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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

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EXERCISE/EXERCICE

**NEW HORIZONS**

**“THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA – POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND MILITARY  
STABILIZATION”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Southern African Region is at relative peace with itself after the apartheid era; nevertheless, issues of peace and stability still remain unresolved in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. In Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), ethnic conflicts have long haunted its citizens. In Rwanda and Uganda, populations still continue to see danger even if the governments are trying to restore peace, hope, and harmony to their people. Kenya and Tanzania suffer the consequences of the problems that are prevailing in the neighbouring countries. In the troubled states people are always on move; thus, reduced production continues to expose the region to poverty and hunger. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/AIDS, tropical epidemics, diseases, and natural calamities such as droughts also contribute to the high level of mortality. Military interventions contribute to the destruction of lives, properties, and economic infrastructures in these countries. Majority rule, the rule of law, and democracy seem to remain far from reality. The influx of refugees across the borders, even beyond the regional areas, seems to continue unabated as long as a peaceful environment is not established.

Should this situation be left without further action taken by either regional actors or the international community? Based on humanitarian grounds the answer is clearly no; something has to be done. Therefore, this paper will argue that major powers under the United Nations (UN) and the collective international community, should meet their obligation to intervene and remain engaged, with efforts leading to permanent military, economic, and political stability, which have started to bear fruit and are now at a crucial implementation stage.

*“While preventive diplomacy is always the preferred course of action, there are some situations when it must be backed by a credible threat to use force in order to stave off humanitarian disaster.”<sup>1</sup>*

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1996.

While the international community pledges world peace, human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and stability among nations, these concepts have remained as evasive as ever in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Rwanda. Ethnic conflicts and military rule have persistently haunted these countries and people continue to face a threat to peace and poor living conditions caused by the constant movement of the productive population. This situation also affects other countries in the region from economic, social, and security perspectives.

The Great Lakes Region of Africa is composed of six East and Central African countries: Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC (See the map - Figure 1). All these states share the waters of the two big lakes: Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC share a similar history from the colonial era. However, there are differences between the DRC and both Rwanda and Burundi. The later two are linked through historical and social backgrounds before, during, and after the colonial rule of Belgium. One could question why such economic, political, and social instability exists in the region? Why have problems in Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC prevailed for so long? Why do the regional powers not solve this ongoing crisis? An African citizen, particularly one from the troubled areas, might also ask why the international

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<sup>1</sup> Glynne Evans, *“Responding to Crises in the African Great Lakes;”* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1997), 45.

# THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

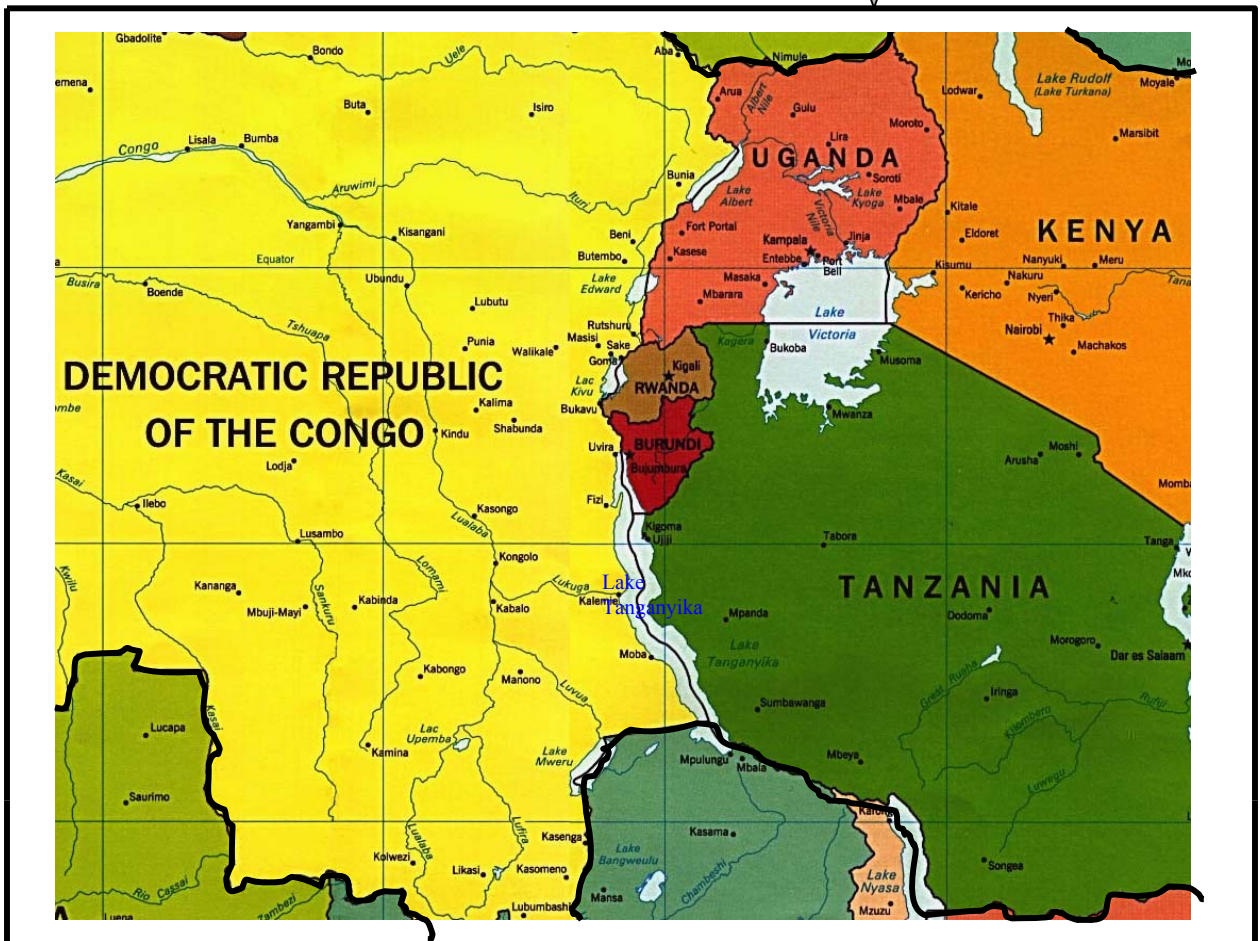
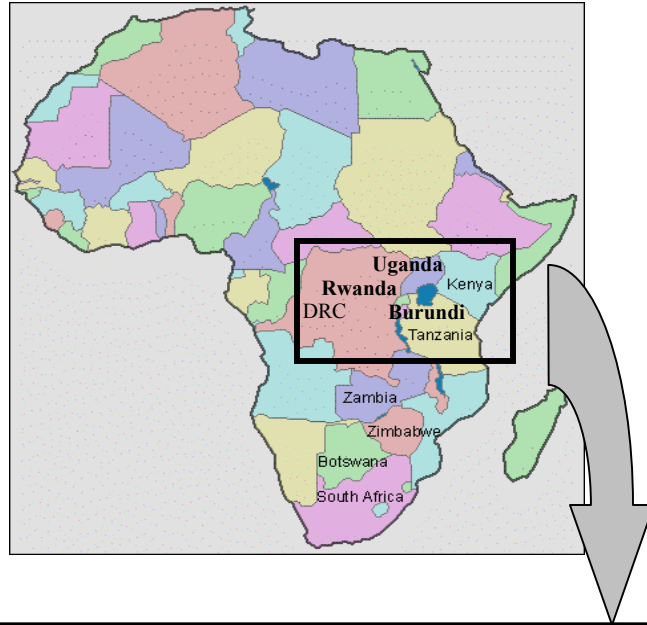


Fig. 1

community has not taken appropriate steps to help bring to an end the ongoing crisis, especially in Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC, and to the neighbouring countries which suffer from the influx of refugees and other threats?

To answer these questions one must consider the source of the problems. There are numerous reasons, foremost among these being continuing ethnic conflict. There have been efforts initiated by countries within the region to solve these problems, but the involvement of the international community in backing up these efforts has been kept to a minimum. Based on these factors, this paper will argue that, to solve regional problems, the international community must remain seriously engaged, with more efforts to facilitate a clear consensus among all parties to conflict, send more peacekeeping forces, provide humanitarian assistance, and continue to provide means of economic recovery. This thesis argues the need for developed nations, in close cooperation with the United Nations (UN), to support regional leaders' efforts to bring peace and hope to the region.

To illustrate the turbulent situation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa from a military perspective, this essay will begin by highlighting the sources of the problems that result in the population suffering psychologically, politically, and militarily. The discussion will also show the involvement of the military in politics, which has been a catalyst to unsettle these countries. The latter points of the paper will highlight how economic standards and social services have been affected and will examine other effects that make the area unstable. This paper will recommend new measures to be taken by the international community under UN sanction to improve the situation. Finally, it will conclude that efforts

that are currently being effected by various actors have reached a crucial stage, and must be increased dramatically. The alternative is that peace and stability in the entire area will continue to be threatened by internal conflicts and poverty.

