion in which he problematises African agency, Tieku (2013, 530) shows that Burundi's peace process used a 'Pan-Africanist approach … [which] created the space for African governments to assert their independence and to develop novel conflict instruments such as the Great Lakes Regional Initiative.' He argues that bilateral and multilateral cooperation between African states is 'one of the major enablers of African agency.'

As was discussed earlier in the article, central to the push for African integration and the formation of the EAC, were the pan-Africanist considerations of self-reliance, African agency, and African ownership of and control over its own resources (Aniche 2020). The development of the Central Corridor speaks to these same considerations. As was also alluded to earlier, Burundi's intervention in the DRC represents an Africa-led approach to conflict in a neighbouring state. Not only are Burundi and the DRC both members of the EAC, but more significantly, they have been part of the Great Lakes Regional Initiative (GLRI) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) which both emerged out of the understanding that conflicts in states

within the Great Lakes Region are irrevocably interconnected.

When M23 first emerged in April 2012, the ICGLR intervened on the basis of the Ezulwini Consensus, which emphasised that regional organisations needed to be empowered to intervene. The Ezulwini Consensus is a common African position on the proposed reform of the United Nations (UN) adopted by the African Union (AU) following the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that was adopted in 2005. Tunamsifu (2017) argues though that efforts by the ICGLR were undermined by the fact that two of its members, Rwanda and Uganda, were implicated in the emergence of M23, and thus it became impossible to find consensus or to take action against responsible member states.

Although much has been written about Rwanda-Burundi and Rwanda-DRC relations, and particularly the contentious position that Rwanda holds in the region, far less has been written about Burundi-DRC relations. Burundi and the DRC are the only countries within the EAC where French is used as a key official language that dominates political, trade, and diplomatic exchanges. This plays an important role in their rapprochement. Burundi and the DRC also share a colonial legacy where they were both under the Belgian colonial authority. These factors play a role in developing bilateral agreements and in building trust between the two countries.

6. Conclusion

This article has considered a broad range of what Burundi's motives and interests might be in terms of its intervention in the DRC within the framework of the East African Community's (EAC) response to the growing conflict in the eastern DRC. Possible motives and interests that were explored included security and stability, both nationally and regionally, regional political dynamics and the position of Burundi within this, and trade and business opportunities.

This article has discussed that in terms of intervention, while the realist perspective can help us understand Burundi's intervention in the DRC to a large extent, an additional layer of complexity is the multifaceted relationships that neighbouring African states have with one another and with the continent. Manifestations of this can be seen in the emphasis by the African Union and individual African states on 'African Solutions to African Problems', the principle of subsidiarity, and the Responsibility to Protect. These considerations not only place people at the centre of intervention as opposed to placing the state at the centre, but they also speak to issues of African agency, African

resistance to external 'interference', Pan-Africanist interests, and the decolonial concern of addressing the ongoing colonial legacy.

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Decolonizing Knowledge Production and Power Relations in African Studies: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

Intellectual efforts at removing the vestiges of colonialism in knowledge production and power relations in African studies are not recent phenomena. Power relations in this context refer to the binary nature of relations between Africa and the Western world in terms of knowledge production, application, and transference. In terms of its chronology, it has been in existence as far as the first decade of independence from European colonialism in the late 1950s. Despite the novelty of these cerebral efforts in African studies in the postcolonial era, little or no progress has been achieved in its application in our knowledge production processes. Postcolonialism as an intellectual binocular in the social sciences remains an under-explored standpoint even by African researchers in African Universities.

Keywords: African Studies, Post-colonialism, International Relations, African Epistemology, Imperialism

1. Introduction

Intellectual efforts at removing the vestiges of colonialism in knowledge production and power relations in African studies are not recent phenomena. From the inception of the European invasion of Africa in the 17th century, resistance to European imperialism started in many African colonies under the leadership of the traditional African rulers. These sets of Africans were referred to as traditional nationalists. They were eventually succeeded by the educated elites from the late 1920s and referred

to as modern nationalists. While the effort of these people was targeted at political decolonization, it does serve as an intellectual background to the much-touted post-independent intellectual movement of postcolonialism which is a postmodernist effort at a radical reorientation of epistemological processes and power relations in African studies. This intellectual movement has been necessitated by Africa's relationship with Europe since the time of colonialism. This is because the imperial relations created what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) describes as the cognitive empire, which I describe as the mental slavery of Africans by the European imperialists. Africa is one of the numerous global epistemic sites that experienced not just colonial genocides but theft of history (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Goody, 2006). Africa in its relations with Europe has also experienced epistemicides and linguicide (Ngugi waThiongo, 2009a, 2009b). The former refers to the extermination of indigenous knowledge while the latter refers to the eradication of indigenous languages. These two fundamental flaws from European colonialism form the basis of the intellectual struggle against its protracted influence in the postcolonial era. Despite the plethora of Afrocentric arguments (Crossman and Devich, 1999; Momoh, 2003; Zeleza and Olukoshi, 2004; Fonlon, 2009; Mamdani, 2016; Gebrial et al, 2018; Shilliam, 2018) about the need for the decolonization of epistemological processes in African studies, little progress has been achieved in more than five decades of the emergence of postcolonialism as alternative African intellectual binoculars for Africans and Africanists. At its best, African Universities which are the centre of knowledge production were only decolonized in personnel recruitment while the imperial pedagogical structures, curricula, and methodologies remain intact (Nyamnjoh, 2019).

2. Epistemic Decolonization in African Studies

The quest for an African-based epistemology and methodology in African studies has attracted the attention of many scholars, and for several decades since independence most of the focus has been on the decolonization of postcolonial universities (Momoh, 2003; Nabudere, 2003; Nyamnjoh, 2019). The argument in this regard is that postcolonial universities were jointly established by the erstwhile colonial masters and the indigenous, postcolonial governments and, as such, they are merely sustaining the colonial legacies in the postcolonial era (Bhambara et al, 2018). Another criticism of the postcolonial universities is that they have been functioning as satellite campuses of the universities in the imperial metropole(Lumumba, 2006). This is because their

epistemic and methodological basis is still Eurocentric and devoid of what is needed to solve Africa's identity crisis and epistemic freedom (Gwaravanda, 2019). The call for the decolonization of knowledge production in African studies has occurred in different waves across Africa at different times and it dated back to as far as the independence of Ghana in 1957(Jansen, 2017). For instance, the first waves of calls for epistemic decolonization took place in the latter part of the 20th century (Mbembe, 2016). The works of scholars like Frantz Fanon 1961 and Edward Said (1978) in his book Orientalism provide a sound intellectual basis for subsequent postcolonial theorists. In his two treatises, Fanon examined the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonized and the colonizers with an argument that the native's development of self is through the conditions imposed by the colonial masters(Mambrol, 2016). This was achieved through imperial representation and discourse of the natives while the colonizers developed a sense of superiority. Consequently, Fanon (1961) initiated a psychoanalytical theory of postcolonialism where he explained that the European self develops in its relation and encounter with others. This in turn results in psychological inadequacy which makes the natives try to be as white as possible by adopting Western values to the detriment of their values. Fanon then advocated the idea of national literature and national culture as panaceas to national consciousness that is critical to any decolonization effort. Writing on a major consequence of colonialism in the postcolonial era, Edward Said (1978) gives a succinct mental picture of scholars who studied the orient disregarding the views of their subjects of study and arrogantly rely on their intellectual superiority as well as that of their peers. He faulted these writings by arguing that a true epistemological system should encapsulate the views of both the orient and the occident—namely, a view that their existence is a complementary and not mutually exclusive phenomenon. Ake (1982) argued that the mainstream Western social sciences scholarship on Africa and other third-world nations can only be described as imperialism. He further explained that the West's domination of developing countries is not just because of their superior economic and military power, but because of their imposed idea of development on these countries (Ake 1982:141).

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni(2018) the challenge of Africa in the 21st century can best be described as that of an epistemic battle different from the colour battle of the 20th century. However, there is a connection between the epistemic battle and the colour battle. This nexus, as he argued, is determined by the racist denial of the humanity of the colonized which eventually disqualified them from epistemic virtue. He described the psychological effect of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized, using the

concept of "the cognitive empire":

> The cognitive empire is that form of imperialism which invades the mental universe of its victims and in the process imposing particular knowledge systems, displacing others and consequently shaping the intellectual consciousness of its victims." (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020:5).

The imperial invasion of the intellectual space of the colonized through colonialism is thus a major task that has occupied the mind of many postcolonial thinkers, and this has also been described as the second phase in the fight against colonialism and its numerous ominous effects on the postcolonial era. As a consequence of the plethora of literature about the persistent narrow and Eurocentric basis of knowledge production in postcolonial Africa, there has been an increasing call in the academia for the decolonization of African universities (Chaka, Lephalala and Ngesi, 2017; Mheta, Lungu and Govender, 2018). The call is necessitated by the centrality of the university in the epistemological processes and the need to purge its system of Eurocentric knowledge production. However, scholars were of diverse opinions in their quest for epistemic freedom in African studies. While some (Nadubere, 2003; Momoh, 2003) argued for an African epistemology and methodology, others (Icaza and Vasquez, 2018) argued for diversity in knowledge production, while noting the ills associated with the Eurocentric basis of knowledge production. Despite the numerous call for the decolonization of African universities since independence, African universities without notable exception have only Africanized their personnel while their pedagogical structures, curricula, and epistemology remains the same as those inherited from the European imperialists(Nyamnjoh, 2019).

Heleta(2018) argued that the imperial and Eurocentric epistemic system inherited from the European colonial masters needs yet to transform even in the first two decades of democracy in South Africa. That the students in South Africa are the ones spearheading the protests and not university academics and administrators,reflects the desire to maintain the status quo in knowledge production by postcolonial African leaders. This implies that the task of decolonization of knowledge production in Africa is an effort that requires the collaboration of all the stakeholders. Correspondingly, Nadubere(2003) argued that the existing African universities have failed to generate the kind of knowledge environment that is a prerequisite for the social and economic transformation of their societies. They have continued to reproduce Eurocentric

knowledge, dependent on its actualization in the centres that exploit the African people and utilise Africans. In a similar perspective, Lumumba (2006) indicted the postcolonial African leaders as the forerunner for the sustenance of the European colonial legacy in knowledge production in African studies:

> The colonial powers essentially employed force in reshaping African education. Despite the criticisms of this Eurocentric knowledge production system, African leaders who are influenced by this same educational system developed a mindset that viewed European education as good for Africa. Thus, through the dynamic of European colonial education and African leaders' demand for the integral transfer of European education into their different societies, African education was caught in a dependence trap. This repulsive development did not exclude institutions that were created after independence as they have been modelled in the forms of the systems of the colonial powers and their extensions in the west (Lumumba, 2006:31).

Expressing a similar view, (Vilakazi 1999:205) argued that:

> For more than forty years on, African universities and the African governments that established them had dismally failed to chart new paths for Africa's emancipation and liberation and Africa finds itself in deep, multidimensional crises that require deeply thought out solutions and responses, if the African rebirth is ever to be achieved.

This assertion blames postcolonial governments for the continued flourishing of the European cognitive empire in Africa.

3. African Epistemology: A Critique

Despite the myriad of scholarly works with optimistic views about an African-based epistemology, several scholarly works have critiqued the African method of knowledge productionand its philosophy that is claimed to be inseparable. Most importantly, African epistemology has been criticized based on its metaphysical nature and global competitiveness even in the global south. Nwosimiri (2019) argued that based on our common humanity and our interaction with each other, irrespective of race, African

epistemology is not as distinct or unique as the protagonist of African epistemology had claimed. He further explained that such a claim is partially driven by a non-epistemic move. Similarly, Udefi(2014) argued that definitional issues and clarity of the sufficiency of an African-based epistemology are some of the problems that are still confronting the idea and the discourse of an African-based epistemology. He further noted that this misconception about the idea is based on the meaning ascribed to the concept by its advocates while their interpretations are fluid and inappropriate with present African realities in their relations with the rest of the world. In his work, he did reconstruction and delineation of African epistemology in a way that reflects the appropriate African epistemological and ontological conceptualization with insights from the Igbo traditional thought system. Writing from a more affirmative perspective, Alem(2019) examines the fitness of an African epistemological system in scientific knowledge. The study revealed that there are thought systems in Africa that can have equivalent value to scientific practices in the Western paradigm system and their scientific status is as valid as that of the West. Examining the veracity of an African epistemology, Ndubuisi (2014) argued for the centrality of logic in African epistemology with a further explanation that logic provides African epistemologists with a coherent and methodical approach to objective knowledge acquisition. While so much has been written about the ills of colonialism and its effect on knowledge production and power relations in the postcolonial era as well as the pros and cons of an African epistemology itself, few studies have addressed the issue of the visibility and challenges of the quest for African epistemic freedom.

