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Understanding Human Insecurity in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo:

The Relevance of Ethnography for Post-Conflict Reconstruction

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ABSTRACT

The Yokohama Declaration of May 2008 recognizes Africa's potential for human development without downplaying the formidable challenges the continent faces. In relation to Human Security, the multiple tasks ahead pertain to the need for peace, good governance and sustainable development, areas requiring the active participation of local communities and individuals. The central message of this address is that any programme for Human Security partnerships, such as envisaged in the Yokohama Declaration, must start from a detailed understanding of the various forms of *human insecurity* that exist at local levels. The analytical need is for an ethnographic lens on social and individual vulnerabilities as is here demonstrated with reference to war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In reviewing vulnerabilities in relation to youth (recruitment of child soldiers), livelihoods (access to land) and various basic human rights, this address argues that an understanding of human insecurities at the individual and community level, during and after conflict, requires empirical data and detailed attention to pre-conflict conditions.

1. HUMAN SECURITY

The Yokohama Declaration of May 2008, the outcome of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), aims to work 'Towards A Vibrant Africa', an Africa that builds upon its capabilities and partnerships, and 'asserts ownership' over its destiny. Progress to date -

in trade, investment and tourism - suggests that sustainable growth can be achieved. In turn, sustainable growth should lead to poverty alleviation and better 'quality of life and self-reliance' (Yokohama Declaration 2008: 2). Participants at TICAD IV stressed, however, that Africa still faces huge challenges. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be attained unless something dramatic is done to reverse trends in unemployment and poverty; poor agricultural productivity and infrastructure; the low level of industrialization; the deadly diseases; inadequate access to education and basic health; and, of late, soaring food prices. Against this mixture of progress and unresolved challenges, TICAD IV committed itself to partnerships in three inter-related priority areas, among them Human Security.

The concept of Human Security demands that partnerships focus on peace, good governance and sustainable development. The concept 'underscores freedom from fear and freedom from want … [and] emphasizes the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities' (Yokohama Declaration 2008: 4). At the community level, on which this keynote address concentrates, the multiple tasks ahead have a strong gender dimension. Planning for a better future means addressing gender 'disparity in education, violence against women, and insufficient participation of women in all spheres of decision making, while taking account of the cultural specificities of different countries' (Yokohama Declaration 2008: 5). The Declaration calls for the recognition of women's roles in peace building and economic productivity, agriculture in the first instance. The logical extension of this recognition is that legal instruments must be crafted to protect women's rights and advance their empowerment. Responding to 'cultural specificities', it needs to be said, is no easy matter because culture is never bounded and often contested. It is because of the complexities involved in 'understanding culture' that a regional case study and an ethnographic lens were chosen for this address.

Before turning to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), whose conflict I shall review from the angle of Human Security, let me state that quite a range of issues need to be tackled at the level of *communities and individuals* (see TICAD IV Yokohama Action Plan 2008: 14). My key message comes down to this: any programme for Human Security intervention needs to start from a detailed understanding of the various forms of human insecurity that exist at the level of communities and individuals. I shall focus in particular on vulnerabilities relating to gender, livelihoods, ethnicity and young people. In addressing specific insecurities, I shall invite you also to develop a sense of history, because the legacy of the pre-war era – three decades of rule by President Mobutu Sese Seko - is still felt throughout the DRC.

The war in eastern DRC is a stubborn war. It goes on and on. A recent issue of *MSF Dispatches* (Spring 2008) recalls that the province of North Kivu has seen some of its most intense fighting between August 2007 and January 2008. Despite a peace agreement signed that January, which brought hope, people remain desperate: crops and property are being lost; violence, disease and displacement sum up their daily lives. An MSF representative said: 'The long-term impact of violence in Congo is that people cannot get access of health care …, they are dying from completely preventable problems.'[1]

This disturbing insecurity comes five years after the European Union (EU) sent emergency troops to Ituri district (see map) to stop the carnage on the streets of capital Bunia. What had shocked the EU into action was not only the deadly violence, but also the participation of thousands of child soldiers who were 'out of their minds'; children high on drugs, bizarrely dressed, and without pity for helpless civilians.

The objective of the EU intervention – named *Operation Artemis* – was different from that pursued in classic military confrontations, which is to attain victory on the battlefield. For Artemis, the goal was 'not victory but [the] cessation of violence, in order to provide space for political solutions'.[2] Being a different kind of intervention, *Operation Artemis* gave rise to the term Human Security. Analyst Mary Kaldor saw in *Artemis* confirmation that the EU (and the world at large) needed to believe in a new strategic narrative. But the success of *Artemis* needs qualifying. While the dual perspective of ending violence and creating political space is noble and just, we also know that political solutions can mean different things to different people. Therefore, even when space for solutions is provided, the range of challenges can still be so vast that the Human Security framework for

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1   *MSF Dispatches*, UK Issue No.48, Spring 2008, p.9.
2   Mary Kaldor (2004), 'A human security doctrine for Europe, and beyond,' *International Herald Tribune*, 30 September 2004.
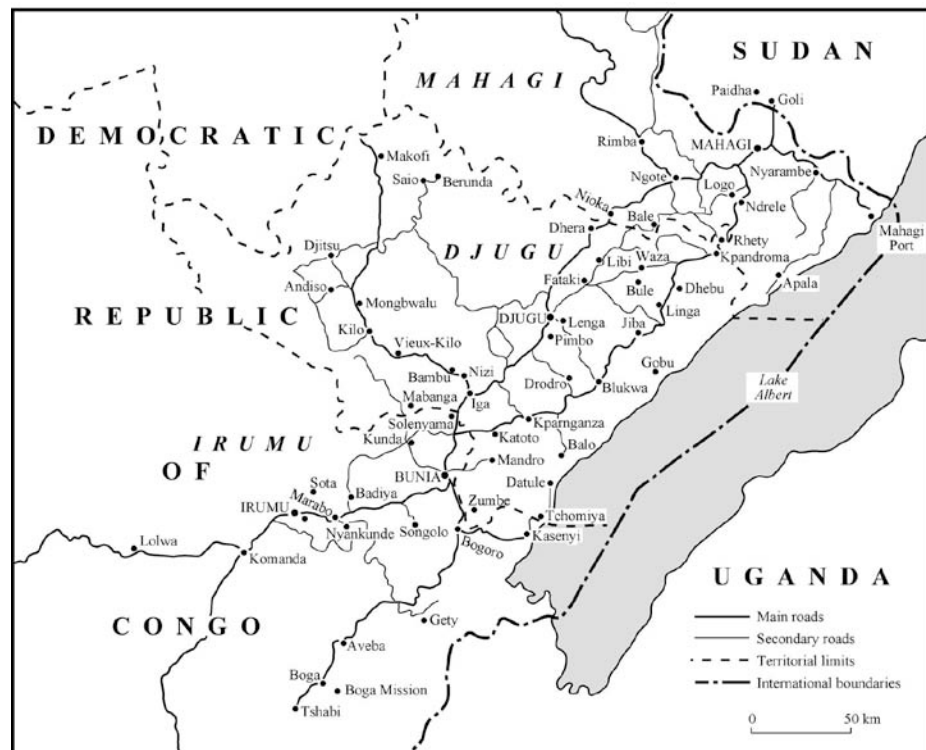
Map of lturi in its regional setting.

action may seem like nothing but idealistic, wishful thinking.

Where do I stand? There are times when the Human Security agenda does indeed strike me as a wish-list of noble goals that, even under the best of circumstances, will take a lifetime to achieve. This does not make me a sceptic, however. My position is that I regard occasions like the present symposium as part of a global discourse that needs to be pursued, because discussing the concept of Human Security *in all its facets* will make it possible for those directly involved in security to reach *common understandings and new insights*.

In many ways Human Security is a concept akin to that of Human Rights. There are sceptics who still lament that the Universal Declaration of 1948 was an imposition by the liberal West; there are others, whose side I am on, who argue that there is an ongoing, pluralist dialogue about human rights, and that the concept has evolved since its launch. More specifically,

'the concept of human rights continues to grow as a set of principles, social movement, and legal framework opposing oppression' (Messer 1997: 310). With this in mind, I believe that the concept of Human Security will also mature and spread, and result in more effective and better contextualized interventions. That said, I must add the proviso that working at the level of 'communities and individuals' – the level at which TICAD IV is committed - is a lot harder than commonly thought. In my experience, there is a long way to go before high-level politicians and policy makers will feel confident that their thoughts and formulae for a more secure world reflect reliable understandings of what happens *inside communities*.