Intra-state conflict is the pattern of the times, and it presents a serious threat to East African regional security.<sup>2</sup> Countries like Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda are being affected by the intra-state conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC by providing shelter to refugees and by suffering other security and economic effects.<sup>3</sup>

The origins of the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when Africa was partitioned after the Berlin Conference in 1884. At that time, European nations desired to expand areas of influence over Africa. After the Berlin Conference, the Great Lakes Region of Africa was divided among Belgium, Britain, and Germany. The Congo fell to Belgium, and Rwanda and Burundi to Germany as part of German East Africa.<sup>4</sup>

After the defeat of Germany in World War II, the Districts of Rwanda and Burundi were annexed from German East Africa, then called Tanganyika. Under the League of Nations, Tanganyika was given to Britain while Rwanda and Burundi were given to Belgium in addition to Congo. Kenya, Uganda, and Zanzibar were put under British rule soon after the Berlin Conference.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Christian P. Scherrer, "*Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa*," *Conflict Roots, Mass Violence, and Regional War*." (The United States: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 20-21.

<sup>5</sup> Linda Melvern, "*A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*," (New York: St Martins Press, 2000), 9.

Prior to foreign European domination, the countries of the Great Lakes Region had some form of governance, headed by kings or chiefs of individual ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup> As the Europeans came, they defeated these systems and made those chiefs sign treaties giving away territories to foreign powers. However, wealth and power had been entrenched among the peoples of the region long before the coming of foreign domination. For example, the Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi had settled peacefully among the indigenous people of these countries, the Twa. The Tutsi, cattle herders, who did not originate in those two countries, immigrated from the north, in the Horn of Africa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The Tutsi adopted the Hutu language, beliefs, and customs. However, the Tutsi enforced class divisions based on their own culture. They perceived themselves as a superior race whose role was to defend the land while the Hutu and Twa were regarded as slaves.<sup>8</sup>

The German and Belgian colonialists reinforced these class divisions by favouring the Tutsi with education opportunities and high posts in the national administration. Hutus were neglected and were used as a labour pool. At the time of independence in 1962, Rwanda and Burundi were split into two sovereign countries.<sup>9</sup> The indoctrination in these now two different countries did not end after independence. Even today, the Tutsi still seek to rule over the less educated majority Hutu, while the latter seek to drive out their oppressors, the

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<sup>6</sup> Scherrer, *Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa...*, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Melvern, *A People Betrayed...*, 2000, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>9</sup> "Republic of Rwanda, Psephos-Adam Carr's Election Archive;" available from [http://psephos.adm-carr.net/countries/r/rwanda/rwa\\_factsheet.shtml](http://psephos.adm-carr.net/countries/r/rwanda/rwa_factsheet.shtml); Internet, accessed 24 January 2004. 1.



Tutsi. This has been the main source of ongoing problems. Today, the situation in Rwanda seems to be more stable than in Burundi and the DRC. In order to examine the problem in greater detail, this paper will examine one country to another, starting with Rwanda.

Rwanda has ethnic differences among the minority Tutsi (15%), the majority Hutu (84%), and the aboriginal Twa (1%).<sup>10</sup> The political and security instability in the country became worse in 1959 when the Hutus eliminated many Tutsi from the government structure.<sup>11</sup> This resulted in over 45,000 Tutsi seeking refuge in neighbouring countries; some of them are still living in those countries with some were given citizenship. The Tutsi refugees who went to Uganda later became the backbone force of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (the Ugandan President) when he was fighting the dictator Idi Amin from 1971 onwards.

In 1990 Tutsi refugees in Uganda who by then turned into guerrillas, representing the exiled Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) led by Major Gen Fred Rwigyema, crossed the border from Uganda into Rwanda. With the help of French and Zaire (DRC) troops, those guerrillas were blocked from taking Kigali.<sup>12</sup>

Using guerrilla tactics, the RPF made sustained attacks on border areas in the north and northwest of Rwanda from Ugandan bases. The conflict continued throughout 1991.

Meanwhile, regional states were trying to find solution to the problem by initiating political negotiations between Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana (Hutu's Government) and the RPF, leading to the Arusha Peace Accord. Following the slow implementations of this

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda,* (New York: Human Right Watch, 1999), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 116.

Accord, the President of Tanzania called a Regional Summit in April 1994 aimed at convincing Habyarimana to inaugurate the parliament as agreed to in the Peace Accord.

On 6 April 1994 day Habyarimana's aircraft, returning from that summit in Tanzania, was fired upon above Kigali Airport and exploded on landing. All passengers were killed including the President of Burundi, Cyprian Ntaryamira, who was among the passengers. This tragic incident provoked a brutal campaign and very quickly escalated into a national-wide genocide against the Tutsi, led by members of the presidential guard and the Interahamwe militia.<sup>13</sup> This catastrophe caused about 2.5 million people to flee the country.<sup>14</sup> The Rwandan Army was quickly defeated by the RPF and the remnants along with Interahamwe militias crossed into neighbouring Zaire (DRC).<sup>15</sup> The RPF managed to control the whole country and formed a government. From 6 April 1994 the security situation became volatile. Interahamwe militias launched sporadic attacks from Zaire against the new government, increasing the flight of refugees from Rwanda into neighbouring countries.

