

Jeania St-Fleur
School for Advanced Studies
Miami, FL
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Food Scarcity in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Previous affairs embedded a long-lasting effect on the Democratic Republic of Congo's current political, environmental and agricultural state. In 1960, when Congo became independent from the harsh rule of Belgian King—Leopold II—their appointed president, Joseph Kasavubu, and Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, was not ready to rule a nation left neglected, ill-educated, and unfit to govern (BBC News). There was rebellion in the DRC and the UN Security Council attempted to help by sending troops, but their lack of intervening in the internal affairs of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) left them unable to help to their full ability. Eventually, Prime Minister Lumumba was murdered in hopes to bring the DRC's government closer together without rivaling governors (The Guardian). In 1965, Joseph Kasavubu and the new Prime Minister left to rule were overthrown by Joseph Mobutu. A dictator and poor leader who made wrong decisions for his personal gain, Joseph Mobutu caused damage to the Congolese economy. Rwanda, who experienced its own turmoil between the Tutsi and Hutu natives, experienced the victory of the Tutsi leading the Rwandan government. Meanwhile, the Hutu fled to Eastern DRC for refuge. Eventually, when Mobutu fled in an effort to escape punishment for his crimes, Laurent Desire Kabila was put in charge (BBC). A Ceasefire Agreement, mentioned in Resolution 1258, was established and later signed in an attempt to create ephemeral peace. Additionally, the resolution established a UN peacekeeping force that would monitor the DRC's progress of peace. So in the next resolution—1273—the peacekeeping force time was extended. In the succeeding resolution, Resolution 1279, the force was given the name, MONUC, and re-extended due to continuing success in 1999. It was later renamed MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and re-extended in 2010 (UN MONUSCO).

During 2018, government officials in the DRC carried out widespread suppression and violated human rights of, “...political opposition leaders and supporters, pro-democracy and human rights activists, journalists, and peaceful protesters.” (World Report 2019). The elections of December 30th in the DRC were tarnished by rampant voter suppression and violence which caused over one million Congolese being unable to vote after voting was postponed until March 2019. Moreover, peaceful demonstrations were also banned and the government used teargas and sometimes live ammunition to disperse protesters; constricted the movement of resistance leaders; and arbitrarily jailed hundreds of human rights activists, resistance supporters, journalists, and protesters, who were eventually released.

Although the DRC has made significant progress, the problems now remain in stabilizing the government and economy, dealing with rioters, managing the mineral resources, educating, and providing nutritious food to the people. Part of the problem is being made worse by the riot groups—some of which have become peaceful and are going through reintegration. “The combination of persistent violent armed conflicts, massive population displacements, poor or nonexistent infrastructure, and widespread deterioration of productive assets have significantly affected food security in the DRC over the past two decades. Hunger in the DRC is increasing at an alarming rate. Severe food insecurity afflicts 7.7 million, which is an increase of 30 percent in the past year as a result of these conflicts. Food insecurity is when any aspect of accessibility to nutrient-rich food is compromised. What we call the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) level in the country is on average 10.7%. According to the World Health Organization, when GAM rates exceed 10%, the situation is deemed as “alarming”. About 43% of all children under the age of 5 are chronically malnourished and show signs of growth retardation. About 3 million children suffer from emaciation and are alarmingly thin. About 2.5 million women of childbearing age are emaciated. One in ten people living in the rural areas in the DRC is in a situation of food security and livelihood crisis” (Food Security).

“1 out of 4 children is malnourished (WFP, 2012). Based on the recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (December 2012), about 6.4 million people are in acute food security and livelihood crisis, requiring food and agricultural assistance. This goes to show an increase from 5.4 million in June 2012 and 6.3 million in October 2012. The level of food insecurity is worse in rural areas compared to urban areas (MICS4,2010)” (Pagina). Most of the population suffers from malnourishment due to the years of war and political issues; the question lies in how we, the United States, would be able to assist the Democratic Republic of Congo to face its humanitarian challenges.

Even though the nations are separated by bodies of water, the U.S wants to assist the DRC to become a better country in Africa. The U.S Bureau of African Affairs declares, “U.S. foreign policy in the D.R.C. is focused on helping the country become a nation that is stable and democratic, at peace with its neighbors, extends state authority across its territory, and provides for the basic needs of its citizens”. The Bureau also states that the U.S is the largest donor to the UN stabilization mission.