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Review article:

The Delusion of Apartheid and the African National Congress: Sizwe's Mythmaking and South African Politics

Mpofu-Walsh, Sizwe. 2021. *The New Apartheid*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 184 pp., Price (Inc. VAT): R 299.00/ $10.49 (Softcover) ISBN: 9780624088547

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The book under review entitled *The New Apartheid* by Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh, is another contribution to the debate and critique of the so-called post-Apartheid dispensation. The African National Congress (ANC)-led post-1994 non-racial constitutional dispensation is evidently falling apart. The African majority faces the frustration of not being able to reconcile the idealistic liberal rights embedded in the final constitution and their daily existence of squalor, misery, and survival due to terrifying socio-economic conditions. In this book, Mpofu-Walsh aims to account for the dehumanising circumstances of the African majority, argues that Apartheid did not die, but was merely privatised. The book foregrounds the role of Neoliberalism in the worsening socio-economic conditions of the African majority. The vector of race in determining one's socio-economic condition as a member of the African majority is now overtaken by the market logic. Readers of this book can expect to be treated to several salient themes, such as law, space, wealth, technology, and punishment. The book is written in a succinct manner, thus ordinary readers can easily get the gist of the argument. The fundamental argument that Apartheid was not dismantled completely, but was transformed through a market logic of neoliberalism is proffered in a manner which suggests that Mpofu-Walsh is aligned to the Congress Tradition of the ANC. The detection of this ideological bias requires one to be a knowledgeable reader and student of South African history and politics.

The fundamental distinction between a civil rights movement such as the ANC and a liberation movement like Poqo lies in the status of white settlers and Apartheid. The mythologisation of Apartheid by promoting it as the main problem in liberation

politics and history in "conqueror South Africa" (Ramose 2018,330), is the persistent intellectual obsession of the Congress Tradition. A trenchant contestation and rejection of Apartheid as the fundamental antagonism in the history of the struggle for national liberation is the defining trait of a liberation movement and intellectual liberation production. Due to the triumph of the civil rights movement of the ANC in 1994, the Congress Tradition as an ideological and intellectual paradigm, has attained a hegemonic status with the help of white liberals (Mafeje 1998). At the Congress Tradition's very origin is the Freedom Charter's embrace and propagation (Pheko 2012). This is why the Congress Tradition is premised on Charterism (Raboroko 1960). Adopted in reaction to the dominance of the so-called Afrikaner nationalism in 1955, the Kliptown Charter (Sobukwe 1957) is the core of Charterism which centralises Apartheid as the main problem. Liberal non-racialism (Dladla 2018; Soske 2017) as an antidote to the rabid and clumsy racism of the Apartheid regime, is encapsulated in the Congress of the People's annoying fixation with the naïve fantasy of South Africa belonging to all who live in it, both black and white… Mpofu-Walsh is an organic product and a 'bright' example of the triumph of Tutu's curse of blacks and whites belonging together in South Africa, literally. While the Congress of the People was preoccupied with the old Apartheid, Sizwe and his fellow Charterist intellectuals were obsessing about the new Apartheid in 'post-Apartheid' South Africa. Having written a book entitled *Democracy & Delusion: 10 Myths (2017),* in which he debunks what he considers to be myths about the so-called post-Apartheid South Africa, Sizwe is back again, only this time he is reinventing two myths.

   This first myth is about the centrality of Apartheid as *the* problem in liberation politics and history, while the second myth is about the ANC being a liberation movement. This is how Sizwe (Mpofu-Walsh 2021, 178) reinvents the first Charterist myth "Defining a central social problem takes generations. In hindsight, the struggle against formal apartheid appears coherent and premeditated. *But identifying apartheid as the problem* took eternities of debate, struggle, and reflection" (author's emphasis in italics). Within the Africanist Tradition as the opposite of the Charterist Tradition of Sizwe, Peter Raboroko has debunked Sizwe's two myths in a piece called *The Africanist Case* (1960). The Africanist tradition, later called the Azanian Tradition, broke away from the civil rights logic of the ANC in 1959 due to the Charterists' betrayal of the fundamental question of historic justice, namely to whom does the land belong? Anton Lembede (Lembede 2015) and Robert Sobukwe(Sobukwe 1957) later emphasised that Europeans are alien conquerors who dispossessed the Indigenous people of their land.

The land dispossession took place in 1652 and not in 1948, making the horrible date of 1652 fundamentally important in the Africanist and Azanian Traditions. This implies that the fundamental problem is not Apartheid, be it old or new, however, conquest in the form of land dispossession since 1652 in wars of colonisation (Ramose 2007).

Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh (Mpofu-Walsh 2021, 23) reinforces his second Charterist myth by stating the following; "Furthermore, when the liberation movement was nationalised, it assumed apartheid's debts. These debts further constrained ANC policy choices and limited fundamental reform". According to Sizwe, his book *The New Apartheid* posits that Apartheid did not die; it was privatised. The idea that the neoliberal market logic that is central to the current economic system in South Africa can be traced to the final stages of the Apartheid regime, has some element of truth. This is since F. W. De Klerk as a *verligte* (person of any of the white political parties who supported liberal trends in government policy) reformer of the regime met with Margret Thatcher to discuss economic reforms necessary to transition South Africa into the new neoliberal hegemony. The ANC's inheritance of the Apartheid debts which were ironically incurred by the regime in its oppression and killing of the African majority, is central to the argument by for instance Julius Malema, that the figure of Nelson Mandela symbolises the achievement of political freedom without economic freedom. The privatisation of Apartheid as Sizwe (Mpofu-Walsh 2021, 12) posits, does not entail the "death of the State." The provision of social security and welfare as embedded in many social policy documents on housing, for instance and the provision of social grants shows that the ANC-led government is still involved in its Keynesian macroeconomic role through fiscal policy. This, however, does not mean that the private sector which is dominant in the South African white settler economy does not determine to a large extent the direction of the economy. Proponents of 'white monopoly capital', such as Chris Malikane and Andile Mngxitama, are partially correct regarding the nature of the white settler political economy of South Africa. The problem with Sizwe's analysis is that it uses abstract terms such as 'privatised' instead of the more slightly historically accurate terms such as 'The Stellenbosch mafia' and 'white monopoly capital' or what we prefer to call racial capitalism as postulated by Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism* (2000). This is because given the nature of a white settler, colonial political economy as analysed extensively by Bernard Magubane in *The political economy of Race and Class* (1979), Sizwe's so-called private actors or private sector comprises of white settlers who connive with Euro-American foreign owners of capital. Neo-leftist historians, such as Martin Legassick and Harold Wolpe, have discussed the relation between capitalism (in

the form of foreign and local capital owned by whites) and the Apartheid regime as early as the 1970s, something which Sizwe fails to discuss in this book. The literature on the nature of the South African political economy and the transition stage is dominated by thinkers such as Patrick Bond in *Elite Transition* (2000) and Sampie Terreblanche in *Lost in Transformation* (2012). Among others, these two books analyse the so-called negotiations which foreground the agency of the ANC, despite global structural constraints in making the economic concessions to fully integrate South Africa into the global system of Neoliberal fundamentalism. The ANC's abandonment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) project and the embarrassing embrace of the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) by Thabo Mbeki captures the 'economic soul' of the ANC comprising of 'civilised natives' who obsess about appeasing their white masters. The subjectivity of the founders and leaders of the ANC as the "New Africans" (Masilela 2013) is to a large extent responsible for the treacherous mess during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The economic concessions made by the ANC during the 'secret talks' are now absurdly justified by the myth of the so-called two-stage theory of the National Democratic Revolution, which will never get to the second stage of socialism despite the Marxist rhetoric of the elite leaders of the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance. The ANC's moderate liberal pragmatism captures the "soul of the ANC" (Gumede 2007,25). Sizwe's book fails to provide this extensive analysis of the South African political economy and the role of the ANC as comprising of 'civilised natives' with double consciousness deriving from their Amakholwa heritage since its founding moment in 1912.

The book investigates the afterlife of Apartheid, which was made new by being privatised through the market logic of neoliberalism. Sizwe argued that the dominance of private actors diminished the power of the State. In this sense, Sizwe's fellow Charterist intellectual comrade, Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, argues in the blurb of this book that it "explodes the myth that apartheid is a thing of the past". From an Africanist Tradition's position, this 'explosion' is pointless since apartheid was never the problem, however, a mere regime invented by Dutch settlers who, under the delusion of indigeneity, called themselves the Afrikaners. These delusional architects of the regime of apartheid merely reconfigured white settler colonialism, which commenced with conquest in the form of land dispossession and intellectual warfare (Carruthers 1999) in 1652 in wars of colonisation (Ramose 2006). Only Charterist intellectuals like Sizwe and Tembeka, and their ideological victims see the need to 'explode' the myth of apartheid being a thing of the past. White settler colonialism and white supremacy

in South African politics preceded apartheid and transcended it in the so-called post-apartheid South Africa. Apartheid, as a political regime of Dutch settlers, was a clumsy manifestation of white supremacy. This regime is not *the* problem; white supremacy is *the* main antagonism. White supremacy does not need apartheid. This is why white supremacy has outlived the regime of apartheid under liberal constitutional democracy in the current so-called new South Africa. White liberals (Mafeje 1998) like Hellen Zille and Merle Lipton (2007) know very well that, apartheid as a clumsy political regime was too costly for white supremacy, hence, they had to intervene ideologically in 1994 to secure the afterlife of white supremacy under a liberal constitutional democracy. The idea of white liberals intervening ideologically to reinforce white settler colonialism, entailed the reformation of white supremacy and not only Apartheid. The entire epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror in the form of law, politics, culture, and economics is what Sizwe fails to understand by narrowing the antagonism to a mere regime of Apartheid. Mafeje (1998) provided a critique of black nationalists in the ANC in terms of how they conceded intellectual leadership to white liberals. The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) under Sobukwe and the so-called 'Gang of 8' under the Makiwane brothers, rejected white intellectual leadership and were expelled by the ANC leadership under Tambo and Slovo. The fundamental point which Sizwe, who is ideologically aligned with the Congress Tradition, fails to comprehend is that the ANC has a 'liberal soul' and only turned to the so-called arms-struggle when peaceful discussions with white settlers were not eventuating in the extension of democratic rights to the African majority. The ANC's moderate black liberalism accounts for the Nationalist Party's embrace of the ANC as the main discussant during the 'secret talks'. It is in this sense that many of the points advanced by the verligte/liberal members of the Nationalist Party in terms of constitutional guidelines and other economic reforms were readily accepted by the ANC, despite its rhetoric of radicalism ala two-stage theory of revolution and the so-called the Freedom Charter. The ANC, just like Sizwe, has always conflated white supremacy with Apartheid, and this is why it regards itself as an anti-apartheid movement. This is true since there is a distinction between an anti-apartheid movement and a liberation movement. An anti-apartheid movement confines itself to racial discrimination and oppression of blacks under the 'Afrikaner' nationalist governance, while a liberation movement like Poqo is concerned with white settlers and white settler colonialism in its entirety which commenced in 1652 with land dispossession, thus 'Izwe Lethu' as opposed to 1948 and the extension of civil rights to the excluded blacks. Sizwe does not seem to understand this fundamental disparity

between the democratisation paradigm of the ANC and the decolonisation paradigm of Poqo. This is why Sizwe obsesses about a regime of white supremacy, and not white supremacy itself. In promoting the two myths of apartheid as *the* problem and the ANC as a liberation movement, Sizwe indulges in Charterist delusions throughout the book. The book is divided into five sections: Space; Law; Wealth; Technology; and Punishment. The book also offers a relevant discussion of the so-called Apartheid spatial planning. The persistence of the disjuncture between the city and the township reflects the bleak reality of the African majority in 'post-apartheid South Africa'. Sizwe provides a slightly different criticism of the current debate surrounding the constitution. Contemporary discussions on South African law are dominated by the debate concerning the final constitution. Sizwe does not seem to be blinded by the centralisation of law which comes with legal training. This gives the book a different angle about the nature of law. The section on wealth rehashes the bleak statistics regarding the miserable socio-economic conditions of the African majority. The lack of access to resources due to racial capitalism and the dominance of the market logic as discussed by Sizwe show that 'the most liberal constitution in the world' cannot save the African majority from poverty and inequality; if anything, it will continue to reinforce white supremacy and privilege. For someone who obsesses about apartheid, the section on Space is a well-presented summation of the racist production of social space by the apartheid regime. The section on Law is by far the most rewarding portion of this myth-making book. Sizwe's criticism of the two schools of constitutionalism, namely the triumphalist, which is embraced by his fellow Charterist intellectual Ngcukaitobi (2018 & 2021), and the abolitionist as 'forged' by Ndumiso Dladla (2018) and Joel Modiri (2018), was indicative of Sizwe's commendable yet shallow comprehension of legal philosophy. His critical point about the two schools' naïve belief in the power of law was quite interesting. Sizwe's legal and constitutional scepticism and its critique of the legalism of the constitutional abolitionists and triumphalists, is by far the only important aspect about the entire book. Sizwe (Mpofu-Walsh 2021, 68) states it as, "Both constitutional triumphalist and constitutional abolitionist overestimate law's potential for transformative change. This belief in legal centrality is not uncommon among lawyers". It was interesting to see a Charterist intellectual mythmaker like Sizwe engage with the Azanian Tradition honestly by citing the scholars and debunking the myth of legalism in these constitutional schools. Given the ideological flipflopping of Tshepo Madlingozi, we cannot classify him under the Azanian Tradition, however, we can credit him as an influence on Sizwe's first myth of apartheid as *the* problem. As