The Republic of Burundi, a country with almost the same geographic characteristics as Rwanda, also has the same ethnic composition ratio of the Hutu (85%), the Tutsi (14%),

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<sup>13</sup> Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story...*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> "Back Ground Note – Rwanda", Bureau of African Affairs, *U.S. Department of State*, (October 2003); [Profile]; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn2861.htm>; Internet, accessed 24 January 2004, 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

and the Twa (1%).<sup>16</sup> The security situation in Burundi has been worse than in Rwanda, with the difference that in Burundi, it involved the Hutus being massacred.<sup>17</sup> These massacres started in 1959 when a Belgium mercenary force overthrew the monarchy. Other killings occurred in 1972 when there was a Hutu uprising, and in 1993 when a democratically elected president, Malkior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was overthrown and subsequently killed.<sup>18</sup> This occurred because the monopolistic army controlled by the Tutsi would not accept a Hutu as president. In all incidences, civilians sought refuge in neighbouring countries where they could save their lives.

Following the death of Malkior Ndadaye, Cyprien Ntaryamira, representing the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) Party that had won the June 1993 elections, was elected President by the National Assembly in 1994. Unfortunately, President Cyprien Ntaryamira was also killed in the aircraft in which he was traveling at President Habyarimana's invitation. The Speaker of the National Assembly, Selvestre Ntibantunganya was then elected to the presidency. After almost two years, a military take-over of the government by Major Pierre Buyoya (a Tutsi) took place on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1996 in a bloodless putsch.<sup>19</sup> Since then, the security situation in Burundi has continued to be characterized by a protracted military confrontation between the Hutu rebels and the Tutsi- dominated Army.

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<sup>16</sup> "Republic of Burundi, Republic of Burundi Geography, Republic of Burundi People," <http://zhenghe.tripod.com/b/burundi>; Internet, accessed 25 January 2004, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, *Responding to Crises...*, 20-21.

<sup>18</sup> Burundi, "History," available from <http://www.rnw.nl/humanrights/html/historyburundi.html>; Internet, accessed 25 January 2004, 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

As a result, civilians have become targets of attacks staged by both rebels and government troops; thus, the continuation of influx of refugees into neighbouring countries.

The author of this essay has highlighted what he calls the Burundi critical factors that are to be noted: firstly, ethnic tension has been in Burundi due to long domination of Hutus by Tutsis. Secondly, the continued Tutsi domination of the army has been the case since the massacre of 1972.<sup>20</sup> Both circumstances have made it difficult for the army and the Tutsi group to psychologically accept integration with Hutus and give up the power they have been possessing for decades. Furthermore, the Tutsi believe that the Hutu majority would murder the minority and the Hutu believe that the Tutsi would attempt to restore numerical balance by killing the Hutu.<sup>21</sup> All of these factors have constituted a serious obstacle to the process of political and military negotiations between the Sub-region States, the African Union (AU), and African actors as a whole. One can conclude that the solution to finding a lasting peace in Burundi w(r60 0 12 338.3400r0 0 12 362.669751Tm062988 Tm(in Burund 0 12 175.58324 93. 46988 Tm(in

Mobutu Sese Seko. The security situation in the Congo did not change with independence and there has been a continuation of conflicts based on tribalism, reprisal, and ethno-political strife.

This unstable situation led General Mobutu Sese Seko to overthrow the democratically elected government on 25 November 1965.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, Zaire has been facing social-political turbulence for decades; however, the current crisis flared up in a series of events beginning in 1996 when President Mobutu became sick. Rebel groups in the East became active and with the assistance of Rwanda and Uganda, managed to overthrow Mobutu's Government. The late Laurent Desire Kabila, a long-time guerrilla, emerged as the new leader and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Current instability started on 27 July 1998 when Laurent Kabila decided to terminate the presence of Rwandan forces in his country and ordered their immediate repatriation to Rwanda. On 30 July 1998, all Rwandan troops serving in the National Army – Forces Armées du Congo (FAC) returned to their home country.<sup>23</sup> The move sparked off yet more violence in the Eastern side of the country where the rebellion to overthrow Mobutu had begun in October 1996. The uprising broke out on 2 August 1998 in the Eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. Meanwhile, other rebel groups tried to seize the capital, Kinshasa, with the subsequent goal of ousting President Laurent Kabila.

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<sup>22</sup> Edgar O'balance, *The Congo- Zaire Experience, 1960-98*, (New York: St Martin's Press Inc, 2000), 93.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 179.

While rebels were preparing to capture Kinshasa, President Kabila sought external military assistance, which came immediately from Angola and Zimbabwe. This assistance changed the situation in his favour by allowing him to re-capture all Western towns that had already fallen in the rebels' hands. Meanwhile, the large area in the Eastern side of the DRC fell under rebels who have controlled it since. Later, Ugandan forces joined with the rebels claiming to establish a buffer zone for protecting the Tutsi-held area near Goma.<sup>24</sup> This situation brought serious political and security repercussions to the entire region. Tanzania and Zambia, for instance, have been receiving hundreds of refugees from the DRC.

These refugees continue to constitute a security threat on many different dimensions, to human security of the refugees themselves, to the local population in the areas to which they fled, the national security, and the security of other countries.<sup>25</sup>

Since the eruption of the war in the DRC in August 1998, African leaders in search of a peaceful resolution have made several efforts. Meanwhile, President Joseph Kabila and the leaders of armed groups have finally accepted the establishment of the transitional government since 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003. This seems to be the future road map to peace and stability in the country, but constant and real involvement of international community is still needed.

In Uganda there has been security instability for decades. The country was granted independence in 1962 and Kabaka Mutesa II was made president. In 1966, Dr Milton Obote, the Prime Minister, drove Kabaka into exile. Obote proclaimed Uganda a republic,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>25</sup> Kurt Mills, ph. D. and Ricard J. Narton, "*Refugees and Security in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*," available <http://homepage.mac.com/vicfalls/civilwars.html>; Internet, accessed 17 January 2004, 1.

abolished the kingdom and become Uganda's first president of a unitary government.<sup>26</sup> A falloff in the economy and charges of corruption led to an army coup in January 1971 led by Idi Amin.<sup>27</sup>

In 1978, when Idi Amin attacked and annexed Tanzania's Kagera Salient, Tanzania, in close conjunction with Ugandans who opposed Amin, reacted by launching a massive counter-offensive against Idi Amin's forces.<sup>28</sup> Amin was defeated, fled the country, and a transitional government was formed. In 1980, democratic elections were held. Dr. Milton Obote won the election and became the president once again. His counterpart, Yoweri Museveni, disputed the results and started a guerilla movement against the government. In July 1985, Dr. Obote was overthrown by his army and fled the country. Yoweri Museveni became more active with the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and in July 1986 took power.<sup>29</sup> Although President Museveni has successfully ruled Uganda and has established a relative strong economy, the security situation in the northern area of the country has remained unstable as fighting continues between government forces and rebel groups, notably the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is said to have bases in South Sudan.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Geographical Survey*; available <http://www.acts.edu/oldmissions/uganda.html>; internet, accessed 24 February 2004, 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> Uganda; "The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)," available [http://www.genocideprevention.org/uganda\\_2003.htm](http://www.genocideprevention.org/uganda_2003.htm); Internet, accessed 12 June 2004, 5.

The instability within all mentioned countries of the Great Lakes Region of Africa has a military dimension. Military confrontations have contributed to the destruction of lives, properties, and economic infrastructures in the affected nations and have crossed the borders to neighbouring states such as Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya. Military forces in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC are mostly involved in protecting their rulers. To ensure this goal is achieved, elite forces are relatively well trained, well paid, and well equipped. Above all, most come from the same tribe as their leaders. This leads to divisions among national military forces, who later develop ambitions for self-advancement and political position as the means to find self-determination.

In the troubled areas, military forces are generated along tribal lines. Ambitious officers within this structure continue to plot the furtherance of their position by striking to capture their own political power. The ingrained mistrust of the Hutu's majority by the military Tutsi elite creates an endless cycle of violence. Attitudes of military forces towards civilians are based on tribalism and vice versa. Therefore, there is no relationship between military personnel to the rest of the population surrounding military installations. Above all, there is no clear mission given to these armies. All are indoctrinated with reprisal and seek political power. Defending their people sometimes appears to be of limited importance.

All examined instabilities, conflict and violence have far-reaching security and political implications outside the states where they originate. The result has been that populations continue to suffer and humanitarian assistance is hampered because agencies fear for their security. Moreover, the whole region experiences the effects of refugees. More



than 2.5 million people have been and are still displaced from their homes.<sup>31</sup> A number of people sought refuge even far beyond the boundaries of the region, escaping ethnic tensions as well as war-related insecurity that resulted in many incidents of family separation. Fear, ill will, and mistrust prevent people from settling down and engaging in productive activities; they are always on the move and their social services are disrupted.

Another effect of instability is human suffering. As people become displaced, their security also becomes vulnerable to other threats.<sup>32</sup> For example, since the ongoing crisis started in April 1994, hundreds of thousands of refugees have been crammed together in the refugee camps without adequate food and health services. They lack legal and physical protection.<sup>33</sup> They have been at risk of diseases, intimidation, robbery, physical attack, and other threats directed at innocent old people, women and children in particular.

As thousands of refugees are crammed into the small areas provided for refugee camps, environmental degradation is inevitable norm. Grasses are destroyed, resulting in soil erosion. Every tree is cut down in the vicinity for use in building their shelters, warming, or cooking. The bare land thus become prone to a devastating soil erosion.

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<sup>31</sup> UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); *UN Consolidate Inter-Agency Appeal for Countries of the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa, January-December 1998*; available <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/files/RWDomino.nsf>; Internet; accessed 25 February 2004, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Mills and Narton, *Refugees and Security* ..., 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 9

Robbery has been a threat too, even in the regional countries not having internal wars. This is because a number of refugees escape from their countries of origin with concealed firearms, which they either sell or exchange and later use to harass, kill, and take the property of the innocent local populations of host countries.

Poverty is at such a high level that more than 51% of the populations in these countries live on less than US \$ 1 per capital per day.<sup>34</sup> Measures to alleviate poverty have remained difficult to implement because development projects cannot be undertaken effectively due to regional instability. Regional leaders have been spending much time trying to find solutions for disputes between worried parties; with political stability, they could have devoted the time to raising the population living standards in their countries.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/AIDS is an increasing human disaster in the region and in Africa as a whole. The spread of AIDS to communities has been increasing in spite of the efforts made by governments. On other hand, wars are contributing to a certain extent; for example, rebel female combatants becomes more infected and through them HIV/AIDS is being spread to communities in which they settle before and after the reintegration process. HIV/AIDS is also spread through poverty conditions in the refugee camps. Endless wars, poverty, the lack of essential social facilities in the communities and illiteracy, have meant that HIV/AIDS is being given less attention by the communities

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<sup>34</sup> Dr. Bienvenu-Mangloire Quenum, "Trading and Investing in Africa, Per Capital GNP versus Parity Purchasing Power," *Africabiz®Email Edition* Issue 59, Vol. 1 (March 15 – April 14, 2004) [[editon@afribicabiz.org](mailto:editon@afribicabiz.org)]; available from <http://businessafrica.usanethosting.com/afribicabiz/graphs2.htm>; Internet; accessed 11 April 2004, 2.

themselves. However, the governments, especially in Uganda and in those countries in the region that never suffer civil wars, are trying to address the problem with determined efforts. Above all, the region suffers from natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and endless epidemic diseases such as cholera, malaria, and other tropical diseases that cause a high mortality rate. The result is reduced production, leading to famine and starvation.

All these effects have hindered development throughout the entire region. Populations which are constantly on the move live without hope. Meanwhile, it has been noted that, “the UN is guided by a fundamental commitment to the humanitarian imperative that all people’s basic rights should be protected and respected, that their essential needs should be met and that they should live in peace.”<sup>35</sup> The foreign policy of rich countries such as the United States, the most economically and militarily powerful country in the world, is intent on pursuing human rights, the rule of law, and world-wide peace. The issue of ongoing ethnic war in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, one may think that the region is not a place of strategic interest or political gain for major powers. However, since Africa is a large part of this world, the international community should be much more involved in supporting humanitarian programmes in this region.

There are understandable reasons why rich nations do not think they should spend money and risk the lives of their soldiers stabilizing Africa when Africans themselves have not been accountable for the money they are receiving. The problem here is excessive

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<sup>35</sup> UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); *UN Consolidate Inter-Agency Appeal for Countries of the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa, January-December 1998*; available <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/files/RWDomino.nsf>; internet; accessed 25 February 2004, 4.

corruption. While corruption is a global problem, it is particularly acute within developing countries such as those found in Africa. Governments in developing nations have sometimes been less than rigorous in ensuring that international aid money is used solely for its intended purpose, rather than being misallocated. During these transactions, corrupt individuals become dishonest and transfer funds to foreign banking systems. It is likely that these situations contribute to the hesitation of the major powers to provide more humanitarian assistance, military assistance, and to become fully involved in addressing the ongoing crisis in the region. On the other hand, international financial institutions have contributed to this unfortunate situation by providing a sanctuary for these illicit gains. Measures could have been put in place to trace and identify the sources of this money to ensure that it was not gained illegally.

The security threat against foreign troops who have deployed to some African countries in order to restore peace, prior to the escalation of the Great Lakes crisis, might also be another reason that those nations are hesitant to send additional troops. The American, and Canadian experience in Somalia, the death threats made against Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire in Rwanda in 1994, and the murder of Belgian soldiers, are examples of why major power nations perceive that Africa does not welcome the presence of large-scale western military intervention. This kind of negative attitude does not represent the national policy of African states. They were, and are still, individual and hostile ethnic and religious groups who thoroughly know that the presence of capable military forces hinders them in achieving their illegitimate goals. These groups always aim at killing innocent people,

looting, destroying public infrastructures, and imposing threats in order to drive out legal governments.