2. WAR IN EASTERN DRC: AN OVERVIEW

In 1996, when its national security was threatened by militarized refugee camps in eastern Congo, then called Zaire, the government of Rwanda sent in troops to dismantle the camps. Confirmation that Rwanda had invaded its 'big neighbour' had to wait until July 1997, when President Paul Kagame informed *The Washington Post* that his army had led and fought in what until then had been called a purely local rebellion. Commonly referred to as the Banyamulenge Tutsi rebellion, this 'purely local' uprising had gathered momentum and developed into an alliance - the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), led by Laurent Kabila - which ousted Zaire's dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko. This short episode is called Congo's First War.

Having toppled Mobutu, president Laurent Kabila then sent his Banyamulenge and Rwandan advisers home. None too pleased, these 'sacked allies' retaliated by launching the Second War, which took on full international overtones. Besides Rwanda, countries like Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola, Chad and Namibia all entered the battlefield. Starting in August 1998, the Second War was something of a re-run of the first rebellion, at least initially (see Pottier 2002). The explicit motive, once again, was Rwanda's (and Uganda's) need for regime change in Kinshasa, a change that would bring stability and security along shared borders.

What follows is a skeleton overview of the main rebel groups that emerged during the Second War.

Initially, the rebel movement which started the second war was known

as the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD). It had ethnic Banyamulenge fighters at its core.[3] From its inception, however, the RCD was rife with internal disagreements; its chair, Professor Wamba dia Wamba, who wanted political reform and transparency, found himself opposed to the rebellion's militarists. When, in April 1999, the military expressed dissatisfaction with Wamba's performance, he and his supporters (among them Mbusa Nyamwisi, now a minister) broke away and set up the RCD-*Mouvement de libération* (RCD-ML).

RCD-ML moved north and allied itself with Uganda, which sent military aid and troops. This led to a number of shoot-outs with the original RCD, now referred to as RCD-Goma.[4] Uganda and Rwanda were fighting a war between themselves, on Congolese soil. After moving to Bunia, in Ituri district, RCD-ML experienced tension between Wamba and Nyamwisi, notably about the possible merger with a third rebel movement, called the MLC (*Mouvement pour la libération du Congo*), headed by Jean-Pierre Bemba. The MLC had been launched from within Uganda with the backing of president Yoweri Museveni.

Uganda's support for Wamba evaporated in February 2002, when Jean-Pierre Bemba arrived in Ituri with instructions from Museveni. Within weeks, Bemba removed Wamba dia Wamba and appointed Nyamwisi (ethnic Nande) as head of the Ituri administration. Feeling empowered, Nyamwisi then turned against his colleague John Tibasima (ethnic Hema), kicked him out of the region and took control of RCD-ML, which he renamed RCD-K-ML.[5] These events made Bemba pull out of central Ituri to resume his own war against the Kinshasa government. Reacting to Nyamwisi's betrayal, Museveni sent troops and tanks into Bunia, causing Nyamwisi to flee. To fill the power vacuum thus created, ethnic Hema launched the *Union des patriotes congolais* (UPC). Ethnic Hema were politically and economically dominant in Ituri. Knowing of Uganda's interest in the region, UPC leader Thomas Lubanga quickly secured official Ugandan support.[6]

2002 was also the year of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the mass consultation which led to the formation of a Transitional Government. What happened *after* the main talks ended, however, would prolong the conflict. At the closure of the main talks, in April, Jean-Pierre Bemba had emerged as the strong man of the armed opposition; he was named Prime Minister designate. The plan was welcomed by the UN Security Council, but rejected by Congo's main rebel group (RCD-Goma), by Congo's main opposition party (UDPS),[7] and by Rwanda and the United States of America. Under pressure, president Joseph Kabila gave in and announced that the political dialogue needed re-opening; he removed Bemba from the position of Prime Minister, thus making him one of four vice-presidents. Bemba then broke off relations with Kinshasa and resumed his rebel activities.

Installed in 2004, the Transitional Government brought peace to much of the DRC, but not to the east. Rather than peace, Ituri district and the two Kivu provinces saw an intensification of conflict. It is useful briefly to give some details of the unrest in both Ituri and the Kivus. What I want to stress here is the conflict's global-local dimension, which is typical of all of Africa's so-called New Wars.

2.1 Ituri district

In highly simplistic terms, the conflict in Ituri pitted ethnic Hema (pastoralists) against ethnic Lendu (cultivators); they quarrelled over land.[8] The wider picture, however, is that the initial squabbles escalated into full civil war once neighbour Uganda interfered by sending troops.

With the Ugandan army supporting prominent Hema in their quest for land, the conflict turned catastrophic when UPC leader Lubanga seized Bunia in August 2002. Lubanga launched a virulent racist discourse in which all non-Hema (mainly ethnic Lendu, Ngiti, Bira and Nande) were targeted. Now called *non-originaires* (non-natives), it was a death sentence for many of them. Bunia's Lendu population fled the town, while tens of thousands of displaced rural Hema filed in to occupy abandoned

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3   Banyamulenge (literally: people from Mulenge) are the descendants of ethnic Tutsi from Rwanda who arrived in Congo over a century ago.

4   RCD-Goma = *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie – Goma.*

5   RCD-K-ML = *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie – Kisangani, mouvement de libération.*

6   Thomas Lubanga currently stands trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

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7   UDPS = *Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social.*

8   Not all Hema are pastoralists. Today, the majority of Hema in Djugu Territory are subsistence cultivators (Thiry 2004: 111, note 7). For an overview of Ituri's ethnic composition, see Pottier (2006, 2008).

homes. The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Bunia grew to 60,000, predominantly Hema.[9] That same month Lubanga's UPC attacked Songolo village, again killing many Lendu/Ngiti civilians. To avenge the atrocities, Lendu/Ngiti combatants then carried out their (second) attack on Nyankunde, supported by troops led by the ousted Mbusa Nyamwisi. They callously massacred 1,200 Hema and Bira.[10]

But Lubanga, too, would lose Uganda's support. Following his exclusion from the national peace talks, because he was a political newcomer, Lubanga signed a collaborative agreement with RCD-Goma, Rwanda's proxy. Angered, Museveni then dropped his support for Lubanga, making Chief Kahwa (Banywagi Hema) his new protégé. On paper, Kahwa's military faction became a political party named PUSIC (*Parti pour l'unité et la sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo*). Together with other militia groups, including the Lendu-dominated FNI (*Front nationaliste et intégrationiste*), chief Kahwa set up FIPI, the *Front pour l'intégration et la paix en Ituri*. On 6 March 2003, a combined UPDF-FIPI force ousted Lubanga from Bunia.[11]

At this point, the 'international community' stepped in, but miscalculated when the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC) insisted that the Ugandan military depart from Bunia on the date previously agreed. The departure was premature. Notwithstanding the excesses of individual UPDF commanders, who had been in the district since 1998/9, the Ugandan army had provided a modicum of stability, which the UN failed to recognize. The consequence of Uganda's premature pullout was catastrophic. Predictably, Lubanga returned; less predictably, he returned with Chief Kahwa in support! (It is remarkable how quickly military alliances have been made, unmade and sometimes remade in this conflict.) Lubanga and Kahwa took on the Lendu (and Ngiti) militias in a violent battle that killed over 400 civilians. The battle also caused the displacement, often a second fleeing, of most town dwellers. Bunia was cut in half: FNI/FRPI troops controlled its southern half, UPC/PUSIC the north.[12]

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9   Amnesty International Open Letter to the UN Security Council, 17 October 2002.
10   Human Rights Watch 2003: 30.
11   UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Monitoring de la Situation en Est RDC: au 09 mars 2003.
12   Ituri has five administrative territories, two of which feature here: Djugu and Irumu. Djugu is associated with ethnic Hema, a.k.a. Gegere Hema or North Hema, and with

The rest of Ituri's conflict history can be summarized. Arriving in Bunia in June 2003, with a Chapter VII mandate, *Operation Artemis* (the EU rapid intervention force) quickly secured most of Bunia, but *could not stem the violence that now moved to the countryside*, where rural Hema became a soft target for FNI/FRPI assaults. When *Artemis* ended and MONUC troops were boosted, the UN continued to struggle to make Ituri secure.[13] In other words, *Operation Artemis* may have been the first Human Security military intervention, but its positive impact was seriously limited and localized (see MSF 2003). Among the successes were the stabilization of (half of) Bunia's population and the return of thousands of residents - and Hema IDPs who had fled Bunia in May – within roughly one month. What brought them back, however, was not so much the relative safety of the town as a sharp increase in rural insecurity, which *Artemis* could not prevent. *Artemis* also made Bunia relatively safe for IDPs, yet, again, it could not change the fact that most quarters (*quartiers*) in this divided town remained under militia control at night. More positively, however, *Operation Artemis* did prepare for the deployment of a stronger MONUC force the following September.

When Ituri's warring factions declared peace on 14 May 2004 and signed the Kinshasa Act of Commitment (*Acte d'engagement de Kinshasa*), the arrangement was a classic example of the 'international community' rushing in in search of a much needed victory. The Act had no future. Warlords had 'entered the negotiations knowing that if their largely unreasonable demands for status, jobs and immunity from prosecution were refused, they would continue their activities without fear of sanction' (International Crisis Group 2004: i). Unsurprisingly, fighting in Ituri continued until – officially – the middle of 2007.[14]

Since I may be at risk of offering too much detail, let me now make three points regarding *the internal dynamics* of the Ituri conflict. Firstly,

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ethnic Lendu. During the conflict, Hema formed the UPC militia (*Union des Patriotes Congolais*), led by Thomas Lubanga; Lendu formed the FNI (*Front Nationaliste et Intégrationiste*), led by Floribert Njabu. Irumu'fs Hema, in contrast, are referred to as South Hema, its Lendu are commonly known as Lendu-Bindi or Ngiti. Ngiti formed the FRPI militia (*Force de Résistance Patriotique d'Ituri*), while South Hema joined the UPC. In membership terms, FNI and FRPI did not distinguish between Lendu and Ngiti.
13   GAA (German Agro Action) Situation Report Ituri, 1-16 September 2003.
14   IRIN, 21 August 2007. IRIN = Integrated Regional Information Network, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

as already seen, the Ituri conflict began with a land dispute in which Lendu agriculturalists clashed with Hema landowners who had purchased ancestral Lendu land on which to graze their livestock. The Hema farmers claimed they had purchased the land legally, i.e. in the spirit of the General Property Law of 1973, and they had the documents to prove it. This was unacceptable to the Lendu farmers who now faced *instant eviction* (which was not according to the law). For Lendu, the purchases smacked of blatant collusion between wealthy Hema livestock keepers and influential Hema officials in town. Facing *immediate* expulsion, because Hema hired Ugandan soldiers to speed up the evictions, the Lendu agriculturalists resorted to violence, which, in the absence of an authority structure for arbitration, spiralled out of control.

Secondly, at various times during the conflict, Hema as well as Lendu/ Ngiti militias called for the wholesale expulsion of the ethnic other. In January 2001, Lendu chiefs in Djugu Territory demanded that Hema from Blukwa (historically the heartland of Gegere Hema) vacate their land, because these Hema were now just 'visitors who are living here in these hills'.[15] Likewise, in 2004 the Hema-dominated UPC called for the forced migration of Lendu out of Djugu (Pottier 2008). Under these conditions of threatened wholesale expulsion, the return of IDPs becomes a tough challenge. The main threat of ethnic cleansing, however, came in 2005 when an FNI militia (loyal to Peter Karim) destroyed some seventy Hema villages. This gave rise to a serious humanitarian crisis (details further down).

Thirdly, military conquest, with its focus on land, is driven also by the international hunger for precious minerals. Ituri's high-quality gold, for example, has attracted warlords and transnational mining corporations alike. I note the active presence in Mongbwalu of AngloGold Ashanti (part of Anglo-American) and the Swiss gold-refining company Metalor Technologies. AngloGold Ashanti developed links with the Lendu-dominated FNI (Human Rights Watch 2005b). Along with other natural resources, Mongbwalu's gold found its way to Uganda, from where it reached global markets. Other warlords too have coveted Ituri's gold, killing civilians and torturing artisanal miners who failed to pay their taxes. When the UPC gained control of Mongbwalu in September 2002, a site it held for

six months, leader Lubanga sent gold to Rwanda in exchange for weapons.

But gold is just one example of a natural resource whose extraction needs regulating. Coltan, diamonds and timber (amongst others) have to be added. Coltan, a rare ore, has been particularly instrumental in fanning the flames of conflict (see UN Security Council 2002). The bottom line is that we cannot discuss human (in)security in eastern DRC without also discussing the conflict's strong international dimension.

2.2 The Kivus

The conflict scene in the Kivus has its own characteristics, but shares common elements with Ituri. The chief similarity is that politico-military elites have sought 'to consolidate their power base and reward their supporters by extending control over land'; land wrenched from established communities (Vlassenroot 2008: 197). The region of Masisi (North Kivu) offers a prime example. After RCD-Goma gained control of the region, Banyarwanda Tutsi leaders used their influence within the rebel movement and local administration to strip 'autochthonous customary chiefs of control over land. Local administrators and customary chiefs who did not support TDP [*Tout pour la paix et le développement*, an NGO facilitating the return of Banyarwanda refugees who had fled to Rwanda], were systematically replaced' (Vlassenroot 2008: 205). The Banyarwanda Tutsi elite thus took substantial tracts of land away from autochthonous groups (e.g. Hunde), turning them into *zones extra-coutumières*, i.e. spaces outside the control of customary chiefs.

The displacement of entire village populations during the war has also been documented by Hélène Morvan (2005), who researched the Mayi-Mayi movement in South Kivu. Here, too, the quest for land acquired ethnic overtones. In Shabunda territory, for example, where Mayi-Mayi leader Padiri had his headquarters, 'autochthonous' Rega accused Padiri of having brought with him a good number of Tembo supporters, who then robbed local Rega of their land. Although Padiri claimed he was 'above tribalism,' Rega chiefs countered that his Tembo followers 'are foreign to the region, they have come to take our riches and trade them with their [ethnic] brothers. Today they are strong, we have surrendered, but one day we will ask that our sons take up arms and chase them away'

15　IRIN report on Ituri, 25 January 2001.

(quoted in Morvan 2005: 63). (In other parts of South Kivu, it was 'surtout les Rwandais', Rwandan military units, who controlled mining sites after removing villagers.) Regarding the position of displaced Rega, however, it was doubtful whether their young men had much of an appetite for taking up arms. As Morvan learned in relation to villages abandoned in 1999 and 2000, youths from there had moved away to more peaceful 'zones rich in minerals' (e.g. quarries near Shabunda and Walikale), where they appeared little inclined to contemplate returning home (2005: 63-64). This information introduces an important insight: the old and the young may have different views on what constitutes 'home' or their 'heritage', which cautions against treating 'culture' as being bounded and fixed.

Again, the conflict's international dimension must be recognized. In some areas, villagers were forced off their lands because of contracts awarded to international companies. Thus in North Kivu, in late September 2001, Rwandan soldiers forcefully moved the inhabitants of several villages after RCD-Goma had awarded exclusive logging rights to a Kenya-based timber company. The contract specified that no cultivation must take place on the site, which effectively deprived the villagers of their main source of subsistence (Amnesty International 2003: 28).

The fighting in Kivu has also been marked by the terror activities of the renegade Laurent Nkunda. In 2004, Bukavu (South Kivu) witnessed a mutiny of 'Banyamulenge' forces enlisted in the newly integrated national army (the FARDC). Following intense combat, the pro-Rwanda dissidents then spread their operations to North Kivu, where the Nkunda caused terror and massive displacements.[16] Despite the peace agreement of January 2008, Nkunda remained at large, recruiting and training fighters.[17]

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16   Clashes between the Congolese army and Nkunda's troops earlier this year, near Rutshuru, caused 40,000 people to flee.

17   IRIN, 6 August 2008. After Nkunda's troops terrorized the population in the second half of 2008, Nkunda was 'neutralized' through a military plan that involved Rwanda. On 5 January 2009, Bosco Ntaganda, his military chief of staff, declared he had taken control of Nkunda's CNDP troops.

3. HUMAN INSECURITIES DURING WAR TIME: livelihood and food insecurity, physical violence, vulnerable youth

I shall now look at basic human insecurities from a local perspective, which means focusing on 'individuals and communities' (Yokohama 2008: 4). In presenting these insecurities, starting with livelihood deprivation, I will also present insights from academic research. The wider context here is that people in eastern DRC have been displaced on a massive scale, often permanently. To put a percentage to it, a recent survey of 600 villages across eastern DRC has found that 61 percent of households had been displaced at least once between 1996 and 2007 (DRC TUUNGANE 2008). The main reason for this massive displacement, I reiterate, is that politico-military elites use land to reward allies and backers, and followers, while they also use land to exploit minerals and sustain the war.

3.1 Livelihood insecurity: loss of land, cattle and food markets

During the war, with rebels and local militias expropriating land by force, the Kivus saw land under cultivation fall by almost 30 percent. In addition, there was reduced access to markets, now too dangerous to be held, and a parallel collapse of the region's already dismal road infrastructure. Cattle theft too was excessive: surveys conducted in North Kivu show a 50 percent drop between 1996 and 2004 (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2008: 160). These thefts made farmers shift from raising cattle to raising small livestock.

In Ituri as well, besides the theft of land, the war resulted in widespread cattle rustling. In October 2002, the UN Panel of Experts exposed how armed Hema, supported by Ugandan UPDF troops, forcefully took cattle from Lendu villagers for the benefit of commercially oriented elite Hema. The FAO representative in Bunia reported how the UPDF offered protection 'against attacks that they themselves ha[d] orchestrated, in exchange for regular payment in animals' (UN Security Council 2002: paragraph 117).

Let me now make a first key point. In terms of the post-conflict recovery of livelihood assets, it is land that needs looking at most urgently. And land must be understood in a historical context. *The challenge of post-conflict recovery includes addressing pre-conflict conditions*. What is that

context? The General Property Law of 1973, already mentioned, decreed that *all land* – including land managed under customary tenure – had become state property. The upshot was that *local/customary chiefs could now expropriate ancestral land previously held in perpetuity, and sell it for private gain.* The 1973 legislation affected rural populations in two ways: firstly, secure occupation/residence no longer existed; secondly, customary leaders lost interest in ensuring the rights of their people, they now invested in networks of state patronage. The patrimonial system president Mobutu had set in motion meant that high-level political loyalty was increasingly rewarded with titles to swathes of land suited for commercial exploitation.

The scale of the expropriations (known as '*spoliation*') is well documented for the Kivus, where entire communities came to be dispossessed ('despoiled') to make way for plantations and cattle ranches. The work of anthropologists Brooke and Claude Schoepf (1987, 1990) offers a window on the scale of spoliation:

> Between 1979 and 1983 more than one thousand new land title petitions were filed at the title registry office for North Kivu. Big businessmen, multinational firms, government officials and chiefs have been involved. Repression, including arbitrary arrests, extortion and crop destruction have been employed against peasants who refused to abandon homes and fields. *Many have been forced off the land; others now work in exchange for squatter rights.* (Schoepf and Schoepf 1990: 93; emphasis added)[18]

The importance of this finding is twofold: one, forced expropriations (resulting in displacement) hurt people well before the recent wars began; two, international interest was also part of the problem. Fertile Masisi (North Kivu) is a case in point. Before 1996, one-third of the arable space publicly available was already controlled by landowners involved in 'commercial ranching and plantations of coffee, tea or pyrethrum' (Vlassenroot 2008: 201). These *nouveaux riches*, moreover, had the international community

on their side, since commercial ranching was boosted by internationally funded herd health projects (Schoepf and Schoepf 1990: 94; Fairhead 1992: 25).

Within this climate of international assistance and state-centred patronage, customary chiefs and other officials began to excel in the design of expropriation strategies. One such strategy was the use of trumped-up charges.

> For example, each man in the village must carry receipts for tax payments and proof that he has voted, as well as a *Carte pour Citoyens*. Receipts, however, often cost more than the amount received, and identity cards are kept unavailable by the local authorities. (Fairhead 1992: 22)

Other strategies included the falsification of land registration documents (1992: 26).

The knock-on effect was rampant livelihood insecurity for the rural masses, and a concomitant need for protection. If they were not expelled at the point of expropriation, *villagers found themselves increasingly 'squatting' on land their families had cultivated for generations.* They were allowed to squat, but only if they paid 'rent' – read: protection money - to customary chiefs, and sometimes churches. Paying rent usually meant providing a man-day of (unpaid) *corvée* labour per week (Fairhead 1992: 29). In other words, control over land became a lever to gain control over labour (Schoepf and Schoepf 1987: 22-26), and ultimately, as became clear in the 1990s, a lever to control the minds of impoverished people. In sum, we must understand that – well before the First War began - traditional chiefs and the military worked hand-in-glove to create poverty and make people dependent on them.

In the 1990s, land became even scarcer, while the concept of protection was widened to include *political allegiance* to new landowners. This situation took a turn for the worse when, under pressure from the international community, Mobutu launched his democratization process in the *early 1990s*. From then on, *struggles over land became ethnic struggles*, resulting in inter-ethnic clashes and displacements because of ethnicity. Loyalty in return for 'squatting' rights now meant supporting the

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18　Schoepf and Schoepf comment that the land policy is officially dressed up as a 'national integration' strategy, i.e. the policy ensures that all citizens now can have equal access to land throughout the national territory (Schoepf and Schoepf 1990: 93).

patron's political vision and discourse – and discourses radicalized once Mobutu began to 'democratize' his political system. At this point, some aspirant politicians in eastern DRC launched into discourses of ethnic hatred – and sometimes used the promise of land – to rally their followers around them. The stark reality was that the young thugs who swore allegiance to powerful, emerging elites (read: potential warlords) often did so because they were too marginalized, too insecure, not to do so.

To conclude, what matters today is that the violence and livelihood insecurity seen in eastern DRC during conflict are, in actual fact, *extreme forms of a well-known structural violence* which has its roots in so-called peace time. (Rural people, I should add, now rely on agriculture for their livelihood, as opportunities for lucrative migrant work have dried long ago. New mining opportunities for some young men may be the exception, but these, even if lucrative, rarely benefit the families back home.)

But the war did not just result in widespread displacement and heightened land insecurity, and hence in sharply reduced levels of food production and consumption. The war also resulted in the total disruption of the inter-zonal food flows that had been so crucial for achieving basic food security in pre-war days (Pottier and Fairhead 1991). It may seem 'obvious' that the infrastructure for local food markets collapses when war prevents people from growing crops and visiting markets. After all, food markets are a well-known target during conflict. What made the crisis in eastern DRC all the more acute, however, was that the war disrupted not only the infrastructure for markets that moved food between ecological zones, but it also crippled Kivu's capacity for exporting beans to Kinshasa and other major towns. Before the war, 'Kinshasa's main provider of beans, maize and meat were the Kivus, … after the war it was cheaper to import agricultural products from Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and other countries' (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2008: 161). While this observation must not detract from the difficulties small-scale producers had when 'playing the market' before the war (Pottier and Fairhead 1991), the shift has undeniably undermined the ability of households throughout eastern DRC to make money and stay food secure.

3.2 Bodily and sexual violence

Besides opportunistic land grabbing, extortions and the collapse of infrastructure, the war resulted also in gruesome human rights violations, often of a sexual nature, 'unspeakable' mutilations, and alleged acts of cannibalism. Allegations of cannibalism have been rife in Ituri and other parts of eastern DRC, but they are sometimes fabricated and used for political ends, i.e. to discredit opponents (see Pottier 2007). On the other hand, mutilated bodies or body parts have regularly been displayed in public, in order to intimidate and terrorize.

Crucially, from a Human Security perspective, it must be recognized that *the human rights situation did not improve when the Transitional Government took office in 2004*. On the contrary, the widespread rape of women and children continued to increase.[19] By 2005, the appalling situation made the UN declare that Congo was now 'the biggest, most neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today', and that 'sexual abuse … had probably become worse there than anywhere else in the world'.[20] For that same year, Human Rights Watch (2005a) asserted that tens of thousands of women and girls had suffered crimes of sexual violence by armed forces; all forces being equally guilty.[21] Sexual violence was still a *systematic* weapon

> to terrorize communities into accepting their control or to punish them for real or supposed aid to opposing forces.
> … In many cases, combatants abducted women and girls and took them to their bases in the forest where they forced them to provide sexual services and domestic labor, sometimes for periods of more than a year. (Human Rights Watch 2002: 1)

Academic research on sexual violence in wartime confirms that 'the body' is used as a carrier for violent messages that terrify communities

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19   IRIN, 8 March 2004.
20   Daily Observer (Liberia), 17 March 2005. Statement by the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.
21   See Year Reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* by the US State Department.

and individuals (Broch-Due 2004: 24). Such a perspective makes us see violence as embedded in existing cultures and cosmologies, rather than in a universal 'culture of war' (2004: 16). These cultures and cosmologies may explain why sexual crimes are not publicly condemned, and why they are instead 'surrounded by a protective wall of silence', as Sharon Hutchinson learned during her research among Nuer in South Sudan (Hutchinson 2004: 135). Nuer girls who had been raped would attempt to hide the fact from their mothers. Alcinda Honwana (2006) makes a similar point regarding demobilized girl soldiers in Mozambique. They too struggled with taboos associated with rape and sexual abuse: 'Feelings of shame and guilt and the fear of stigma prevented many young women from telling their stories' (Honwana 2006: 21).

Research also suggests that silence and stigmatization become more pronounced when communities fear extinction. In the face of collective despair, discourses of morality amplify the symbols of normality and self-control, and advocate zero-tolerance towards social deviance. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) remind us, in the wake of a political violence comes a symbolic violence that may turn victims into 'living-dead people, refusing to speak of the unspeakable; [they] are often shunned or outcast by kin and community, and even by comrades and lovers' (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 1).

Violence against civilians, women in particular, also has an underreported seasonal/agricultural dimension. As I learned from Ituri refugees in Uganda, at the beginning of each agricultural season displaced women experienced pressure to return home and tend to gardens. But women who attempted to return home had no guarantee that militias would let them do so without 'punishment'.

3.3 Vulnerable youth: the plight of child soldiers

To understand the life-world of child soldiers two perspectives are helpful. Firstly, children in sub-Saharan Africa are not treated as individuals, they rather belong to larger social structures. Secondly, over the past decade, as a result of the spread of a revivalist Christian fundamentalism, children 'in trouble' increasingly see themselves as living in a 'pandemonium world' cut off from the everyday reality they once knew.

The social position of the child in eastern DRC was most forcefully expressed in 2003, when warlord Thomas Lubanga (UPC) decreed

that each family in the area under [the] control [of UPC] must contribute to the war effort by providing *a cow, money or a child* for the UPC's rebel militia.[22]

At the time, UNICEF protection officers firmly believed that 'families and communities [sent] the children' not just to the UCP, whose fighting force reportedly was 50 percent children, but also to other militias.[23] Humanitarian workers sometimes linked this parental or community consent to the area's trenchant poverty. The SCF Programme Director for the DRC, for example, commented that 'where abject poverty is the norm many children and their parents find it difficult to see alternatives'.[24] While there is much of value in this perspective (see the section on DDR, below), we should also be aware that children in Africa are socialized into active, responsible members of society (Toren 1996). Children may want to join the militias without being coerced. This does not mean, however, that they cease to be victims; they are still victims of circumstance.

But children can also be disowned by families and communities. In Kinshasa, for example, thousands of rejected children live on the streets, where they move 'between the worlds of the visible and the invisible, life and death, daily reality and its nocturnal double' (De Boeck 2004: 156). Accused of witchcraft, these children move in and out of what is known as the 'pandemonium world' or 'second world,' a world deemed capable of overwhelming the 'first world' of everyday reality. Kinshasa's revivalist Christian churches have spawned frenzied discourses about witchcraft in children, and regularly 'accommodate' children who confess to having experienced the 'pandemonium world' which they visit as nocturnal cannibal witches.

In the war, militias too were spurred on by extreme religious imaginations, as seen in the ranks of the ferocious *Effacez* troops under

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22   IRIN, 7 February 2003; reported by Radio Okapi, MONUC's own radio.
23   http://groups.yahoo.com/group/osint/message/32605. Accessed 15 June 2003.
24   Save The Children Fund (SCF) circular posted on ReliefWeb, 16 June 2003.

MLC control. They fought in Ituri in 2002-3 seeking inspiration in the Bible, and were subsequently accused of cannibalizing Mbuti pygmies (Pottier 2007). There were many disaffected youth among the *Effacez*; some had joined out of anger because they could no longer go to school, while others had looked upon the military as a substitute for family.

Likewise, in the Kivus and in Katanga, Mayi-Mayi fighters have stood accused of cannibalism. But whether they practised it, and what kind of cannibalism it was, remains unclear. After spending five months researching in Bunyakiri, a region then under Mayi-Mayi control, French anthropologist Hélène Morvan preferred to keep an open mind. If cannibalism was practised, she wrote, it happened in a ritual context (Morvan 2005: 78). Some Mayi-Mayi child soldiers (*kadogo*) whom Morvan interviewed did indeed speak of rituals in which bone ash of slain Rwandans had been used.

What applies to Kinshasa's disowned children (*shege*) also applies to child soldiers. Many are believed to be cannibal witches for whom reintegration into society is a near impossible, dangerous undertaking. This is particularly the case for girl soldiers who have lived as bush wives to militiamen, and who may have both given life (birth) and taken it through killings. What cannot be denied, however, is that 'Pandemonium' children who entered the war often turned out to be without mercy. They terrorized people not just through the weapons they fired, but also through their dress and demeanour, especially when wielding both Kalashnikovs and symbols of childhood. Young boys often appeared on the scene in girls' dresses. A media report on child soldiers serving in the FRPI militia had this to say:

> the boys have taken to dressing up. One wears a red straw hat of the style favoured by the late Princess Diana. Another, not to be outdone, has made a headdress out of a baseball cap and a blue nylon tablecloth wrapped around it. Yet others, a little older and fully aware of the fear they already inspire thanks to their weapons, have accentuated the effect by wearing wigs that give them dreadlocks flowing to the waist or a white papier-mâché mask with dehumanising effect.[25]

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25   http://groups.yahoo.com/group/osint/message/32605. Accessed 15 June 2003.

Covering the war in Liberia, Stephen Ellis (1999) has made similar reference to seemingly carnivalesque behaviour: young men posing for photographs in the midst of 'incomprehensible slaughter', or wearing women's wigs and adorning themselves with human bones and other grotesque decorations (Ellis 1999: 17). Child soldiers carrying both AK-47s and teddy bears have also been a common sight.

4. INTERVENTIONS IN THE NAME OF HUMAN SECURITY

Having discussed key human insecurities, let me now turn to humanitarian interventions. I will select for comment a small number of interventions, or intervention phases, to reveal the magnitude of the Human Security challenge. As stated at the beginning of this address, the concern is to keep a 'community and individual' focus. I shall concentrate on aspects of Human Security where humanitarians may face particularly difficult conceptual problems and dilemmas. In addition, I shall comment on the programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), which is at the core of the Human Security programme in eastern Congo.

Since I began with livelihood insecurity, let me now also say something about food aid and livelihood support.

4.1 Food aid and livelihood support

Food aid failing to reach the needy is a common problem in war, just as it is in times of famine (Pottier 1999). In eastern Congo, combatants have at times gone to extremes to deny food aid. Referring to the theft of 100 tonnes of WFP food aid by RCD-Goma soldiers in 2001, Amnesty International wrote:

> The theft was carried out like a military operation… . Staff of the UN World Food programme (WFP) had encouraged the local population to return to their homes, after extended displacement in more inaccessible areas, to obtain humanitarian aid and resume cultivating their fields. Promises of security and permission to distribute the aid had been obtained from RCD-Goma authorities, traditional chiefs and commanders of armed groups operating in the area. However,

immediately after distribution of the food in several villages, RCD-Goma combatants visited and threatened each household, forcing people to give up the food. Many people fled the area again after the incident.

An observer told Amnesty International: "… [soldiers] also took the villagers' clothing and any livestock, and even cut down the crop of banana trees. Cultivated ground was trampled over. Everything was taken away in a convoy of trucks." (Amnesty International 2003: 10)

In DR Congo, food theft by 'the authorities' is common also in peace time. Under Mobutu, food theft by those in power happened on market days, for example, although theft generally took the form of money extortions. The extortion principle – popularly known as *Article 15, Débrouillez-vous* - still lies at the heart of the Congolese socio-political fabric; it remains the chief reason for livelihood and food insecurity. The scene Amnesty described reminds us that many 'chiefs' *continue* to side with other powerful actors, not with their own people. (There is a lesson here for policy makers and practitioners concerned with governance.)

There may be little humanitarians can do to prevent looting by heavily armed militias, but there *is* a challenge they need to respond to. The challenge is that food aid in wartime must be part of a package for agricultural recovery (commonly known as 'seeds and tools') which should get under way *during* the conflict itself. For this to happen, and the challenge is huge, humanitarian organizations need to work with 'all sides' in the conflict, which is hard to achieve and equally hard to justify since working-with-militias is frowned upon in many international circles, not least within the United Nations.

