

Captions:

North Kivu, 15 years of war

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RDC – Democratic Republic of Congo
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Photo 01 –

Refugee camp. The conflict began after the victory of the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) led by Paul Kagame, which ended the genocide in Rwanda. It was the year in 1994. 15 years later, the crisis has still have not found a solution. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 02 –

Wars, coming one after another, have made between 3 and 5 millions of victims. The UN mission (MONUC) is unable to protect civilians, despite the colossal resources. 17.000 peacekeepers are deployed in the territory, mostly in the Kivu region.



Photo 03 –

The Kivu conflict will become the first African world war. Since 1994 six African nations have supported various armed groups in order to have the control of the large mining sites. Over 10 million people have fled, fighting for 15 years, and finally found themselves displaced in their own country.



Photo 04 –

Human Rights Organizations denounced the past 15 years of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Three militia leaders are judged by the International Criminal Court for the crimes committed in the neighboring province (Ituri) between 2002 and 2003. None of them was judged for the violations perpetrated in the Kivu area.



Photo 05 –

Insecurity and recurrent conflicts made it impossible for agricultural activities to continue. Almost all villages asked assistance to international humanitarian assistance organizations. The central government in Kinshasa failed to restore its administrative authority. The area obeys to the laws of competing armed groups.



Photo 06 –

Some people hide in the forest for days to escape the violence. Most of them never reach the camps, as they are weakened by disease and malnutrition. RDC North Kivu



Photo 07 –

Armed groups close roads access to prevent people from fleeing. Civilians are then used as human shields. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 08 –

During the year 2008, nearly one million people have fled the fighting. Humanitarian organizations were unable to face the influx and urgency, particularly because of access restrictions in combat zones.



Photo 09 –

Women are the first victims of fighting and violence. Humanitarian Coordination (OCHA) estimates that 3,500 women have been raped since September 2008. Women are used as porters, cooks and sex slaves. Some are forced into prostitution with the members of the opposition armed groups to gather strategic information.



Photo 10 –

Raped women prefer not return to their homes. They will be repudiated, accused of bringing shame and curse to the family.



Photo 11 –

"This war is not an ethnic war or a civil war as we want to believe. The Congolese do not fight between them. These are armed groups fighting for power and mineral wealth. We are sacrificed for economic interests: they want us to make jewelry and cell phones! "



Photo 12 –

Since 2001, reports of the United Nations experts explain the origin of the conflict: "access, control and trade of key mineral resources: diamonds, copper, cobalt, gold, but mostly coltan and cassiterite". Two minerals used in electronic circuits for computers and mobile phones, which have experienced a significant market growth over the past decade. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 13 –

The systematic exploitation of natural resources has created a situation in which all the belligerents are winners, including the officers of the regular army who do not hesitate to exploit the Congolese people they are supposed to protect.



Photo 14 –

Young children recruited in the militia in May: over 33 000 children were served in the various armed groups. Conscripted or volunteers after seeing their families abused and looted.



Photo 15 –

The breakdown of the family obstructs psychological rebuilding and removes all sign of stability. For example, it is very difficult for soldier children, to reintegrate their family even after the demobilization process. Firstly because they are scattered and decimated by years of war; secondly, because going back to their homes becomes very hard. Children have difficulties recognizing the new parents as a real authority and know no other way than violence to settle disagreements. Many families prefer to separate.



Photo 16 –

Civilians under the protection of Congolese FARDC army (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo). Congolese troops have failed to contain the advancing troops of the CNDP of Laurent Nkunda in November 2008. The soldiers were the first to escape, pillaging the people they were supposed to protect. The troops, consisting of old groups that have recently accepted their integration into the national army, do not pursue the same interests and struggle to recognize their new hierarchy. The soldiers suffer from a lack of training, and their balances are often diverted by their own officers. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 17 –

Years of conflict have prevented education for the last generation. The humanitarian disaster will provoke a serious failing in the reconstruction and future development. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 18 –

Thousands of children are growing up alone or in the few households for displaced people. They are war orphans, children born of war rape and abandoned children who have lost their families while fleeing.



Photo 19 –

Testimony. *"I remember of 50 years ago, the North Kivu was called the Switzerland of Africa. There were foreign tourists who came to see the wild beasts. They made Safari. We would never die of hunger. The region produced vegetables for all, and even exported to neighboring countries. At that time, we did not even know that there were minerals under the earth".* RDC North Kivu.



Photo 20 –

Torture and mutilation is commonly used by armed groups. The aim is to demonstrate their strength and their will to authority. They hope to discourage civilians from fleeing or joining another armed group. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 21 –

Prisons and dungeons are seriously becoming murder places. Prisoners do not receive food or care; they survive only thanks to the support of their families, or through a system of parallel market, including human exploitation. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 22 –

Medical facilities are lacking in the areas that humanitarian workers can not reach. The patients were abandoned for lack of qualified personnel, and lack of basic medical facilities. For the few clinics that are still operational, the administration refuses the patients because as they are not creditworthy. RDC North Kivu.



Photo 23 –

The FDLR (Fighting Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) movement is quoted in all international organizations reports as an instigator of violence against civilians. It is made up of Rwandan Hutus who participated to the genocide of 1994 and the second generation who grew up during the past 15 years on the Congolese soil. After fighting against them from 1996 to 1998, Laurent Desire Kabila found in Congolese the allies to free him from of Kigali. Rwanda accuses Kinshasa of protecting the rebels who threaten the stability of the area. RDC North Kivu.