Despite these African failures, it is important that the rich countries recognize that Africa is still a young continent in many aspects. All major powers were independent even before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whereas in Africa, there is no country that has had more than 60 years of independence. Therefore, it can be concluded that African countries are still in a transitional period. During this period there are a lot of difficulties, and innocent people such as women, children and old people, are suffering while elite groups are laundering the small funds available and whatever is being donated by rich nations. However, there are also wise leaders in Africa who are working hard to see that the economic and security situation is improved. With respect to this latter group, a lack of resources has been a major hindrance to the achievement of success. Keeping these reasons in mind, wealthy nations still have a key role to play in ending ethnic conflict by supporting the efforts of responsible regional leaders, instead of allowing the results of these efforts to fade away.

One can ask what key roles regional leaders have carried out. The truth is that regional leaders have been trying to solve these problems but they have not been sufficiently supported by the UN and the major powers nations: For example, Tanzania put efforts towards Rwanda crisis in 1993, but lacking UN back-up to reach the success, the result was genocide.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Scherrer, *Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa...*, 372.

The achievements of reconstruction justice in Rwanda since 1995, the peace process in Burundi since 1998, the fall of [dictator] Mobutu, achieved by Africans themselves, and the July 1999 Lusaka Accord achieved by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for peace in Congo-DR; are other examples of regional efforts towards endogenous developments.<sup>37</sup>

If these efforts had received more support from both the UN and the major super powers, concrete progress could have been made. The question remains: should the situation be left to its own devices? The answer is absolutely not to leave this situation unsolved. In 1998, the UN urged the international community continue to address the crises in the region collectively and in a broad involvement but the response was not effective.<sup>38</sup> However, the slow involvement of the international community, with African efforts to bring peace in the Great Lake Region, have started to bear fruit. Efforts have reached the crucial implementation stage when belligerents in the DRC for example, have agreed to have the transitional government, therefore, it is time for the major powers, led by the United States, to increase their involvement, notably through the steps, outlined below.

### **Political and Military Stabilization Measures**

All protagonists involved in Great Lakes Region conflicts should be strongly warned that their continued involvement to the conflict is unacceptable. Moreover, countries harbouring rebel leaders who orchestrate mass killing and rebel movements must be openly

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 377

<sup>38</sup> UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); *UN Consolidate Inter-Agency Appeal for Countries of the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa, January-December 1998*; available <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/files/RWDomino.nsf>; internet; accessed 25 February 2004, 4.

condemned. There should be measures put in place that will stop those nations from assisting rebel leaders and will encourage these leaders to come to meaningful consensus. Meanwhile, the UN must create conditions that will force all rebel groups, especially in Burundi and the DRC, to lay down their arms and come to consensus. This can be achieved if the international community convinces the five permanent members of the Security Council of the UN to use their influence in finding, authorizing, and supporting an international neutral force that will ensure security in the DRC and Burundi. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) should supervise the integration of forces from all armed groups and provide unified training programmes.

Here is the opinion of a Tanzanian senior Defence Advisor in Uganda, when he was recommending what the UN can do to solve problems in Burundi and the DRC:

The UN Security Council (UNSC) must provide resolutions that will establish the UN peacekeeping force in Burundi with sufficient mandate to carry out disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement (DDRRR). The Security Council should strengthen MONUC's capacities to do effective DDRRR and to monitor border security between Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, and make provision for the means to pacify and police the region especially in the area of Ituri. MONUC does not necessarily need many more troops. The UNSC Resolution 1445 of 4 December 2002 already authorized the deployment of 3,000 additional personnel taking its deployment to a total of 8,775. But MONUC needs to make the most out of its contingent, with a new mandate and concept of operation allowing if necessary the use of force to oppose the destabilization of Rwanda and to disarm ethnic militias in Eastern area of the DRC.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Lt Col Mella P. I. The Tanzania Defence Advisor credited to Uganda, e-mail communication with the author, 3 March 2004.

The U.S. and European Union countries must take the lead in urging the UNSC to give MONUC a peacekeeping mandate, as well as the wherewithal to carry out the DDRRR process.<sup>40</sup> The same efforts should be applied equally to Burundi, since the two conflicts are interlinked. Failure to exploit the current successes reached in securing a temporary ceasefire will lead external actors with selfish interests, such as smugglers and game poachers, to return to the region and continue their economic exploitation of the resources. This will, in time, undermine the credibility of the future transitional governments in the DRC and in Burundi.

There should be an arms embargo imposed on countries having ethnic wars in the region and to each country in Africa that has intrastate conflict. Most troubled areas do not even have a single heavy industry capable of manufacturing large weapons and high explosives. Therefore, all weapons and explosives are being imported from external nations.

### **Measures for Economic Back-up**

UN monetary agencies must establish worldwide measures to ensure that aid money is fully accounted for and not transferred illegally to an offshore account.<sup>41</sup> If funds were found in the international banking systems that were obtained by an individual illegally, efforts should be made to coordinate with the person's home country to ensure that all money is returned back to the country concerned and that the appropriate legal action is taken against the perpetrator. This type of action will contribute to reducing corruption.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Department for International Development; "Fighting Corruption," available from [http://www.keysheets.org/red\\_6\\_fighting\\_corruption.html](http://www.keysheets.org/red_6_fighting_corruption.html); internet; accessed 12 June 2004, 1.



The Security Council must exert its influence on the U.S. and EU countries to establish bilateral and multilateral funding to finance the transitional governments in the DRC and Burundi. The presence of the UN Peacekeeping Force should continue for some time, together with a follow-through operation to establish a regulatory environment and codes of conduct for business in the region. This is critical to the destruction of international channels for illicit trade. As well, a tax system must be established that would promote reconstruction and help to give the central government a regular income. Without strong international involvement, the DRC and Burundi states will remain incapable of reestablishing security within their territories. The reconstruction of the DRC and Burundi will guarantee long-term stabilization of the Great Lakes and prevent criminal use of its natural resources.

To improve local economic conditions, the developed world should buy manufactured goods, crops, mineral resources, and other products produced in the Great Lakes Region and throughout the African continent as a whole. By so doing countries will minimize the reliance on aid and grants from abroad.

The UN, the United States, and the EU countries should encourage efforts put forth by powerful countries in Africa which are focused on African unity. Sub-regional communities such as East Africa Community (AEC), SADC, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the AU should be backed-up and encouraged to achieve their goals towards economic and security stability within their regions and for Africa as a whole. All of these organizations should be treated and assisted in dealing with African problems.

## **Human Rights and Assistance**

It is recommended that the UN establish a strong and credible Human Rights Commission to investigate all breaches and abuses of human rights committed by individuals as well as armed groups in Burundi and the DRC. All those suspected criminals must be brought before an International Court of Justice. Subsequently, a reconciliation process that will minimize acts of revenge by any group or individuals may be established, following the example of the South African Commission on Reconciliation, facilitated by international agencies by restoring the dignity of victims through much-needed economic and social reforms. “In fact truth is more important than punishment if the end goal is reconciliation.”<sup>42</sup>

The Rwandan Government, Burundi and the DRC Transitional Governments should be encouraged and assisted by the international community to create conditions that will encourage the return of refugees and ex-combatants who are in exile, in order to participate in a reconciliation process between belligerents.

Under the assistance of UN Agencies, None Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and major powers, there should be programmes to rehabilitate the affected areas of countries harbouring refugees. There should be humanitarian support to indigenous populations in areas where refugees are cramped.

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<sup>42</sup> International IDEA / Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; “The path towards reconciliation and justice,” available from <http://www.idea.int/97df/presskit/reconciliation.html>; Internet; accessed 12 June 2004, 5.

In conclusion, peace and stability across the entire Great Lakes Region of Africa will continue to be threatened by internal ethnic conflict if the international community does not put into practice, plans by the UNSC, through its previous resolutions, to resolve the crisis. Africa has many different ethnic groups of different cultures, languages and customs. The colonial era contributed to disintegrating these groups, without those colonial powers understanding the implications of favouring some groups and leaving others behind. It is now imperative for the international community to engage all efforts focused on peace implementation.

There is a huge gap in wealth between African nations and those of the developed world. Lack of human rights, economic collapse, brutal and corrupt military dictatorships, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, environmental degradation, overpopulation, poverty, and hunger continue to threaten the well being of the population.<sup>43</sup> The developed world must continue addressing regional stability and human rights issues, thereby setting an example of what foreign aid can achieve. What if global terrorist groups chose to exploit these populations for their selfish ends? This international hazards has already been demonstrated by Al-Qaeda through their bombing of the two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on 7 August 1998.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire, *“Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda.”* (Toronto: Random House Canada Ltd, 2003), 521.

<sup>44</sup> Africa online; “US Kenya and Tanzania embassy blast 1998.8.7,” available from <http://www.asah-net.or.jp/~eels-ari/bomb.html>; Internet, accessed 12 June 2004.

The international community must take a more active role in enforcing the UNSC resolutions concerning peace in the region. Resolutions must be enacted to stop the parties to these conflicts from resorting to military means in pursuit of their interests.

The U.S. and major western nations as a whole must be fully engaged in African regional diplomacy. If the belligerents persist in not complying with those efforts rendered by the international community, measures backed by force such as peace enforcement and long-term peacekeeping operations must be maintained. Sending more peacekeeping forces, providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating economy recovery, and continuing the United Nations' important role in support of these efforts, will play a critical role in leading the Great Lakes Region of Africa towards a real African renaissance.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Scherrer, *Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa...*, 378.

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