Let me give an example. In Ituri, in 2004, the German NGO Action Agricole Allemande (AAA), or German Agro Action (GAA), rehabilitated roads in areas where the conflict was ongoing. AAA also worked as the implementing agency for the World Food Programme (WFP). Its approach was to work with all parties in the conflict, and be transparent about it (Pottier 2006). The AAA work ethic had its critics – who argued that working with warring parties meant helping warlords – but the approach also drew admiration, mostly in private comment. A positive byproduct of this bold approach was that seeds-and-tools reached needy populations *during* the war itself, thus avoiding the all too familiar problem of excessive

delays once a conflict ends. When I joined an AAA reconnaissance party on the Katoto-Blukwa road (a no-go area for the UN and other NGOs), there was ample evidence that crops – maize and beans - were being cultivated. It was a good sign, even though it was quite likely that the rebel faction in control, UPC-Lubanga, would claim its share of the harvest.

Working with 'all parties' during conflict is both laudable and hazardous. The AAA reconnaissance party I travelled with was intercepted by UPC-Lubanga and forced to return to Katoto at gun point. Some months later, another AAA party was also taken hostage and humiliated, with one AAA worker being shot and MONUC needing to come to the rescue.[26] Coming at a time of heightened insecurity, the incident resulted in AAA delaying and changing plans, and caused problems with donor ECHO, who seemed inflexible about project completion dates.[27]

But agricultural needs were high. For example, by 2005, Ituri district struggled to find the right planting materials, even for cassava. With the conflict now in its sixth year, the FAO in Bunia had started to import cassava cuttings from Kisangani. Access to maize seed, too, was problematic; most farmers were planting fourth and fifth generation hybrid seed that was practically sterile.[28]

While I regard agricultural recovery to be a programme that cannot wait until a conflict ends, it is entirely normal that intervening agencies focus first and foremost on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). What is the experience with DDR in eastern Congo?

4.2 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

DDR began in 2004 with international funds, including from Japan, being channelled through the UNDP.[29] Initially, MONUC shared many responsibilities with Congo's newly integrated army (the FARDC); responsibilities included attacking militias that refused to disarm, but MONUC gradually passed all responsibilities on to the national army.

26　IRIN, 25 February 2005.
27　IRIN, 4 April 2005.
28　IRIN, 4 April 2005.
29　IRIN, 3 November 2003. Japan contributed US 3.7 million (408 million yen) towards DDR.

While pockets of resistance continue in some regions, it is clear that DDR is coming to an end – at least as far as disarmament (the first D) is concerned. In June 2007, Mbusa Nyamwisi, now the internal affairs minister, said that thousands of combatants still awaited demobilization and reintegration, despite the fact that 130,000 had already disarmed. The latter included 2,610 women and 30,200 children. For Ituri, the latest figures spoke of 'at least 25,000 ex-combatants [having] disarmed, with more than 10,000 children being demobilized'.[30]

In Ituri, CONADER, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion, started confidently by setting up a transit centre near Aru. The centre could process one hundred fighters a day. A consultant explained: 'They stay for four days, during which they are oriented about their options to either enter civilian life or be integrated into the new Congolese Armed Forces. Most important is that they can make a free decision … . We keep them in groups of 25 and constantly monitor them, so that no one can exert pressure on them regarding their decision.' A UNDP officer added: 'The ex-militias also get their eyes scanned so that they cannot go through the process twice and benefit several times of the support packages handed to them. We give them an entry kit …, US $50 for the trip home and food rations for one month for a family of five'.[31] Everything seemed under control.

However, it soon emerged that reintegration into society was far from straightforward. Leaving aside that certain communities might not want their demobilized combatants back, the reconstruction projects designed to reintegrate them were mostly either not functioning well or unsustainable. There were also delays with implementing these projects. As a result, disarmed militiamen were hanging around towns harassing people for food and money; they discouraged others from disarming. In Kasenyi, for example, the committee in charge of community projects for demobilized soldiers received 'business plans' from disarmed militias keen to work in reconstruction, but the application procedure was complex and cumbersome, and success not guaranteed.[32]

Given the emphasis on local ownership (always a slippery term),

expectations ran high and promises were made, but projects remained few. Throughout eastern DRC, disappointed ex-fighters complained that they disarmed without any prospect of reintegration. A former Mayi-Mayi fighter in Katanga said: 'We are forced to live under miserable conditions with other displaced people as we await a solution. We are suffering.'[33] Disarmed and disappointed, many returned to violent ways.[34] In September 2006, a FARDC commander called the process 'a pretence'.[35]

A further problem slowing down DDR was that certain militia leaders did not want fighters to disarm. The problem came to the fore in Ituri after government soldiers (FARDC) started to disarm militiamen by force. In the wake of the first attack – against the UPC at Solenyama – UPC 'General' Bosco Ntaganda and 'Colonel' Linganga reportedly executed militiamen who favoured disarmament. They also appear to have killed already demobilized fighters.[36] For his part, Peter Karim (FNI) kept combatants on the ground despite his acceptance to serve in the FARDC.[37] His troops still collected taxes some eight months after he had agreed to lay down arms.

While progress has been made in terms of disarmament,[38] the challenge of DDR continues and further conflict is expected. In Ituri, the most active militia is the FRPI, which, along with some other groups, blames government for prolonging the crisis. The militias that remain are demanding 'the immediate release of FRPI, FNI and UPC soldiers … arrested in the towns of Bunia, Kisangani and Kinshasa'.[39]

Many former child soldiers, girls especially, also face severe difficulty when attempting to reintegrate as they are often rejected by their families and communities. According to humanitarian sources, girls mostly ended

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30　IRIN, 22 August 2008.
31　IRIN, 22 March 2005.
32　IRIN, 8 April 2005, has details.

33　IRIN, 18 September 2006.
34　IRIN, 8 April 2005, cites the case of ex-FRPI fighters who disarmed at Aveba, and of whom only 65 out of 248 found temporary employment in ComRec-financed road and health centre rehabilitation projects. Many then left for Bunia, where unemployment was high and opportunities for re-entering militias existed.
35　IRIN, 17 September 2006. See also IRIN, 8 April 2005, 29 June 2006, 5 June 2007.
36　IRIN, 18 April 2005; also *Monitoring de la Situation Humanitaire en RDC, 4-10 June 2005.*
37　*Monitoring de la Situation Humanitaire en RDC*, 4-6 June 2007.
38　*Situation humanitaire, District d'Ituri,* 4-10 June 2007.
39　IRIN, 22 August 2008. FRPI troops have allegedly set up camp near the Ruwenzori Mountains, where they are in close contact with (and being armed through) Ugandan dissident fighters belonging to NALU (National Army for the Liberation of Uganda) and the ADF (Allied Democratic Forces).

up as prostitutes, while boys, older ones especially, are known to have rejoined militias or turned to banditry. One demobilized child was quoted as saying 'What will I do without my family? The army is my family'.[40]

4.3 Reintegration of child soldiers

As with agricultural recovery, the reintegration of former child soldiers calls for action well before conflict ends. But where does one begin? Regarding the conflict in Ituri, which drew in a high number of child soldiers, it seems that the British NGO Save The Children (SCF) initially took the lead, asking that child soldiers be treated as victims of war. SCF's initial response, as the war was ongoing, was to run awareness campaigns for military commanders aiming to obtain 'the release of children and preventing new recruitment'. SCF trained rebel commanders on child protection issues, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Children. SCF also told warlords that 'they may have to answer tomorrow for crimes committed today'.[41]

Sensibly, SCF knew that a concerted effort was needed. In Ituri, it called for the active participation of the Ituri Pacification Commission and also of Operation Artemis. The latter needed 'to have the resolve and support to disarm the military groups, enhance the *protection of children and their families* wherever they are and to bring to justice those who are using child soldiers to perpetrate this conflict'.[42]

The call to protect not just the child soldiers *but also their families* reveals how delicate and complex (tricky) the matter was, especially at the community level. As with disarmed adults, reintegration was not straightforward. A glimpse of just how complex and sensitive the challenge was could be seen in 2004, when various local and international organizations (e.g. *Bureau Diocésain de Caritas Développement*, PAV, Caritas, IRC, SCF-UK, COOPI) reported that host families – with whom they had placed children to prepare them for reunion with their own families – were struggling to the point of despair. In Mahagi town, for example, 43

registered children lost the support of their hosts.[43]

Humanitarians were also concerned about the low number of demobilized girls who sought help. A Congolese humanitarian worker told me:

> While many girls in need of protection seek help, there are few former child soldiers among them. Demobilized girls seem destined for lifelong displacement and destitution. They are really beyond the pale, and often stigmatized as witches. Even the ones who do come for help to our centre tend not to stay very long. We feed them for two months, they put on weight, then disappear and may lose the weight they had gained. Some are re-recruited into the militias.[44]

The issue of demobilized girls not seeking humanitarian help raises some important questions, the most basic one being: is it stigma that keeps demobilized girls away from help by humanitarians or do they prefer to use (are they told to use) local strategies for reintegration? The question of whether local strategies exist invites other questions too. For example, what should agencies do when it turns out that families condoned the recruitment of child soldiers? And what should they do if/when it transpires that communities had no choice when told to send children to such or such a militia? My personal view is that the no-choice scenario may well apply in eastern DRC because of the region's long history of land insecurity whereby the rural poor are 'tied' to landlords (reviewed above). The concern I present can be stated in the form of two simple questions that, I believe, are insufficiently asked and answered. Are there local-level, cultural mechanisms that facilitate the reintegration of child soldiers? And if so, how do these mechanisms work, and how efficient are they? The dilemma for Human Security workers is that they often work in what is for them uncharted territory, and need to ask challenging questions about their own preconceptions.

I can do little more here than highlight the lack of information on

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40　IRIN, 12 April 2005.
41　Save The Children Fund (SCF) circular posted on ReliefWeb, 16 June 2003.
42　Save The Children Fund (SCF) circular posted on ReliefWeb, 16 June 2003. Emphasis added.

43　OCHA (2004) *Humanitarian Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. April 2004.*
44　Bunia interview, 25 April 2004.

'local' strategies for the treatment of demobilized child soldiers. Treatment, however, may be available – e.g., through revivalist churches – and trying to understand these (culturally appropriate?) approaches to 'social healing' should be a matter of ethics, part of the job description, for humanitarians in charge of demobilization. But humanitarian 'professionals' may not want to know about local practices. This is an argument Filip De Boeck has made with regard to child-witches in Kinshasa. De Boeck argues that humanitarian organizations working in Kinshasa at the end of the 1990s did not value the fact that revivalist churches took child-witches into their care. This non-valuing was to a large extent caused by ignorance, i.e. agencies not understanding that church discourses and practices (such as witch-naming sessions) included known-and-trusted 'traditional divinatory models' (De Boeck 2004: 162).

What De Boeck writes about Kinshasa is applicable to the reintegration of child soldiers. The question begs: Do Christian fundamentalist churches in eastern DRC deal with the reintegration needs of former child soldiers? And if so, what are their practices? To put it ethnographically, 'local services' need to be understood before they are ignored or condemned by international NGOs and UN officers in charge of child protection, or positively appreciated. It is a Human Security challenge that requires urgent attention. The UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) has alerted us to the fact that the 'work' (exorcism sessions) of these churches must not be rejected without a serious attempt at understanding practices. Churches may need guidance, as MONUC puts it, but they do/can/should play a role in the reintegration of child soldiers.[45] (What I do not know as yet is how much progress has been made in terms of UN/NGO/independent research on revivalist practices in eastern DRC. I believe this remains a seriously underresearched field.)

The difficult issue of what is 'culturally appropriate' (see Yokohama Declaration above) applies also to interventions that aim to alleviate war-induced trauma. Here too, questions about authority and expertise need to be asked.

4.4 Psycho-social responses to sexual violence

Throughout the DRC, the need to respond to crimes of sexual violence stands high on the humanitarian agenda. In early April 2004, for example, the Italian NGO COOPI worked with rape victims in Nyankunde (Ituri), running short awareness-raising campaigns[46] and encouraging victims to come forward. On this occasion, eleven women publicly denounced their military aggressors.[47] The information COOPI released at the time suggested that victims increasingly step forward to testify to their ordeals and seek professional humanitarian help.[48] As part of its Nyankunde programme, COOPI offered 'health and psychological care and … elementary education with the possibility of professional training and courses in health care and sanitation' (COOPI Annual Report 2004). In some parts of Ituri, COOPI's support programme included the distribution of agricultural inputs, such as hoes, seeds, and spraying equipment.

While I cannot comment on the quality of the services that COOPI and other organizations run for victims of sexual violence (e.g. the IRC, Medair, Caritas), the issue of *public testimony* in the case of sexually abused women and girls is culturally sensitive. Victims do not usually come forward 'until the consequences of the rape become visible' in pregnancy.[49] The moral issue then, for humanitarians, is whether or not to challenge the 'wall of silence' that 'culture' seems to build.

Commenting on this dilemma is outside the scope of my address, but I am aware that away from the DRC, in South Africa for example, *public testimony* on sexual violence has come in for criticism. In South Africa, public testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have been researched and judged as doing more harm than good. For example, Fiona Ross highlights how women's testimonies of sexual violence have tended to be 'constructed, drawn from [the testifier] through persistent questions and repetitions' (Ross 2004: 225). Testimonies have

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45　Monuc.org website, 19 November 2003.

46　The OCHA bulletin (26/6 – 2/7/2004) recalls that COOPI had 'already sensitized' 13,274 people including 2,211 men.

47　OCHA (2004) *Humanitarian Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Monthly Updates, April – December 2004.*

48　See OCHA's bi-weekly *Monitoring de la Situation* updates.

49　OCHA, *Monitoring de la Situation en Est RDC: du 16 au 22 Octobre 2004.*

often been written up in a suggestive manner which presents 'the event of sexual molestation [as something the women] had intended to speak of … all along and had done so without prompting' (2004: 225). In sharp contrast to official claims, the women Ross interviewed spoke about their testimonies in terms of a second violation. They stressed how the Commission's Report had stripped away important issues besides the rape or torture, especially 'other violations' and the complexities of returning to their communities.

4.5 Security for IDPs and former IDPs

Several times already I have referred to the problem of massive population displacement. As we have seen, for a good part of the conflict years, ensuring the safety of IDPs has been beyond the capacity of the humanitarian agencies. I attribute this neither to a lack of personnel nor to a lack of resources or commitment, but first and foremost to the fact that populations have been moving constantly. This was certainly a feature of Ituri's emergency in 2003, when military alliances were made, unmade and remade with bewildering speed. Significantly, the headache has yet to go away. In June 2007, following renewed attacks on civilians, UNHCR's assistant high commissioner for operations, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, referred to the DRC as being in 'a state of permanent displacement'.[50] Each time a group of civilians returns home, she said, another group is displaced by new fighting elsewhere. The large number of displaced, still estimated at 1.2 million (OCHA/DRC 2008), is a worrying feature.

A related challenge is that when aid agencies scale down operations they need to be confident that it is safe for IDPs (or refugees) to return home. And here organizations may experience that adhering to the humanitarian principles results in other concerns being overlooked. Again, as with the forced withdrawal of the Ugandan troops (UPDF) from Bunia in 2003, one must ask whether the 'humanitarian community' has the means to access, digest and act upon accurate intelligence.

The example of Bunia's Aéro camp for IDPs, near the airport, is a case in point. Two years after it had been set up in May 2003, the authorities,

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local and international, decided to close down the camp and send the IDPs home. Atlas Logistique, which ran the camp, justified the decision saying that the camp now

> offer[ed] living facilities (running water, electricity, free parcels…) that have reached a better level than those of the population living in [Bunia] city. This fact is contrary to "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" elaborated by OCHA.[51]

The head of Atlas Logistique told reporters: 'We think that for the moment there has been considerable progress in efforts to restore the socio-economic and security situation in Bunia and in the rest of Ituri District.'[52] Indeed, some IDPs had been going home. But the 7,000 still at Aéro said they would not go home as they had no homes to go to. Those who originated from Djugu territory considered the area still too insecure to contemplate a return. But the authorities stood firm.[53]

How safe was Djugu at that precise time? The assertion that Djugu was safe came as a surprise when one considered the wider picture. Firstly, between December 2004 and March 2005, there had been a resurgence of the 'ethnic cleansing' Djugu had seen at the beginning of the conflict. FNI militias destroyed some 70 Hema villages and hamlets, causing the displacement of around 100,000 people, *or roughly the territory's entire Hema population*. IDP camps sprung up in four locations.[54] The resumption of 'pure ethnic' fighting by the FNI, which spread to Irumu in 2006, may not have been as murderous as in 1999-2001, but it did result in 'selected killing, rape, total destruction of entire villages and kidnapping for sexual slavery' (statement by MONUC's coordinator for human rights in Ituri).[55]

Secondly, just days before Atlas Logistique decided to close Aéro camp, it was reported that Ituri's largest militias – FRPI, FNI and UPC-Lubanga - had been active in the territories of Djugu and Mahagi.[56] The situation in Djugu

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50　IRIN, 13 June 2007.