Sizwe is familiar with the scholarship of Madlingozi, in particular his article on *Social justice in a time of Neo-apartheid constitutionalism*, he cites it. The transition from neo- to new is not a long journey to apartheid mythmaking.

Another interesting section is that of Wealth. This is the section, which foregrounds the privatisation of apartheid. It delves into the rise of market logic within apartheid and how it affected the governance of the ANC in the 'post-apartheid era' in terms of policy and debts. While in the section on Law, Sizwe demonstrated a shallow, yet commendable grasp of legal philosophy and the section on Wealth is a manifestation of his shallow comprehension of the history of economic thought. Sizwe's discussion of neoliberalism is not impressive, it does not show a solid grasp of the literature on the origin of neoliberalism. Merely quoting Von Hayek is not sufficient. Ludwig Von Misses, Mont Pellerin Society, Austrian School of Economics, German historical school, and the Chicago School of Economics and its second-hand dealers in ideas literature should have been given a brief exposition. Regarding second-hand dealers in ideas, Sizwe should have at least discussed books by Diane Stone called *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process* (1996) and *Second-Hand Dealers in Ideas: Think Tanks and Thatcherite Hegemony* (1994) by Radhika Desai. These two books provide an extensive analysis and history of the intellectuals behind neoliberalism and the evolution of its hegemony. Sections on Technology and Punishment are important, however, mundane. Ironically, the Conclusion is quite significant. It is here that Charterist mythmaking reaches 'explosive' heights. The Conclusion is certainly Sizwe's 'brightest' moment of Charterism. The conceptualisation of the 1994 Civil Rights project of the ANC as the first republic is, however, a less sophisticated way of expressing the mythmaking of the Congress Tradition. Eddy Maloka (2022), a fellow traveller in the Charterist journey of mythmaking in South African politics, has called for a Second Republic in an awkwardly passionate fashion. Exhibiting the naïve and embarrassing integrationist double-consciousness of the ANC since its founding moment by 'civilised natives' confused by Cape liberal indoctrination, both Sizwe and Maloka refuse to trace (white) South African republicanism to the 1852 moment as a racist invention of the Dutch settlers who called it *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* or the South African Republic. Their dishonest Charterist South African republicanism refuses to acknowledge the two republics of 1852 and 1961, which preceded their myth of the 1994 first republic. Tired of the radical pretensions of his shallow grasp of legal philosophy, Sizwe 'Concludes' by celebrating the Constitution. As a typical Black liberal, Sizwe shamelessly flirts with Karl Klare's (1998) transformative constitutionalism. This

is how Sizwe (Mpofu-Walsh 2021, 163) confesses his proud flirtations "my argument, then, is not that the constitution should be entirely abolished but that it should be substantially transformed. I admit, and indeed celebrate the constitution's achievements and advances. I believe in a constitutional democracy. And I do not take for granted the constitution's role in extending the franchise and inaugurating the rule of law". His Charterist fellow traveller Tembeka, accompanied him in this mythmaking journey of the Congress Tradition by stating that (Ngcukaitobi 2021, 226) "our forefathers were in a struggle so that we could have access to the law…They were fighting for the law. We cannot abandon the law". Thus, we have displayed both radical and moderate black liberalism in jurisprudence in the form of the Azanian and Congress traditions. Like a typical flipflopping Coloured in South Africa, Sizwe, who absurdly regards English as indigenous and places it on equal footing with IsiXhosa, encapsulated why he is Mpofu-Walsh. This happens when you intellectualise the myth of South Africa belonging to all who live in it, black and white.

In conclusion, Sizwe wrote his first book (Mpofu-Walsh 2017) to debunk 10 myths only to write another one under review to reinvent two myths of Charterism, namely *the* (delusion) problem of apartheid and the ANC as a liberation movement.

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