Currently, while importing their oil, the U.S is aiding the DRC by exporting food, equipment, and medicine. Due to the U.S.’s strength in the world and having one of the biggest markets and a GDP of 17.42 trillion, the U.S. believes they have excellent guidance to give to the DRC, and will assist in making DRC a stronger country. The United States has excellent partnerships with its neighboring nations, Canada and Mexico, and with many more nations around the globe. Therefore, the U.S intends on helping the DRC in resolving its conflicts and gaining peace with one of their neighbors. Due to their years of experience, the U.S hopes to utilize its expertise to find a resolution that will assist in achieving peace, meeting the needs of the people, and having more authority. By resolving this issue, the U.S will assist the DRC in developing better education, protection, and nourishment for all of its citizens through exports, the establishment of more programs similar to those of Action Kivu and CAMME, donations, and its advice (Action Kivu).

The different countries around the globe can help by putting together different groups to provide aid to the DRC. The first way would be to have one group that focuses on agriculture and farming. This group would include knowledgeable experts on agriculture and land studies to help the Congolese with growing their own food which would provide for each family and decrease the percentage of malnutrition in the different areas of DRC. A second group should be medical professionals to provide care for those in need in the Republic. These medical professionals would be able to assess each individual and devise a plan that can help to nourish them back to good health. Also they would be able to train medical professionals of the DRC the ways of modern science so it can be used when needed. A third group can be skilled miners as Congo has untapped minerals that are worth twenty-four trillion U.S. dollars (Global Edge). The Congolese should learn how to harness the minerals in ways that benefit the country, economy, its citizens, as well as the environment. A small fourth and final group of security can be sent to train as well as protect many of the citizens who are oppressed in their own country as well as those unable to fight for their rights.

Overall, many people have died in DRC. Around 2.8 million people have been displaced alone, and many more are food insecure (Security-General Report). The problem being faced has taken an enormous toll on people around the world and the MDGs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, so now is the time to act. The expertise of the United States of America and other nations should lead to a solution that takes every part of the DRC situation into consideration. This includes the initial cause of the issues and the current condition it is in now.

Work Cited

ECOSOC. "UN Economic and Social Council; Resolutions; Decisions." UN News Center. UN, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>>.

Food Security Democratic Republic of Congo. Oct. 2015, www.wfp.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Security%20DRC%20fact%20sheet%20English%20v3.pdf.

Human Rights Council. "General Assembly." Encyclopedia of Public Health 13th Session (2015): 472. [Http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/). Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Secretary General. "UN Documents for Democratic Republic of the Congo." UN Documents for Democratic Republic of the Congo. Security Council Report, n.d. Web. 17 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>>.

Security Council. "Resolution 2211." International Organization (2015) United Nations Security Council. Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Security Council. "Security Council Report." International Organization (2015) United Nations Security Council. Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Security Council. "Resolution 1258." International Organization (1999) United Nations

Security Council. Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Security Council. "Resolution 1273." International Organization (1999) United Nations Security Council. Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Security Council. "Resolution 2098." International Organization (2013) United Nations Security Council. Security Council Report. Web. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

Security Council. "DRC and the Great Lakes Region." International Organization (2016) United Nations Security Council. Security Council Report. <<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>>.

UN MONUSCO. "MONUSCO Background." UN MONUSCO. UN, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>>.

Action Kivu. "Action Kivu About Us." Action Kivu. Action Kivu. 2015.

<<http://www.actionkivu.org/about-us/>>.

CNN databases: <http://edition.cnn.com/EVENTS/1996/year.in.review/topten/hutu/history.html>

U.S. Department of State forums: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm>, <http://www.state.gov/p/io/empl/126305.htm>,

U.S. AID Organization: <https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo>

BBC databases: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-20438531>, http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/overview/crimes_1.shtml.

MONUSCO: <http://monusco.unmissions.org/>

Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/china/us-relations-china-1949---present/p17698>

The World Bank Database: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/united-states?display=default>

OECD U.S. Exports: <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/usa/>

United States of America Mission to the United Nations: <http://usun.state.gov/about>

Pagina. Food Security in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
www.kaowarsom.be/documents/Conferences/DHAESE.pdf.

(n.d.). Democratic Republic of the Congo: Economy. Retrieved from
<https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/economy>

Paul, J. (n.d.). Democratic Republic of Congo. Retrieved from
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/democratic-republic-of-congo.html>

(2019, January 17). World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Democratic Republic of Congo. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo>