



Co-operating to Disarm

**AN ASSESSMENT OF ILLICIT SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
PROLIFERATION AND FRAGILITY SITUATIONS**

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO





Co-operating to Disarm

VISION

“A safe and secure sub – region in a peaceful continent free from arms proliferation”

MISSION

To coordinate action against Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa

CORE VALUES

Flexibility
Gender Sensitivity
Integrity
Professionalism
Partnership
Team Work
Transparency

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACL	Authority, Capacity and Legitimacy
ADF	Allied Democratic Force
CAR	Central African Republic
CENCO	National Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo
CNDP	The National Congress for the Defence of the People
CONADER	Commission Nationale de Démobilisation et Réinsertion
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDRL	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FNL	National Liberation Forces
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GPRSP	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of Congo
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
PNDDR	Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation, et Réinsertion
RCD	Rally for Congolese Democracy
RECSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
UE-PNDDR	Unité d'Exécution du Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UN-OCHA	United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its independence from Belgium in 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced armed conflicts and mutinies staged by rebels and pro-government forces leading to fragility situations manifested in the several incidences of forceful take-over of government. The Fund for Peace ranked the DRC 173rd out of 178 countries on the Fragile States Index of 2015.

The overall objective of this research was to establish the nexus between small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation and fragility situations and how both impact on human development and livelihoods. Fragility situation in the DRC are manifested by presence of armed groups (80%), peacekeeping forces (71%), IDP camps (70%), ungoverned spaces (69%) and humanitarian agencies (68%) while the drivers of fragility situations were identified as weak governance (89%), protracted conflicts (81%), proliferation of illicit SALW (79%), economic and social exclusion (70%) and porous borders (61%).

The minimal interventions put in place by government in partnership with regional and international actors have largely been inadequate. In order to build resilience, the study recommends strengthening of governance institutions, addressing proliferation of SALW, a comprehensive security sector reform, sensitization and awareness creation, provision of alternative livelihood interventions and post conflict reconstruction.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Country Prolife

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa, located at the centre of Africa and sharing borders with nine countries. It covers an area of 2.3 million square kilometres, with 40% of the population living in urban areas.¹ The country has not been able to conduct regular census due to security challenges. The DRC's population size is, nevertheless, estimated at between 78-82 millions. According to a UNHCR report, the DRC is a country endowed with very many resources.² It has the potential to become one of the richest countries in Africa, but continued armed conflicts have left the country unstable and insecure.

The 2015 Fragile States Index ranked the DRC 173rd out of 178 countries, joining South Sudan, Somalia,

Central African Republic and Sudan at the most fragile end of the index. Concerning fragility situations, the four countries are among the group of 'worst performers'.³ Fragility situations and the presence of illicit SALW in the DRC are a result of multiple factors. These include the fall of the Mobutu regime and the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide that saw a massive influx of refugees into the eastern regions of the country. Additionally, the systematic human rights violations including the use of rape as a weapon of war, the militarized economy based on extortion, plunder (especially of the natural resources) and the multiple conflicts have all amplified the fragility situations in the country.

¹Maps of World, 2015. "Where is Democratic Republic of Congo." Available at: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/democratic-republic-of-congo/democratic-republic-of-congo-location-map.html> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

²UNHCR, 2015. "UNHCR 2015 planning figures for Democratic Republic of the Congo." Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/5461e5fd16.pdf> (Accessed on 18/01/2016)

³The Fund for Peace, 2015. "Fragile States Index 2015." Available at: <http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/fragilestatesindex-2015.pdf> (Accessed on 18/02/2016)

Figure 1: Political map of the DRC



Source: Maps of World⁴

Despite relative calm in Kinshasa the capital of the DRC, in the last two decades, the country has experienced several armed conflicts. These have been staged by both armed groups and the national army. The Mai Mai, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the M23 rebel groups just to mention a few have been implicated in the most recent armed conflicts, which saw thousands flee to neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda.⁵ Scores of people were also injured and lives lost. The most affected areas are the resource-rich eastern parts of the country such as Goma, Uvira and Masisi areas of Kivu.

1.2 Conceptualizing Fragility situations and illicit SALW proliferation in the DRC

Due to the diverse experiences of countries in fragile situations, scholars have noted that there is no generally accepted definition of fragility because of the political motives associated with the concept.⁶ The African Development Bank defines fragility as the “low capacity and poor state performance with respect to security and development.”⁷ It reflects incapacity of the state not only to provide for its populations, but also the non-acceptance of the governing institutions by majority of the citizens.

In the same vein, this study conceptualizes fragility as the low institutional capacity and poor performance facing the Government of DRC with regard to the provision of human security and sustainable development. In this regard, fragility is measured using the authority, capacity and legitimacy, (ACL) framework.⁸ The model attempted to examine fragility situations based on the weakness in one or more key features of authority, capacity, and legitimacy.

Authority is the capability of the state to protect its citizens from any form of violence and criminality including provision of security for their lives and property. Within the hierarchy of public services delivered by states, the most important public good that modern states are required to provide to the citizenry is security, and most importantly human security, which holistically addresses the basic requirement of citizens. It also involves having in place judicial systems that dispense justice fairly while prosecuting against breaking of the law. This characterizes authority, which herein refers to the

ability of the state to enact effective legislation over its population and to provide the latter with a stable and safe environment. In relation to the DRC, authority was measured by considering the extent to which the government ensured human security to the citizens. Authority also included assessing the functionality and effectiveness of the police and military in protecting the citizens against internal and external attacks, especially in the most affected areas in eastern parts of the country.

Legitimacy denotes the ability of the state to command public loyalty to the governing regime and generate support to the implementation of government legislation being passed and policies being implemented. In the DRC, legitimacy was also established by considering the extent to which major legal institutions dispense justice freely and fairly. The ways in which elections are held; regularly, freely and fairly was also interrogated.

Fragile situations tend to weaken state institutions often leading to a state of lawlessness, which further diminishes state legitimacy. While conflict-affected states are by definition more susceptible to fragility situations, some but not all fragile states are marred in deep-rooted conflicts and violent transitions that have postponed peace. Their inability to control high levels of corruption and their propensity to revert to conflicts and political instability after periods of peace is a serious challenge. This has been the case in the DRC, where conflicts have not only become endemic, but also brutal. Due to the limited acceptance of the state in the eastern parts of the country, owing to years of marginalization by consecutive governments, populations continue to live under the control of armed groups and some have resorted to either joining or aiding the groups to access illicit SALW. For such a citizenry, dependence on the armed groups provides more protection and comfort than continuing to wait for government security agencies.

⁴Maps of World, “Political Map of Democratic Republic of Congo.” Available at: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/democratic-republic-of-congo/democratic-republic-of-congo-political-map.html> (Accessed on 2/2/2016).

⁵Enough Project, “Armed Groups.” Available at: http://www.enoughproject.org/conflicts/eastern_congo/armed-groups (Accessed on 2/2/2016)

⁶Finn Stepputat and Lars Engberg-Pedersen, 2008. “Fragile States: Definitions, Measurements and Processes.” Available at: http://www.dcis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports%202008/R2008_11_Fragile_States_%20Definitions_Measurements_Processes.pdf (Accessed on 2/2/2016).

⁷African Development Bank, 2014. “Africa Development Bank Group strategy for addressing Fragility and building resilience in Africa.” Abidjan: Africa Development Bank.

⁸David Carment, Stewart Prest and Yagadeesen Samy. 2007. “Assessing fragility: theory, evidence and policy.” Available at: http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/109860/ichaptersection_singledocument_bfa062b0-1035-41bb-ba7b-8b2e3e26a19d/en/Politorbis+42_CH2.pdf (Accessed on 2/2/2016)

On the other hand, capacity refers to the ability of a state to effectively provide basic services such as health, education, food, water and sanitation as well as basic communication and transport. In other words, the state needs to guarantee the basic needs of its citizens through the provision of infrastructural support, partnership with public and private sectors and encouragement of community initiatives. Fragile states often struggle to realize these basic needs of their citizens and in some cases, this space is filled by NGOs and international development agencies. In understanding the capacity of the state in the DRC, the study interrogated the ability of the state to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development, and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population. Capacity was also assessed by considering the extent to which government provided basic public entitlements including health, education, and infrastructure.

Fragile states can thus be defined as those that are caught up in any or all of the following traps - conflict, natural resource competition, poor governance, weak institutions and violence as well as poverty. The World Bank notes that such states fall behind other states in meeting all the sustainable development goals including mortality, literacy, poverty and malnutrition levels, which remain higher than in other low-income countries.⁹ This study, therefore, sought to establish the extent to which the proliferation of illicit SALW had contributed to fragility situations in the DRC.

Fragile states tend to have high poverty levels. Moreover, the propensity of populations in such states to resort to criminality is also high, as most of the youth remain unemployed or underemployed. Scholars have also noted that fragile situations in one country often have destabilizing, spill-over effects on its neighbours.¹⁰ For instance, some assert that fragile states play a critical role in the proliferation of illicit SALW.¹¹ The availability of weapons tends to weaken state capacity, further fuelling armed conflicts and fostering crime and impunity in the neighbouring states. However, this does not imply that countries with large caches of arms are more fragile than those with fewer weapons. Rather, a highly fragile state with armed populations is more likely to show signs of reduced state legitimacy, authority and capacity to prevent and deal with resource, ethnic and political based violence, thus exacerbating situations of fragility. This has been the case for DRC.

Despite the enormous resource endowment in the eastern parts of the country, for example, poverty levels are high in these areas and the citizens continue to suffer from marginalization and exclusion from political and economic spaces. This has subsequently seen some deprived youth opt for armed groups where they are afforded and trained in SALW use. Rather than improve their lives, a vicious cycle of poverty has persisted and efforts at stabilizing the region have been not successful. The arrests and prosecution of former rebel leaders such as, Germain Katanga¹² coupled with elections, and the signing of a peace agreement between the M23 and the government may bring lasting peace to the DRC. Jean-Pierre Bemba, former rebel leader of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), was on March 21, 2016 convicted of two counts of crimes against humanity (murder and rape) and three other counts of war crimes (murder, rape and pillaging) by the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹³ These attempts were to end impunity, but the political will to genuinely redistribute and manage the natural resources still lacks.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of this study was to establish the nexus between fragility situations and proliferation illicit SALW in the DRC and examine how this correlation has impacted on livelihoods and human development. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To document manifestations of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in the DRC;
- ii. To identify drivers of fragility situations in the DRC;
- iii. To explain the impact of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW on development and livelihoods in the DRC; and,
- iv. To identify existing national, regional and international intervention mechanisms addressing fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in the DRC.

⁹World Bank, 2016. "Fragility Violence and Conflict." Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview#1> (Accessed on 2/3/2016).

¹⁰Sian Herbert, Nathalia Dukhan, and Marielle Debos, 2013. "State fragility in the Central African Republic: what prompted the 2013 coup." GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

¹¹Patrick, Stewart. "Weak states and global threats: Fact or fiction?." *Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (2006), pp. 27-53.

¹²In 2014 March, the International Criminal Court found FRPI militia leader Germain Katanga guilty of war crimes over 2003 massacre of villagers in Ituri province.

¹³International Criminal Court (ICC), 2016. "Bemba Case. The Prosecutor v. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo. Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/car/bemba?ln=en> (Accessed on 18/02/2016)

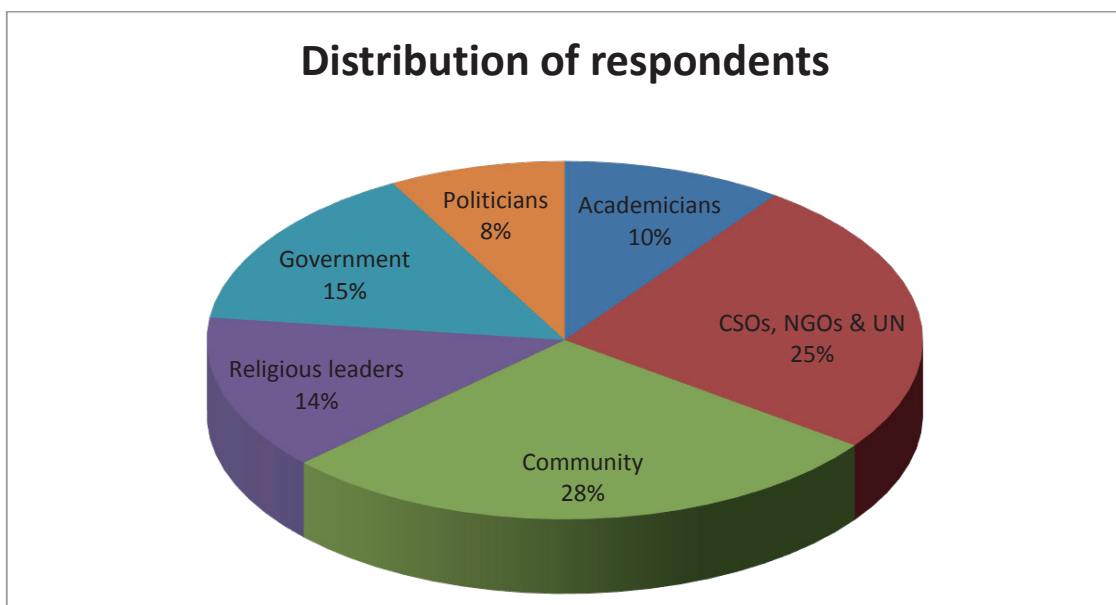
2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design and Sampling

This study applied a cross-sectional study design, which involved triangulating opinions and perceptions from different sectors of the community in order to establish the relational impact between the proliferation of illicit SALW and continuing fragility situations in the DRC. To realize this, the study used a mix-method approach, which entailed a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods in an exploratory and inclusive manner.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that specific key informants were reached for the relevant information. The key informants were identified based on their roles in the society on matters touching on fragility situations, their level of knowledge, and organizational representation. They came from academic institutions (teachers, lecturers, and university students), government officials (government bureaucrats, security personnel, and civil servants), general public (religious leaders and ordinary citizens), politicians and civil society organizations (CSOs) (both national and international). The pie chart below gives the percentage of the respondents:

Figure 2: Population composition of respondents



2.2 Data Collection and management

Primary data collection was carried out through in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions and a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed questions. Secondary data was collected from published books and journals, reports from governments, online reports from the Small Arms Survey, International Crisis Group, United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and from other public available materials.

The collected data from interviews and focus group discussions were recorded in notebooks and stored.

The questionnaire was distributed through gatekeepers (those who command the trust of the data providers, or those who control access) given the challenges of insecurity in the country, and coded and stored for easy access. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the removal of names where they had been indicated, unless otherwise allowed by the respondents.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize categorized variables. Both quantitative and qualitative data were generated. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages) while qualitative data was analysed by use of content analysis. Data was presented in figures, tables, and narratives while guided by the thematic representation of the objectives of the study.

2.3 Limitations and delimitations

Studies on fragility and proliferation illicit SALW are delicate and sensitive due to their association with security issues. Initially respondents were reluctant to divulge details on SALW ownership (licit and illicit). This was however, mitigated by informing the respondents about the intention and nature of the research. The Eastern part of the DRC is in particular volatile due to the presence of armed groups, which pose security threat in the region. The researchers, thus, used gatekeepers and local community mobilizers to organize Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and venues for in-depth interviews.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Fragility situations in the DRC are complex, multifaceted and are manifested in three broad areas - politically, economically, and socially. Fragility situations and proliferation illicit SALW in the DRC ought thus to be understood within the context of the country's vastness, bad governance and refugee influx from neighbouring nations of Central African Republic (CAR), Burundi and Rwanda. The DRC borders CAR, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. These countries have at one or more times in their histories recorded incidences of violent conflicts where illicit SALW has been used in various armed conflicts that have caused serious hindrances to development.

Internally, since independence, the DRC has had its own share of conflicts, which have largely been blamed on competition over natural resources, ethnic divisions and feelings of exclusion, by some regions. Some of these conflicts are still ongoing in the Eastern regions of Kivu, Ituri and Kasai provinces. The country is thus ranked among the poorest and least developed despite its vastness and resource endowment. In terms of governance, the DRC is ranked number 48 out of 54 and only outperforms Chad and CAR in the Central African Region.¹⁴ Illicit SALW have contributed to a vicious cycle of violence, which has in turn retarded developmental efforts by national, regional and international actors. The DRC thus remains fragile and the extent of the proliferation of illicit SALW remains unclear.

3.1 Manifestations of fragility and illicit SALW proliferation in the DRC

Protracted conflicts: Since 1960, the DRC has experienced several armed conflicts. While some have been internal, others have been occasioned by various external factors affecting its neighbours. After years of exploitation and repression from the Belgian authorities, the 30th June 1960 independence was expected to usher in relative peace. This peace was however short-lived after the first president, Joseph Kasavubu dismissed Patrice Lumumba as his Prime Minister following disagreements. The murder of Lumumba saw the ascendance of Mobutu Sese Seko into power. The political and military repression that the country faced during Mobutu's regime (1965-1997) left the country economically weak and politically unstable. An uprising against Mobutu led by Laurent Desire Kabila with the support of Rwanda and Uganda arose in the Eastern part of the country, and eventually led to the overthrow of Mobutu.

Laurent Desire Kabila became the President of Zaire and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). However, in August 1998 his regime was itself faced by a new rebellion backed by the Rwandan and Ugandan governments.¹⁵ This conflict attracted other countries including Chad, Namibia, Sudan and Zimbabwe, which entered the conflict in support of Kabila. The conflict led to the assassination of Kabila in January 2001 and his son Joseph Kabila installed as the new president.¹⁶ The new president succeeded in negotiating the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan forces in 2002, and signed a peace agreement with the remaining warring parties in what came to be known as the Pretoria Accord. A transitional government was later set up in July 2003. This was followed by a constitutional referendum in December 2005 and presidential, National Assembly, and provincial legislatures elections in 2006.¹⁷ Since then the country has struggled with many fluctuating situations of fragility as shown in Figure 3 below.

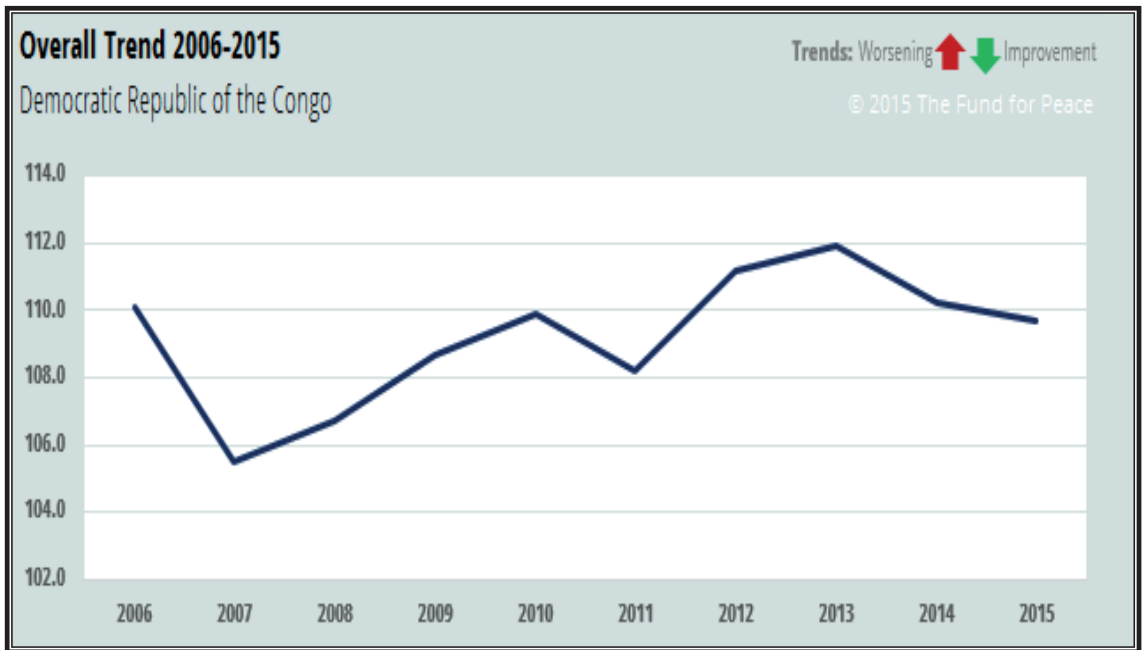
¹⁴Mo Ibrahim Foundation, "2015 Ibrahim Index of African Governance country insights; Democratic Republic of Congo." Available at: http://static.moibrahimfoundation.org/u/2015/10/02201334/14_DRC.pdf (accessed 5/4/2016)

¹⁵Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)." Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html> (Accessed on 12/05/2016).

¹⁶Emizet F. Kisangani, "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A mosaic of insurgent groups". *International Journal on World Peace*. Vol. 20, No. 3 (2003), pp. 51-80.

¹⁷US Department of State, "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Security Assistance." Available at: <http://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pm/64639.htm> (Accessed on 12/05/2016)

Figure 3: Fragility Trends in the DRC from 2006-2015



Source: The Fund for Peace, 2015

Figure 3 above demonstrates DRC's trend of fragility situations, from year-to-year since 2006. Upward movements represent worsening trends, while downward movements represent improving trends. DRC is ranked 5th out of 178 countries.¹⁸ There was a downward trend of fragility situations in 2007 during the government's attempts to disarm Laurent Nkunda, a rebel leader of the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), and in 2008, the government and RCD signed a peace deal. However, fragility situations escalated mostly in the Kivu Region with different armed forces, including Nkunda's RCD.

In 2009, the government signed a peace agreement with the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), a Tutsi-led rebel group. An attempt to integrate the CNDP in 2012 into the national army failed and they defected and formed M23 rebel group, named after the March 23, 2009 peace agreement. M23 was responsible for human rights abuses and displacements of a large population. Since March 2012, the country has experienced a resurgence of armed conflicts mainly in the east, due to demands of the M23 rebel group that decried unfair treatment in the implementation of the Peace

Agreement signed on March 2009.¹⁹ In 2009, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda got into conflict with the government. In 2013, the M23 was pushed out of DRC to Uganda and Rwanda.

In 2016, the DRC continues to experience conflicts and human rights abuses by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, the Allied Democratic Forces, and diverse groups of the Mai Mai militias. However, the decrease in fragility levels may be explained by the defeat of the M23 forces. With the intensity of the above conflicts, proliferation of illicit SALW persists in North and South Kivu and generally the whole of eastern regions of the country.²⁰ In the rest of the DRC, increased cases of high and low criminal activities continue to be experienced. Displacements borne out of conflicts have also been on the rise and humanitarian situations in the country are wanting.

¹⁸The Fund for Peace, 2015. "Fragile State Index 2015." Washington, D.C: Funds for Peace. Available at: <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/rankings-2015> (Accessed on 10/03/2016).

¹⁹Africa Development Bank, 2013. "Democratic Republic of Congo: 2013-2017 Country Strategy Paper." Available at: <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Democratic%20Republic%20of%20Congo%20-%202013-2017%20-%20Country%20Strategy%20Paper.pdf> (Accessed on 19/03/2016)

²⁰Emizet F. Kisangani, "Conflict in the Democratic Republic Of Congo: A Mosaic of Insurgent Groups." International Journal on World Peace. Vol. 20, No. 3 (2003), pp. 51-80.

Poor Infrastructural Development: The DRC faces what is probably the most daunting infrastructural challenge on the African continent.²¹ Health facilities and schools are dilapidated in many rural areas. Despite its natural resources such as gold, tungsten and tin among others, the country heavily relies on external aid with high rates of unemployment. For example, following years of armed conflict, the road networks are poor and some parts of the country are still cut off from the capital and other urban centres, for example the road between Kikwit and Idiofa.²²

Food Insecurity: According to the World Food Program, close to 4.5 million people in the Eastern regions of Congo are in dire need of Humanitarian aid. Majority of those affected are women and children. Deaths and diseases related to malnutrition have also increased in conflict zones and currently the country's Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate stands at 10.7 percent.²³

Presence of Refugees and Internal Displacement Camps: Displacement levels within and outside the DRC in the last three decades have been worrying. According to the UNHCR, by 2014 there were approximately 2.7 million internally displaced people from the ongoing conflict in the eastern regions of the country.²⁴ There are also a significant number of refugees who have fled the armed conflicts and have settled in Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Burundi. Others have sought asylum in western countries, mainly in France. As of 2015 December, the UNHCR reported a record number of refugees and internally displaced people living or displaced from Congo as shown in the table that follows:

²¹Vivien Foster and Daniel Alberto Benitez, "The Democratic Republic of Congo infrastructure: A Continental Perspective 2010." *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review* .Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2013), pp. 56-80.

²²Brian Klosterboer and Lori Hartmann-Mahmud, "Difficult to Repair": Applying African Models for Transitional Justice to Peace and Restoration Prospects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo." *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*. Vol. 3, No. 1 (2013), pp. 56-80.

²³UNHCR, 2015. "UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update." Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/ga15/index.xml> (Accessed on 7/4/2016).

²⁴Ibid.

Table 1: UNHCR 2015 planning figures for Democratic Republic of the Congo (Source: UNHCR (2015)).²⁵

Type of population	Origin	January 2015		December 2015	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Central African Rep.	75,000	25,000	50,000	30,000
	Rwanda	129,440	20,000	109,440	20,000
	Various	2,150	2,150	2,240	2,240
Asylum-seekers	Burundi	280	280	190	190
	Rwanda	110	110	140	140
	Somalia	20	20	20	20
	Various	130	130	110	110
Returnee arrivals during year (ex-refugees)	DRC	53,640	53,640	41,100	41,100
Internally displaced	DRC	2,658,000	1,860,600	2,658,000	1,860,600
Returnee arrivals during year (ex-IDPs)	DRC	932,060	652,440	932,060	652,440
Others of concern	Angola	40,000	40,000	-	-
Total		3,890,830	2,654,370	3,793,290	2,606,840

²⁵UNHCR, 2015. "UNHCR 2015 planning figures for Democratic Republic of the Congo." Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/5461e5fd16.pdf> (Accessed on 18/01/2016)

3.2 Drivers of fragility situations

a) Proliferation of illicit SALW

It is estimated that 300,000 SALW are in the hands of civilians in the eastern parts of the country.²⁶ This has encouraged protracted conflicts, destruction of infrastructure and reduced strength of the rebel factions in DRC to find a negotiated solution with the government to their differences.²⁷ The proliferation of illicit SALW undermines security in some regions such as Kivu provinces, as people resort to SALW to protect themselves against the predatory militia groups. In Goma, the capital of North Kivu, it is alleged that armed groups that controlled the region imposed a rule that required each family to buy guns from the armed groups.²⁸

The sources of illicit SALW are numerous. Neighbouring conflict-ravaged nations have provided DRC citizens and rebel factions with lethal weapons including sub-machine guns, and different types of AK rifles. These arms have been used to destabilize the country's peace. In some cases, the armed groups buy arms from members of the army engaged in illicit SALW sales, pillage, contraband sales and informal taxes, and collaboration between the local and foreign-armed groups.²⁹

b) Protracted Conflicts

Another driver of fragility situations is the protracted violence. In the aftermath of independence, the conflict was ideologically oriented between those who advocated for federalism and those who preferred a centralized state.³⁰ The conflict has since morphed into a resource competition between diverse ethnicities and factions. Different militias have also been involved in the current conflict in eastern parts of the country and more especially in Kivu. The conflict is a result of disagreement between the government and M23 leadership.³¹ This continued conflict has amplified fragility situations and affected human lives. State protection of citizens in this area has also been limited.

²⁶Zeebroek, Xavier, Wolf-Christian Paes, Georges Bergehezan and Lena Guesnet. 2010. '300,000 Weapons Held by Civilians in the East of Congo.' GRIP/BICC Study on the Prolifération of Small Arms in Congo (DRC) - Etude sur la prolifération des armes légères en République Démocratique du Congo. Brussels: Groupe de recherche et d'informations sur la paix et la sécurité / GRIP, and the Bonn International Center for Conversion / BICC. 1 April

²⁷Michael. I. Ogu, n.d. "Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa: Cause or Effect?" Available at: http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_33138.pdf (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

²⁸Nick Long, 2013. "Congo-Kinshasa: Armed Groups Impose 'Gun Law' in Eastern DRC." Voice of America. Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308030020.html> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

c) Presence of Militia and Rebel Groups

Despite the fact that there have been so many agreements to bring peace (for example, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999), violent conflicts continue in DRC.³² Some of the armed groups involved in the conflict include, but are not limited to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) which morphed to M23 in 2012.³³ On various occasions, armed groups have been reported to be supported by neighbouring countries. For example, the Rwandan Government has been accused of supporting M23 by 'facilitating recruitment, encouraging and facilitating desertions from the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and providing arms, ammunition, intelligence and political advice.'³⁴ The presence of armed groups has helped fuel the conflict.

d) Weak Governance

After years of military coups and army mutinies, elections were held in 2006 and in 2011 under a new constitution, which was inaugurated in 2005. New institutions such as the Parliament, the Senate and provincial assemblies have eventually been put in place. Joseph Kabila won a second term and his party came first in legislative elections held in November 2011.³⁵ This notwithstanding, accusations of corruption, resource control competition, and the continuing armed violence in different parts of the country reflect the challenges of governance of the nation.³⁶ The state lacks the capacity to control violence in the eastern parts of the country, and its authority and legitimacy has been dented because of its incapacity and previous history of flawed elections.³⁷ Despite the formation of a government that was supposed to reflect national cohesion, the Opposition and Civil Society claim that consensus building has not been inclusive.³⁸

²⁹Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), 2015. "The economy of armed groups in the eastern DRC." Intersection. Available at: <https://mccintersections.wordpress.com/2015/07/13/the-economy-of-armed-groups-in-the-eastern-drc/> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

³⁰Emizet Kisangani, 2014, "US Policy in the Great Lakes Region." In C. R. Veney (Ed.), *US-Africa Relations: From Clinton to Obama*. Lanham: Lexington Books, Pp. 115-147.

³¹Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2012. "Crisis in North Kivu." Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95836/briefing-crisis-north-kivu> (accessed on 19/03/2016)

³²United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2015. "Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Causes, impact and implications for the Great Lakes region" Available at: http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/conflicts_in_drc_eng_25sept_rev1.pdf (Accessed on 19/03/2016)

³³Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2012. "Crisis in North Kivu." Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95836/briefing-crisis-north-kivu> (Accessed on 12 December 2015).

³⁴United Nation Security Council, 2012. "Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo." Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2012_843.pdf (Accessed on 19/03/2016)

The President of the Republic has attempted to postpone elections a number of times. The elections are supposed to take place in November 2016. In May 2016, the Constitutional Court in the DRC ruled that President Joseph Kabila could remain in office if elections failed to take place as scheduled. Attempts by the President to extend his term beyond the constitutional term led into political unrests that resulted in the death of more than 20 people in January 2016.³⁹

e) Poverty

Despite its natural resource endowment, the DRC

³⁵British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2011. “DR Congo election: Joseph Kabila re-elected.” Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16114824> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

³⁶United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2015. “Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Causes, impact and implications for the Great Lakes region.” Available at: http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/conflicts_in_drc_eng_25sept_rev1.pdf (Accessed on 19/03/2016).

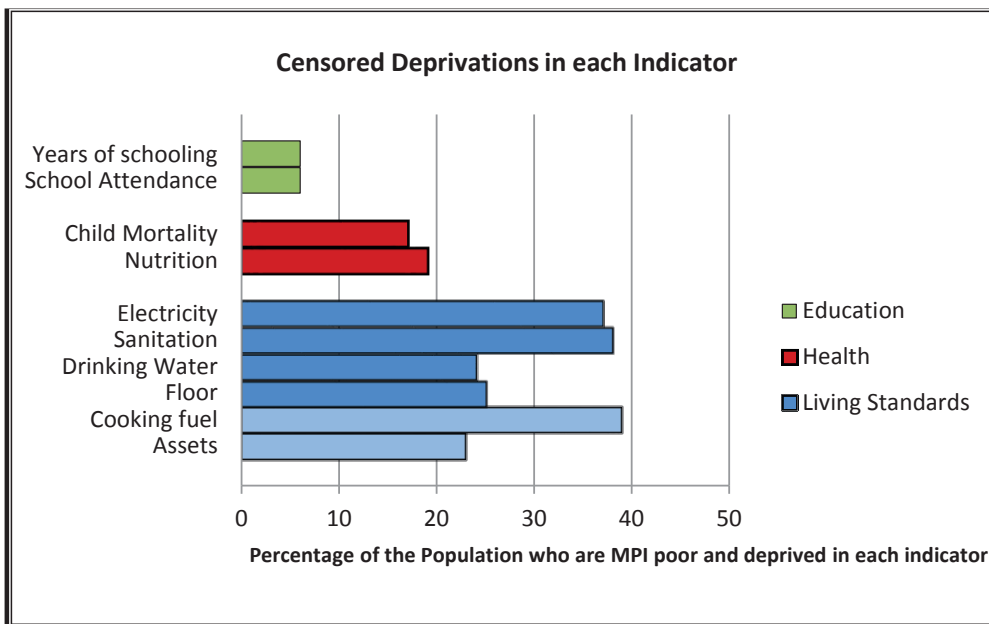
³⁷Many international Observers criticised the 2011 elections as flawed and thus incredible.

is still considered the poorest country in Africa. Poverty, however, does not necessarily engender fragility situations. When combined with other factors, poverty becomes a driver of fragility situations in the sense that when the populations are poor, they may seek alternative methods, including violence, in order to satisfy their needs. This has been the case for the DRC where local populations have joined armed groups that are engaged in exploiting natural resources. Others have joined armed groups involved in criminal activities to sustain their families. The figure below indicates the poverty level in DRC.

³⁸International Crisis Group, 2015. “Congo; Is Democratic Change Possible?” Available at: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/central-africa/dr-congo/225-congo-is-democratic-change-possible.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/central-africa/dr-congo/225-congo-is-democratic-change-possible.pdf) (Accessed on 19/03/2016)

³⁹James Allaire and Kristof Titeca, 2016. “How Congo’s president is trying to flout the constitution and stay in power.” Washington Post. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/12/03/will-congo-vote-in-2016/> (Accessed on 19/03/2016)

Figure 4: DRC’s Censored Deprivation



Source: Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

DRC’s Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is 0.181, which means that the country has high rates of poverty indicators.⁴⁰ The figure above indicates that 24% of the population lack access to safe and clean drinking water, and the child mortality rate affects 18% of that population that is MPI poor, whereas 17% of the population is MPI poor in relation to nutrition. The figure also indicates that 6% of the population are MPI poor and therefore deprived of access to education.

Further, living standards have greatly deteriorated with 39% of the population that is MPI poor lacking sufficient access to cooking fuel and 38% to sanitation.

⁴⁰Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2015. “Central African Republic Country Briefing.” Oxford: Multidimensional Poverty Index Data Bank, OPHI, University of Oxford. Available at: www.ophi.org.uk/multi-dimensional-poverty-index/mpo-country-briefings/ (Accessed on 12/02/2016).

f) Economic Exclusion and Marginalization

Economic inequality is another driver of the country's fragility situations. This is mainly experienced in the mining sector.⁴¹ While the sector accounts for a third of the budget, only a very small number of the local population has jobs in the mining industries. This has left many citizens poor and with no choice, but to engage in illicit means of eking a living. In the eastern parts of Congo, proliferation of illicit SALW is attributed to high poverty levels owing to years of intermittent conflicts in the region.

The uneven distribution of natural resource wealth amongst provinces in the DRC proves to be a strong incentive for opposition parties and marginalized communities in the DRC to resort to violence. It is estimated that armed groups and members of the national army control over 50% of the 200 mines in eastern Congo.⁴² The proceeds from the sale of natural resources are used to sustain the war through acquisition of illicit SALW.

3.3 *The Impact of Fragility Situations and the Proliferation of Illicit SALW on Livelihoods and Development*

a. Social Impacts

Fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW have negatively affected the provision of social services. In the field of education, the protracted conflict in the country has negative repercussions. For example, over 7 million children between the ages of 5-17 that is, 28% of the school-aged population are not attending school.⁴³ This number has remained constant over the last three years in the Kivu and former Katanga provinces, Beni territory and the Bas-Uele region.⁴⁴

In health, according to the World Health Organization 2015, health facilities were strained to the limit because they lacked investments and enough medical practitioners. Furthermore, they have been degraded because of deliberate attacks from various belligerent factions. Another threat that health is facing is the disease of cholera, which has affected over 19,705 persons since the beginning of 2015 and has resulted in many deaths.⁴⁵ Additionally, the recent conflict in the country has had a direct impact on lack of sufficient food leading to child deaths from malnutrition. The rate of infant mortality under the age of five and maternal mortality are staggering as one child out of seven dies before reaching the age of five.⁴⁶

On internal displacement, the conflict in the eastern parts of the country has resulted into a high number of internally displaced persons. It is estimated that 2.7 million people have been internally displaced within the country in 2014 due to ongoing-armed conflict in the eastern parts of country.⁴⁷

b. Economic Impacts

The state of fragility in the DRC has affected the agricultural sector. For example, over 22 million acres of land remain uncultivated. This has increased food insecurity with over 6.4 million citizens facing food insecurity.⁴⁸ The agricultural sector thus lags behind, and the country records limited agricultural rural development programs.⁴⁹ On one hand, natural resources give DRC the potential to become one of the richest countries, but due to existing fragility situations, this has become almost impossible. On the other hand, it is noted that unemployment levels in the DRC today stand at 46.1%.⁵⁰ This means that a large part of the population is left out of the official economic structures and has to survive with limited economic opportunities even in the informal sector.

c. Political Instability and weak Governance

Eastern Congo is largely governed by militias and there is a visible absence of state presence. Politicians use local armed groups for their personal interests. DRC is one of the most unstable countries in terms of political instability and poor governance. There is weakened state authority that hinders the country from managing conflict, as citizens view the government as self-interested and predatory. The government is weak as evidenced by acts of corruption in the Police Force and the Judiciary. Further, displaced populations indicate inability of the government to provide security to its people.⁵¹

⁴¹Oliver Furley, 2005. *Conflict in Africa*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, I.B. Tauris Publishers.

⁴²John-Andrew McNeish, 2010. "Rethinking Resource Conflict," in *World Development Report 2011*. Available at: http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01306/web/pdf/wdr%20background%20paper%20-%20mcneish_0.pdf (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

⁴³The Global Crisis Overview, 2016. "Crisis Overview 2015: Humanitarian Trends and Risks for 2016." Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/crisis-overview-2015-humanitarian-trends-and-risks-2016> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

⁴⁴Alfred Lukambi, 2013. "RDC: Plus de 7 Millions d'enfants en âge scolaire ne vont pas à l'école," *Congo Times*. Available at: <http://afrique.kongotimes.info/rdc/enseignement/6341-congo-millions-enfants-scolaire-ecole-lancement-campagne-inscription-enfants-ecole-primaire-annee-scolaire-2013-2014-millions-enfants-ans-attendus.html> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

⁴⁵World Health Organisation, 2015. "Cholera – Democratic Republic of the Congo." Available at: <http://www.who.int/csr/don/15-december-2015-cholera-drc/en/> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷UNHCR, 2015. "2015 UNHCR country operations profile - Democratic Republic of the Congo." Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c366.html> (Accessed on 21/03/2016)

⁴⁸Catherine Ragasa, and Jennifer Golan. "The role of rural producer organizations for agricultural service provision in fragile states." *Agricultural Economics*. Vol. 45, no. 5 (2014): 537-553.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Rubaba Ali, 2015. "Infrastructure in conflict prone and fragile environments: Evidence from Democratic Republic of Congo, 2015." Available at: http://cega.berkeley.edu/assets/miscellaneous_files/66_-ABCA_Infrastructure_and_Conflict_%28Damania_conf%29.pdf (Accessed 28/04/2016).

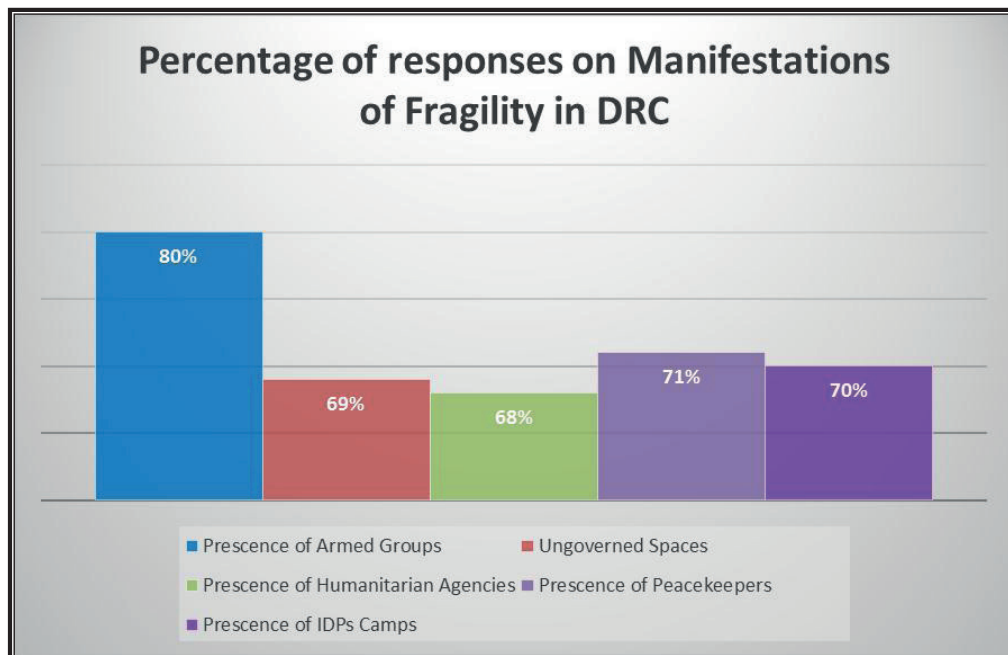
⁵¹Ryan Luisa and Dominic Keyzer, "Everyone for themselves' in DRC's North Kivu." *Forced Migration Review (FMR)*, Vol. 43 (May 2013). Available at: <http://www.fmreview.org/fragilestates/ryan-keyzer.html> (Accessed 28/04/2016).

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Manifestations Of Fragility Situations And Illicit Salw Proliferation

The figure below indicates the various ways in which fragility situations are manifested in the DRC.

Figure 5: Percentage of responses on manifestations of fragility in DRC



Source: Research Findings

Armed groups: According to 80% of the responses, presence of armed groups was the clearest manifestation of fragility situations in the DRC. Respondents were emphatic that several armed groups operate outside of Kinshasa mainly in the eastern parts of the DRC. In a Focus Group Discussion in Bukavu, respondents were in consensus that there were other equally dangerous armed groups in the DRC, and almost each ethnic group claimed to assure security of its own people through vigilante armed groups due to inadequate government presence.

The study established that there were several rebel groups active in the DRC. These included fractions of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) even though the main leadership (under Joseph Kony) is in CAR, the Mai-Mai militias, the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri, the Rally for Congolese Democracy of Goma, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the National Liberation Forces (FNL).

Presence of peacekeepers: the continued instability in the DRC has seen the deployment of the biggest UN peacekeeping force in the world named the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), whose force stands at 22,498 personnel according one of the UN officers interviewed. The presence of peacekeepers was described as manifestation of fragility situations in the country as was highlighted by 71% of the responses.

The presence of IDP camps: The fragile situations that exist in the DRC are manifested through the various Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps located especially in southern and northern Kivu. The findings revealed that 70% of the responses were concerned that people living IDP camps were living in deplorable conditions. It was however, noted that in the year 2015 there was a slight decrease in the camps and corresponding decline in levels of fragility situations in the country. According to one of the respondent interviewed there were close to 3 million IDPs in the DRC as of the end of 2013.

Presence of Humanitarian agencies: 68% of the responses considered the presence of humanitarian agencies as manifestation of fragility situations. According to the UN official interviewed, armed conflicts and general insecurity in DRC have created one of the world's most complex and long-standing humanitarian crisis. This is manifested by the presence of many relief and humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR, the United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), the UNICEF and the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) among others.

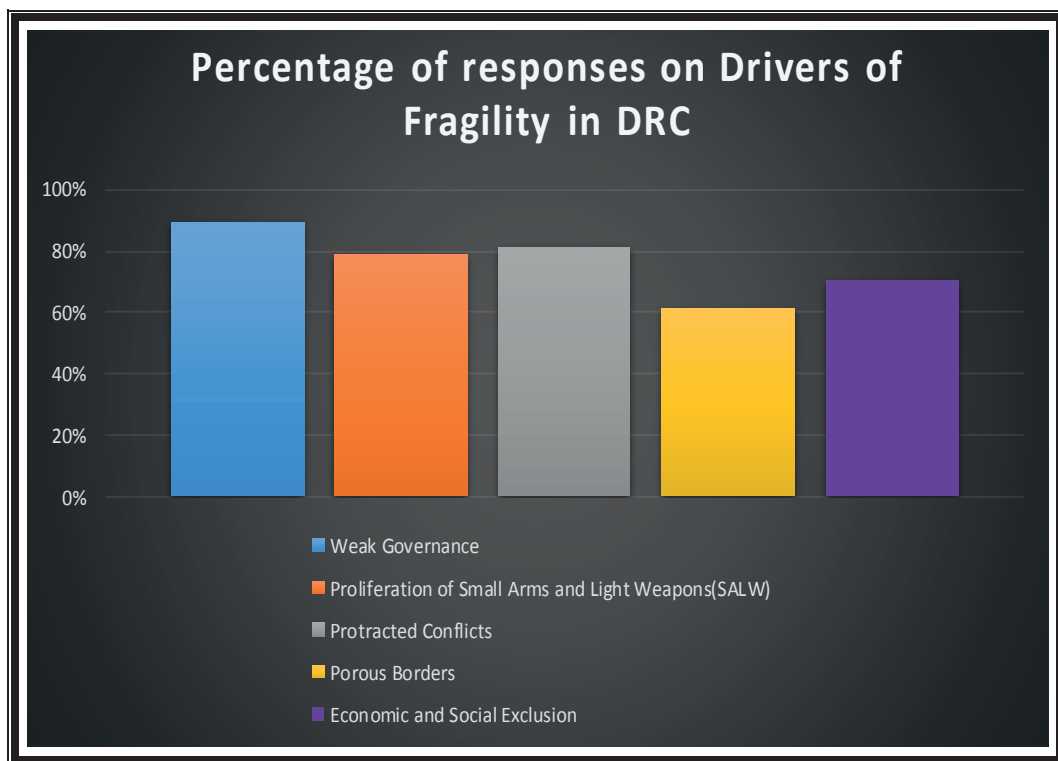
Ungoverned spaces: respondents were concerned about the marginalization of some parts of the country.

In eastern DRC in particular, 69% of responses lamented inadequate state presence. This may be explained by the vastness of the country. This has resulted in armed groups taking over the administration of some parts of the country especially eastern DRC, which is a safe haven for many armed groups such as the FDRL, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Mai Maia among others.

4.2 Drivers Of Fragility Situations And Proliferation Illicit Salw In The Drc

The figure below highlights the drivers of fragility situations in the DRC.

Figure 6: Percentage of responses on drivers of fragility situations in DRC



Source: Research Findings

4.2.1 Weak Governance

Weak governance was singled out as the leading driver of fragility situations in the DRC by 89% of the responses. In a Focus Group Discussion in eastern DRC with members of the CSOs, community and religious leaders confirmed that the fragility situations in the DRC are an outcome of years of poor governance, ineptness and dysfunctional

institutions, loss of legitimacy and multiple regional military interventions. They emphasised that service delivery in the DRC is only in the major towns leaving the greater parts of the country marginalized due to poor infrastructure especially road networks and inadequate state presence. In addition, an elder who was interviewed explained that since independence the history of the DRC is marked by successive conflicts, weak governance, economic mismanagement and widespread corruption.

There is also convergence among respondents (62%) that weak governance lies at the heart of the Congolese political dilemma. As one religious leader put it, “good governance is at the heart of the security issue in the DRC. The elections are often unfair and at times sabotaged by those in power.” The Peace and Justice Commission of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (CENCO) in Kinshasa also held the same view. As one CENCO researcher affirmed: “I couldn’t agree more with President Obama when he says that Africa needs strong institutions and not strong men.” The respondent further noted that there was need for respect of the constitution, which guarantees free and fair elections. Another concern from this respondent was that the Congolese state had proved incapable of providing basic functions such as protecting its citizens and providing basic entitlements to its own people.

According to a human rights NGO respondent, the contestation of and vying for political power continues to represent the backbone of the country’s fragile situation. This especially gets complex when different external actors in search of the wealth from the natural resources meddle in the internal affairs of the country and fund militia groups. This respondent noted that Uganda and Rwanda had severally been accused of funding proxy militia groups to loot natural resources in the country. A university student was critical that weak government institutions were sustained by the failure of the government to maintain security, law and order.

4.2.2 Protracted Conflicts and Violence

The many years of continued armed conflicts in the DRC have led to the creation of a war-economy. The political elite have entrenched interest in the continuation of the conflict and the lucrative

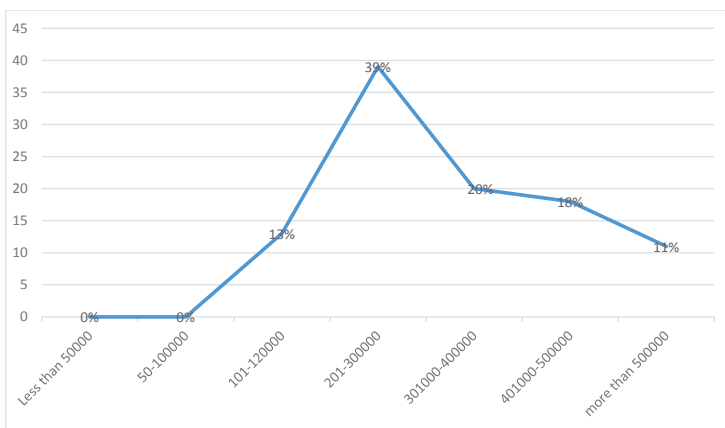
extraction of the abundant natural resources in the country. Extraction of natural resources is the propelling factor for the armed groups’ operating in DRC. It is therefore not surprising that 81% of responses identified protracted conflicts and violence as driver number two of the fragility situations in the DRC. The history of these conflicts can be traced to three inter-linked factors, namely the history of colonial rule, ineptness of the successive regimes and the competition for natural resources that drivers regional and international interest. The endemic nature of these conflicts is traceable to the brutal colonial history.

Despite the “establishment of an inclusive Transitional Government in June 2003, and the full deployment of troops of the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) in the second half of that year, stability in the DRC remains a mirage. The security situation remains fragile given the continuous presence of armed groups in the eastern DRC (Ituri, the Kivus, and Katanga). According to 41% of respondents, these groups have killed, destroyed property and maimed hundreds of local populations in the region. State security officials noted that some of these groups were better equipped than the government’s security personnel.

4.2.3 Proliferation of illicit SALW

Fragility situations in the DRC today are sustained by the proliferation of illicit SALW according to 79% of the responses. In major towns, locals argued that hardly a month passes without a report of death by highway robbers, political competitors and/or petty thugs. In the rural areas, citizens lamented the constant harassment by armed groups or former fighters in search of money and food. They use illicit SALW to obtain their loot. The following are the estimated numbers of illicit SALW by the responses:

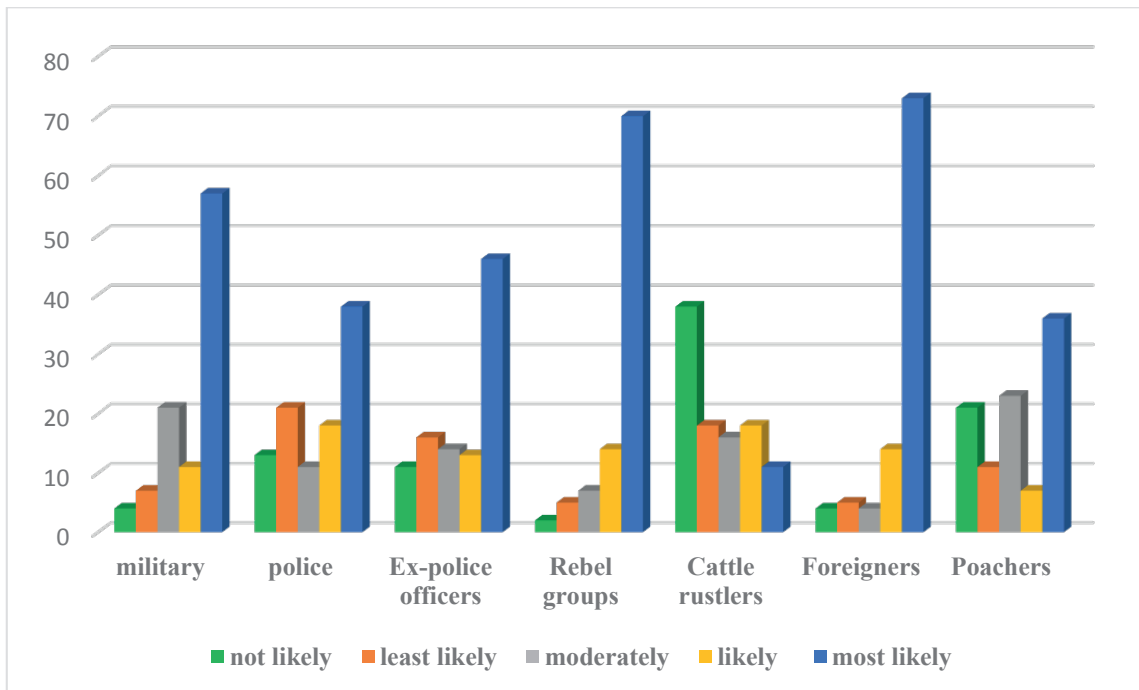
Figure 7: Estimated number of illicit SALW in the hands of civilians



Source: Research findings

According to the figure above 88% of the respondents noted that there are more than 300,000 illicit SALW circulating in the DRC, which are used in fuelling fragility situations in the country.

Figure 8: Perceptions on the sources of illicit SALW



Source: Research findings

In figure 8 above, a total of 71% of the respondents attributed proliferation of illicit SALW to foreigners. These include refugees, warlords, poachers and business persons. Respondents explained that most of the foreigners were well connected and thus operated within the context of a weak and corrupt security system; 69% attributed it to rebel groups; 56% attributed the proliferation of illicit SALW to military. In the Eastern DRC, respondents lamented that lowly paid members of the military tend to lease or sell their arms to violent groups and locals; 46% attributed it to ex-police officers and 38% to police officers in active service; and lastly 35% of respondents ascribed the source to poachers.

In a focus group discussion with former security officers in Bukavu, respondents articulated that the eastern region of the DRC borders Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. These are countries whose history is plagued with illicit SALW proliferation, which eventually filters into the DRC. An academic

Respondents attributed the widespread availability of illicit SALW in the country to several actors as shown in the figure below.

analyst in Kinshasa noted that from Ituri Province to North and South Kivu provinces, Maniema and Tanganyika provinces, there were politicians (especially in Ituri, Beni, Butembo and Lubero) funding proxy armed groups, which illegally import weapons from neighbouring countries. The proliferation of illicit SALW exacerbates armed conflicts, severely undermining peace efforts as it encourages organized criminal violence and poses great obstacles to security and sustainable development.

4.2.4 Economic and social exclusion

The DRC is potentially one of the richest countries on earth, but the history of colonialism, slavery and corruption have turned it into one of the poorest in the world.⁵² Economic and social exclusion was identified as number four driver of fragility situations by 70% of the responses. Poverty continues to affect many people in the DRC. Respondents expressed

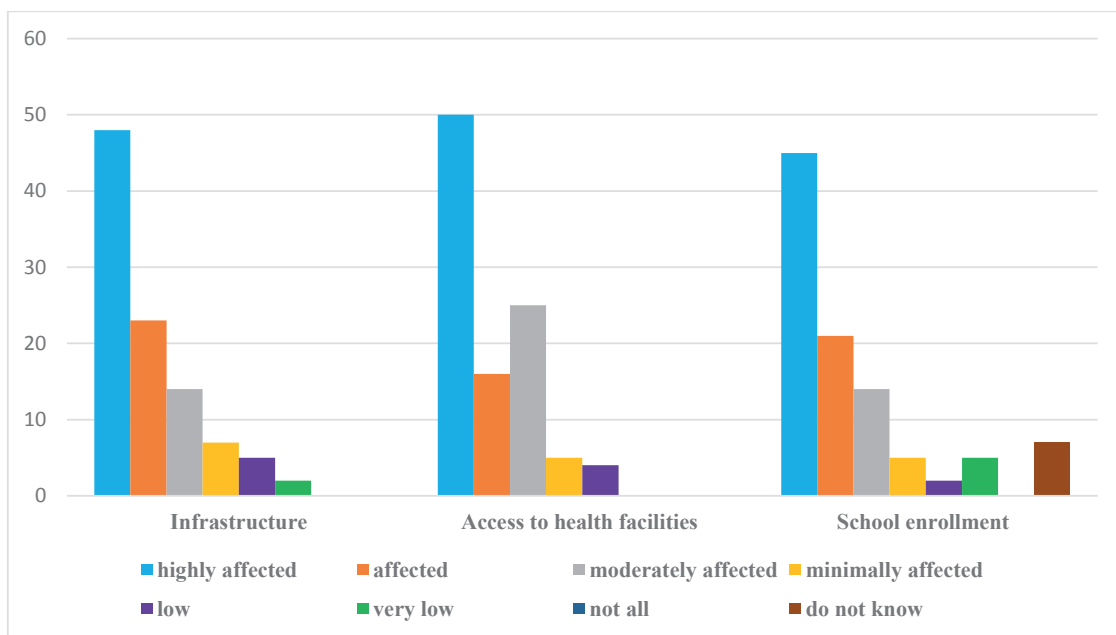
⁵²Dan Snow, 2013. "DR Congo: cursed by its natural wealth." Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24396390> (Accessed on 2/02/2016)

their concern regarding the decline in mining and agriculture productivity due to insecurity. In other areas in the DRC, respondents blamed the state for increased poverty levels. For example, university students lamented the isolation of the eastern DRC region from the economic grid. They have minimal presence of state provided amenities and poverty has increasingly resulted in death due to malnutrition. In a focus group discussion in Bukavu, women respondents from the western part of the DRC complained of inadequate health facilities. They also indicated food insecurity as a major challenge in the populous western regions of Bas-Congo. Despite the fact that the youthful population presents a potential asset for DRC's economic development, respondents from Bandundu and Equateur, respectively, complained of neglect by government in terms of employment.

4.3 The Impact Of Fragility Situations And Proliferation Illicit Salw On Development And Livelihoods

The legacy of armed conflicts, fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW have adversely slowed and reversed development efforts in the DRC. They have posed the greatest risk to the enhancement of people's lives in economic, social and political spheres. Figure 9 below shows the impact of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW on selected aspects of livelihood.

Figure 9: Impacts of Fragility Situation and Proliferation Illicit SALW on Selected Aspects of Livelihood



4.3.1 Social Impacts

The fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW has had negative impacts on social service delivery in the following sectors:

Education: according to 80% of the respondents, fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW have considerably affected the quantity and quality of education. Primary school teachers in the eastern regions, for instance, were in particular emphatic that enrolment and retention of pupils and students in primary and secondary school had drastically gone down.

Poverty stricken countries require investing in education to reduce the ease of mobilization and retention of youth in rebel activities. This is because rebels recruit their young members from schools and colleges. In the DRC, respondents from the eastern side of the country noted that recruitment of children and youth had been experienced in schools and recruits were equipped and trained in SALW use in the thick Ituri forests.

A CSO respondent maintained that several parts of the country lacked educational infrastructure due to conflicts and even where these are present, insecurity makes it impossible for many children to attend school. In particular, respondents noted that a generation of children has been lost; some because of lack of access to school and others because they were more seriously drawn into the armed conflict themselves as child soldiers. Respondents also complained of brain flight where educated people feel compelled to go live abroad where they can afford better living conditions for their children.

Health: In a Focus Group Discussion in Kinshasa with education providers and NGOs working in the same area, respondents expressed their views. In figure 9 above, majority of the respondents (91%) complained of poor health provision in the DRC. International and National health workers were in consensus that the average DRC’s population had no access to health care because it was not only expensive, but also inaccessible in conflict-ridden regions. Some respondents (38%) were also of the opinion that this is coupled with low morale from the workers who are lowly paid. Due to the high levels of poverty, access to public transport becomes complicated especially during times of armed conflicts. According to 57% of respondents, the access to clean water and sanitation by populations in Kivu is a challenge.

Infant mortality and deaths associated with malnutrition and nutrient deficiency are thus common in the eastern parts of the country.

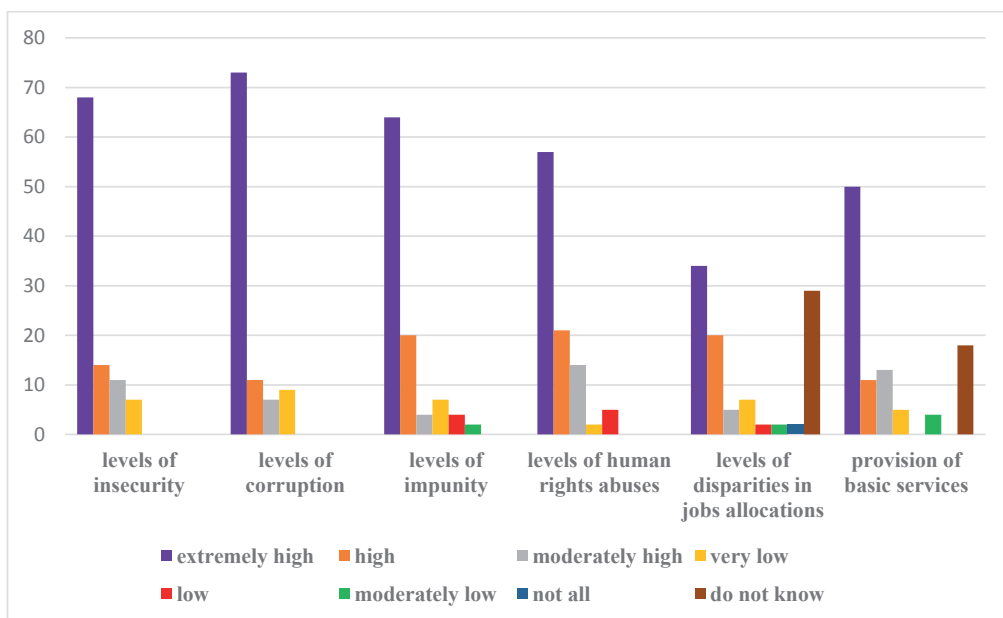
4.3.2 Economic Impacts

Despite the potential of the DRC, becoming the richest country in Africa due to its endowment with vast natural resources, years of looting and plunder by different players has left the country poor. Respondents were emphatic that foreign investments flow, extractive industries growth and infrastructural development have received least attention from the government. In addition, armed conflicts have denied the country the millions of dollars that would come from foreign direct investment and tourism. This has seriously damaged most infrastructural networks in the country as reported by 87% of the responses. The DRC possibly faces the most daunting infrastructural deficit in Africa. Both the road and railway networks are in deplorable conditions due to neglect by the state. A respondent noted that it is difficult to access the other part of the DRC due to the poor transport connectivity.

4.3.3 Impact on governance

Respondents had diverse opinions regarding the impact of fragility situations and proliferation illicit SALW on governance as shown in Figure 10 below:

Figure 10: Impact of Fragility Situations and Proliferation Illicit SALW on Governance



Source: Research findings

Respondents noted that insecurity (93%), corruption (92%), and human rights violation (92%) as the most affected by fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in the DRC. Majority of respondents supported these statistics by citing cases of insecurity and human rights abuses in various parts of the country especially in the eastern of the country and the high level of corruption in government operations.

4.4 Existing Interventions

The instability in the DRC has seen several actors come together to stabilize the nation. Concerted efforts by the national government, regional actors and international community have targeted poverty reduction, disarmament, efforts aiming at reforming institutions of governance, and rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants. These are discussed below.

4.4.1 National Mechanisms

The national government has among other efforts concentrated on the following:

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives: There has been an effort to carry out DDR following the signing of the two peace accords: the Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC (2002) and the Dar el Salaam Accord (2003) signed by ten rebel groups.⁵³ Some of the groups included the Rally for Congolese Democracy Goma, CNDP, and the Coalition of Congolese Patriotic Resistance among others.⁵⁴ Even though these intervention mechanisms have been undertaken, the situation has remained volatile following the oscillating and sporadic violence in eastern parts of DRC.

Peace Pacts: In 2008, there was a peace accord between the DRC government and rebel groups such as CNDP; this resulted into ceasefires, which enabled the return of peace and preparation for an orderly transition to post-conflict, including the holding of elections in 2011.⁵⁵

Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: The DRC has produced the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2011-2015 GPRSP) that aims at improving living conditions by laying strong foundations for the diversification of the economy through infrastructure. It also aims at improving

governance and institutional capacity as well as incorporating the private sector in the growth of the economy. The DRC government has established a National Commission responsible for SALW management and control. The National Commission has established regional offices to coordinate interventions throughout the country. With support from RECSA and UNDP country office, the DRC has a National Action Plan (NAP) in place to guide interventions for control and management of SALW including capacity building for law enforcement agencies and institutional strengthening. The country has also commenced marking of government held stockpiles to curb diversion of legal arms to illicit use.

4.4.2 Regional Approach

The Addis Ababa Agreement: As a religious leader working for the Peace and Justice Commission Secretary at the CENCO put it, the Addis Ababa agreement a peace, security and cooperation framework agreement is a very good framework to help the DRC overcome its current situation, but there is need for an effective structure of implementation. According to one respondent representing an NGO, some positive attempts include the reformation of the army, the establishment of the constitutional court, and popular consultations.

Regional SALW instruments: The DRC is signatory to three regional SALW management and control instruments, which include the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol (2001), Nairobi Protocol (2004) and the Kinshasa Convention (2010). However, the implementation of these regional instruments on the ground is minimal.

4.4.3 International Interventions

The United Nation (UN): On a larger scale, the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) has conducted DDR programs since 2002, allowing participants of the program to either join the national army,

⁵³Small Arms Survey, "Demobilization in the DRC Armed Groups and the Role of Organizational Control," Armed Actors Issue Brief. Vol. 1(2013), pp. 1-16.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2015 "Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Causes, impact and implications for the Great Lakes region." Available at: <http://www.uneca.org/publications/conflicts-democratic-republic-congo-causes-impact-and-implications-great-lakes-region> (Accessed on 23/03/2016).

the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) or become civilians. Those who choose to become civilians are catered for by the *Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation, et Réinsertion* (PNDDR), which was created in 2005 to replace the *Commission Nationale de Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (CONADER). The program later took on the name UE-PNDDR or *Unité d'Exécution du Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion*. The mandate of UE-PNDDR is to work in partnership with the MONUSCO, United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP and through this partnership; it has processed as many as 150,000 ex-combatant cases from various Congolese militias.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Even though the above interventions have been undertaken, they have not been effective enough in addressing the fragility situations in DRC. The study established that there is a strong nexus between fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW, which are widespread in the DRC. Weak governance, protracted conflicts and the proliferation of illicit SALW were identified as the leading drivers of fragility situations. These factors are interlinked and therefore cannot be understood in isolation. The impact of fragility situations in the DRC are dire with regard to security and social service delivery.

5.2 Recommendations

The study offers the following recommendations in building resilience:

a) Strengthening of governance institutions: to effectively address fragility in the DRC the establishment of effective governance institutions is critical for political and economic stability. The lack of effective coordination and information sharing between the various government departments and agencies that have a role to play in building resilience is often a significant barrier in tackling fragility situations. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the capacity of various governance institutions for improved service delivery.

b) Address proliferation of illicit SALW: The government should strengthen the National Commission on SALW control to implement the following interventions; arms marking and electronic record keeping, improvement of safe storage for government stocks, training of law enforcement officers, destruction of obsolete and surplus stocks and practical disarmament. This should be done through provision of appropriate resources to the National Commission.

c) Security sector reforms: the long history of armed conflicts in the DRC coupled with security sector institutional dilapidation calls for comprehensive security sector reforms. This should involve establishment of appropriate security sector management policies, and laws, recruitment of sufficient law enforcement personnel, training and provision of appropriate equipment, and retention mechanisms.

d) Sensitization and awareness creations: protracted conflicts in DRC have left the population heavily armed. To address this, it is imperative to develop and implement long-term behaviour and mind change programs, to dissuade the population from gun culture. This could be done through the use of various disarmament practical options.

e) Post conflict reconstruction: the many years of conflict has left the socio-economic sector of the DRC shuttered. Majority of the people are poor, illiterate and cannot access the basic social services. To remedy the situation the government and development partners should undertake comprehensive security sector reforms, engage in return and re-integration of refugees and IDPs as well as increasing government presence in all parts of the country.

f) Provision of Alternative Livelihoods: The government, in partnership with development partners need to initiate and finance development projects in the country that can generate employment opportunities.

g) Regional cooperation: there is need for a concerted effort and political support among the regional and international actors for a lasting solution in the DRC.

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