

8 YEARS AFTER CEASEFIRE:

**The necessary shift from
Reintegration to Community Development
in the Republic of Congo**

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Background information on the Congolese context

- A succession of civil wars and political violence:
1993, 1997, 1998-1999, 2001-2003
 - Pool region = main theatre of combat operations (1998-99/2001-03) / Instability has persisted there until recently
 - 'Ninjas' and the changing dynamics of this armed movement
 - From Kolelas' recruits to Nsilulu & Ntumi's followers
 - Evolution of the CNR from an armed movement to a political party
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Evolution of the security situation in the Pool region (1998-2011)

- Pool region = deprived of public security forces **for 13 years**
 - Heterogeneity of situations:
Localities have been affected very differently by warfare, during the periods of open war and the period of more diffuse violence that followed
 - ‘Ninja’ bases could therefore persist until recently (2010) in certain localities, posing direct threats to the local population (forced labor, excessive taxation, torture, non authorized use of land...)
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The recent State military response (2010 to date)

- Deployment of 2 successive military operations to restore security and the authority of the State in the region
(Operation Kinzounou, Jul.-Aug. 2010 / Operation Kimia, from oct.2010)
 - Operations generally well perceived by the communities;
mixed reports from ex-combatants
 - General impact:
Social disorder less frequent, downsizing of enduring 'Ninja' bases, restoration of a (embryonic) judicial system...
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Past interventions targeting ex-combatants

- In the past 15 years, several dispositions for disarming & finding ways to reintegrate ex-combatants
(1995: disposition in peace treaty; 2000: set-up of a national Comité; 2000-04: IOM/UNDP initiative, ...)
- The World Bank supported 2 reintegration initiatives:
 - in 2004-05, through the PDR-IDA program,
 - in 2005-09, through the MDRP mechanism.
- The RoC government recently supported two 'cash for weapon' disarmament operations (in 2009 & 2011)

MDRP Impact in the Pool region

- The MDRP program initially targeted 30,000 ex-combatants in the whole of RoC: 19,000 self-demobilized; 5,000 recruits still active in an armed group in the Pool region; and 6,000 representatives of the public security forces.
- Given the regional instability until recently, the MDRP program could only get access to 1,679 ex-combatants in the Pool, mostly residing in 'non problematic' areas (Southern districts mostly), and all had self-demobilized several years ago.

Who are we talking about?

The term ex-combatant encompasses a diversity of profiles

- Local recruits, native of the locality where they are posted
- Outsiders
- Settled / Not settled
- Early-joiners / Late-joiners
- Having spent many years in the armed group
- Having self-demobilized quick
- Keeping links with their former military hierarchy
- Having severed all ties with the movement

All spread all over the region, and in main Congolese towns, with ≠ individual characteristics, social networks & needs

The current situation of ex-combatants

How do they relate socially?

- Most EC self-demobilized more than 6 years ago, hence have developed coping mechanisms
 - Most live with a partner, usually a non combatant (90%)
 - Two-thirds of the interviewed EC are homeowners
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ have access to an agricultural land plot
 - Reintegrating in the village of the spouse or direct ascendant is a pattern (as well as going back to pre-war residence)
 - 'Local' recruits more accepted than 'outsiders'
 - 'Forgiveness' rituals / sensitization fostered by village chiefs
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The current situation of ex-combatants

How do they fare economically?

- Engaged in informal economic activities similar to those of the population at large (usually combining several of them)
 - **No better no worse than non EC/ Facing the same hardship**
 - Several EC involved with non EC on contractual arrangements (tenant farming, plot rental, creditor/debitor relation...)
 - **Opportunities partly shaped by how EC get access to land (rental arrangements or part of the local landowners ?)**
 - A local tendency to prefer working individually or with close family members
 - **A general difficulty to dispatch agricultural products**
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Are there still problematic areas?

- Until the deployment of the recent military operations (2010), insecurity prevailed along the railroad and in lucrative portions of road (prone to racket)
(Voula, Kibouende, Missafou, Mindouli, Madzia, Matoumbu)
 - Southern districts calm since 2003
(districts of Boko, Louingui, Ngoma Tse Tse, ...)
 - Residual banditry since then but at a much lower scale than before 2010
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The current challenges

1. Avoid a gap between the recent military operations and the full time redeployment of the public security forces in the Pool region (several missions were conducted in 2011 by representatives of the Ministry of Defense with the aim to assess the facilities needed to reopen fixed police posts in the Pool region)
 2. Reenergize the local economic situation in the Pool since several sectors were completely destroyed by the war (large-scale fruit plantations, local '*ranches*', animal supply,...)
 3. Foster the opening up of the region.
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Why tackle such issues through a CDD approach?

- The non EC population residing in certain districts of the Pool region has been very adversely affected until recently (through the persistence of armed groups' bases along the railroad)
 - **Attention so far focused on EC only**
(while entire villages were destroyed during the war / issue of housing)
 - Perception that “**being EC is a diploma**”
(quote from a participant to a focus group in Matoumbu)
 - **Distinction EC / non EC no longer done at community level**
(or only in front of assessment missions)
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Recommendations

- Promote a non targeted assistance
 - target youth at large
 - **reintroduce large scale breeding** of ox and fish in the area
 - Explore possibilities for introducing basic motorized agriculture
 - **Pave strategic portions of road** to open up the region & facilitate the dispatching of agricultural products to economic centers
 - Address the issue of housing in the region
 - target in priority localities affected by instability until recently
- Accompany the current State efforts to reinstall the public security forces in the region
- Involve decentralized institutions (*Conseil Général du Pool, Mairies, Direction Départementale d'Agriculture*), local churches and communities in all initiatives (fiscal empowermt, planning, implem.)