51　Atlas Logistique, 11 July 2005. Accessed via www.reliefweb.int on 15 July 2005.
52　IRIN, 8 July 2005. At one point, Aéro camp hosted 20,000 IDPs. Those who returned home in July 2005 were given food rations, agricultural tools and cooking utensils.
53　IRIN, 8 July 2005.
54　IRIN, 8 March 2005.
55　IRIN, 23 March 2005.
56　*Monitoring de la Situation Humanitaire en RDC*, 25 June – 1 July 2005.

caused so much concern that ECHO (the EU sponsor) reminded donors that Djugu territory was 'where the Ituri conflict began; [it] remains the one Territory … still devoid of any administrative or law enforcing agents'.[57] (The local administration had fled to Bunia after Djugu town was ransacked in December 2004.) ECHO's message implied that understanding insecurity was a central task for anyone authorized to make decisions about the return of displaced people. Clearly, those who decided to close Aéro had followed one humanitarian principle, but without close scrutiny of the security concerns that prevailed. The security situation in Djugu did not ease until the second half of 2006, when the displaced started to go home in larger numbers.[58]

As a final thought on the violence of 2005-6, let me caution against overly homogenous portrayals of community. While MONUC was emphatic that the violence was 'definitely not genocide,' it did not play down the atrocities nor indeed the complicity of Lendu civilians. As eyewitnesses revealed, the raids on Hema villages had followed a pattern: militias attacked with guns and machetes, and were followed by women, children and even elderly people who looted and carried away anything of value. They then burnt homes to the ground.[59] The conclusion I draw from this is that local people may be tired of violence, as humanitarians like to say, but they are not all passive bystanders. They may condone violence, or they may want to stop it. Regarding the latter, some Lendu villagers are known to have become intolerant toward 'their own' FNI combatants (see Pottier 2008). The implication for understanding the local scene is straightforward: when it comes to assessing 'local attitudes' towards peace and peaceful relations with the ethnic other, analysts must refrain from treating civilians as a single, homogenous entity. Civilians are likely to hold more than one view on what kind of conflict resolution they want to see.

4.6 Democratic Governance

My calling for a nuanced understanding of 'community' has implications

for the debate on governance. In this final section, I briefly review how the International Rescue Committee (IRC) conceptualizes the question of *governance at the grassroots level*. The IRC runs a programme for community-derived reconstruction in eastern DRC, called TUUNGANE, which is 'designed to support economic recovery, foster social cohesion, and improve the quality of governance' (DRC Tuungane 2008: 2). In line with the Human Security framework, community-driven reconstruction (CDR) is a strategy increasingly used in post-conflict settings worldwide (2008: 7).

My intention is not to discuss the programme itself, but to draw attention to what a recent baseline report on TUUNGANE had to say about the 'political attitudes of communities' (2008: 2). After revealing that '61 percent of household members in the sample were reported as having been displaced at least once at some point from 1996 to 2007,' the baseline report stated that the majority of respondents had 'no problems in terms of being refused access to basic economic and social activities' (2008: 2). However, 'some 10 percent report[ed] that new arrivals in villages make conditions harder and many report[ed] a resistance to welcoming new arrivals of particular sorts – notable ex-combatants and foreigners' (2008: 2). Resistance to newcomers may have been indicative of the fact that for these communities-in-flux accessing land remains a concern (as seen above).

Of equal interest, with respect to governance the Baseline Report mentions some

surprising results. … Our respondents saw decision making power in their communities as being clearly vested in the hands of the village chiefs, and to a lesser extent in the hands of elders. Traditional chiefs from beyond the village are also influential. Community members and women and youth groups in particular play a marginal role in the eyes of our respondents. This suggests in some way a lack of a norm of public participation in decision making. Strikingly too, when asked who *should* play the biggest roles, the answers are similar: there is no evidence of a demand here for more participatory decision making. (DRC Tuungane 2008: 3; emphasis added)

57　*Monitoring de la Situation Humanitaire en RDC*, 23 - 29 July 2005.
58　Humanitarian Crisis Watch, August-September 2006.
59　IRIN, 23 March 2005.

Some respondents, however, did ask for more transparency when chiefs make decisions, even to the point of proposing that they should serve fixed-term periods in office.

Let me make just one comment on this finding. In view of the land situation outlined earlier on, the 'surprising results' with respect to governance should not surprise us at all. Chiefs control land in collusion with the police, the army, administrators and other politicians; and, through land, they control people's loyalty and political orientation. The plight of *the unfree*, already visible by the 1980s, has become even more entrenched over the past decade. With people being 'tied' to the local authorities, chiefs in particular, there is no real surprise in the statement by survey respondents that power is still vested in the hands of the village chief (and other chiefs beyond the immediate locality). I make this point to highlight how formidable a challenge 'achieving governance' becomes when it is understood in a historically informed, local context.

5. CONCLUSION: HUMAN SECURITY IN LOCAL CONTEXTS

While the international community is increasingly capable of brokering peace agreements and stabilizing post-conflict economies - points acknowledged in the Yokohama Declaration (2008) - it is still struggling to ensure the security of *individuals and communities*, as the case of eastern DR Congo demonstrates. While peace deals may hold, ending crime, unemployment and human rights abuses are a much taller order. By focusing on humanitarian challenges at the 'community and individual' level, I have offered some explanation as to why the Human Security challenges remain so formidable even when peace generally seems on the cards.

Working at the 'individual and community level' is difficult business. Moving away from the complex details this address has presented, it is clear that 'community' is a slippery concept that cannot be taken to mean homogeneity above all else. We have to unpack and problematize the concept of community. Similarly, the idea of 'culturally appropriate' action requires close scrutiny. If communities are heterogeneous, as they invariably are, then it follows that cultural appropriateness will also be open to local scrutiny and debate. I presented the COOPI intervention in Nyankunde

as *possibly* a case of working against the cultural grain, in that openness about sexual violations is *mostly* frowned upon in local settings. However, young women in Nyankunde today may well want to distance themselves from such conventions, regarding them as outmoded and unhelpful. They may argue that the time has come for the taboo to be lifted (as I sometimes experienced in Rwanda immediately after the genocide, when 'hiding things' seemed absurd). These are delicate negotiations that outside 'professionals' may or may not be adequately prepared for. I gave the example of Nyankunde not to critique the intervention by COOPI, but to highlight that taking 'culturally appropriate' action may mean confronting controversy at the community level.

Humanitarians working with child soldiers may also need to go against the grain, but in this case the task in hand must start with scrutinizing in-house policy and practice. Agency workers do not routinely look for value in so-called 'traditional' ways. Rather they tend to impose their own understandings, methods and ethics with little or no regard for local-level practices. In the first instance, agency workers need to familiarize themselves with the fine detail of local practices for social reintegration, and bring valuable elements into their own (external) programmes for protection.

Paying attention to local context also requires that humanitarian agencies have access to timely, accurate information on security, and that they make a commitment to digest that information and act upon it. A blind commitment to principles is not appropriate. The UN insistence in 2003 that the Ugandan troops pull out of Ituri by a deadline that should have been reconsidered, turned into disaster and gave the war a new impetus. Likewise, the decision to close the Aéro camp for IDPs came at a time when human insecurity was going up rather than down.

Finally, I have argued that addressing Human Security in post-conflict settings requires attention to pre-conflict concerns. This is extremely pertinent in a situation like that of eastern DRC, where rural poverty is endemic because of the institutionalized manner through which land has been systematically taken away from local communities. To achieve *lasting Human Security* in a post-conflict Congo, partnerships will need to be set up to assess and rectify the 35 years of officially sanctioned land abuse that have made the past decade of conflict and war possible. Tackling

the culture of rewarding political loyalty with land concessions (a practice not to be confused with privatization) remains the biggest obstacle to achieving Human Security in eastern DRC. An overhaul of the land law of 1973 should include giving consideration to gender equity in the way land is legally accessed. (The recent Rwandan legislation which aims to ease the plight of genocide widows might be a useful point of departure.) And of course, an inappropriate national land policy cannot be rectified without considering how global economic markets benefit from the continuation of (so-called) local conflicts.