



Threat Assessment

Democratic Republic of the Congo(DRC) Conflict

No Classification

Cleared for Public Release: 3/30/2025

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- **Score: 108**
 - **Threat Level: Catastrophic**
 - **Major global impact, major geopolitical disruption, major economic and societal consequences.**
 - **Strategic Response: Coordinated military, economic, and diplomatic response required. Focus on containment and crisis management.**
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The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been plagued by instability and conflict for decades. The ongoing violence has deeply impacted the nation's political, economic, and social fabric. This report assesses the most critical threats facing the DRC and categorizes them based on their potential impact, severity, and global implications. These factors include political instability, human rights violations, environmental crises, and the struggle for resource control.

This report aims to analyze the current state of the conflict in the DRC, exploring its scale and intensity, geopolitical consequences, economic disruptions, and broader global effects.

Expanded Conflict Threat Matrix:

1. Scale & Intensity
 - 1.1. Score: 4 (High)
 - 1.2. Description: The DRC conflict has been ongoing for decades with fluctuating levels of intensity. Recent large-scale armed engagements, particularly between the government and M23 rebels, have led to tens of thousands of casualties and over 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), significantly affecting the population. The violence and atrocities committed by armed groups are consistent with war crimes. While it has not reached genocidal levels, the intensity remains very high.

2. Geopolitical Impact
 - 2.1. Score: 4 (High)



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- 2.2. Description: Although the DRC conflict does not directly involve superpowers, it has major regional implications. Neighboring countries like Rwanda and Uganda have been accused of supporting rebel factions for strategic reasons. Their involvement risks destabilizing the entire Great Lakes region. The international community, especially through MONUSCO (UN peacekeepers), plays a significant but often ineffective role.
3. Economic Consequences
- 3.1. Score: 4 (High)
- 3.2. Description: The DRC's economy is heavily dependent on mining, particularly cobalt, gold, and coltan, crucial for global technology markets. The ongoing conflict has disrupted mining operations, slowed foreign investment, and hindered national economic growth. Smuggling and illegal mining further complicate the region's economic stability, affecting global supply chains for key minerals.
4. Risk of Escalation & Spillover
- 4.1. Score: 4 (High)
- 4.2. Description: The DRC conflict has a high risk of escalation, especially with the involvement of neighboring countries. The M23 rebellion has already escalated into cross-border attacks involving Rwanda and Uganda. If these countries become directly involved, there is significant potential for a regional war, destabilizing Central Africa.
5. Involvement of Major State & Non-State Actors
- 5.1. Score: 4 (High)
- 5.2. Description: The DRC conflict sees significant involvement from regional actors, notably Rwanda and Uganda, which have been accused of supporting insurgent groups. Non-state actors like the ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) further complicate the situation, utilizing insurgency tactics and targeting civilians and military sites. This involvement from multiple actors increases the stakes of the conflict.



6. Disruption of Critical Global Systems

6.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)

6.2. Description: While the DRC conflict impacts regional stability and global commodity markets, particularly minerals, it has not yet reached a scale that would disrupt core global systems like energy or financial markets. The effects are primarily regional, with significant consequences for the tech and mining industries.

7. Use of Hybrid & Asymmetric Warfare

7.1. Score: 4 (High)

7.2. Description: The DRC conflict is characterized by asymmetric warfare, including guerilla tactics, insurgent attacks, and cyber warfare. Armed groups like the M23 and ADF also use disinformation campaigns to manipulate public sentiment. The conflict is a complex hybrid war, combining traditional and modern warfare strategies.

8. Cultural Identity Conflicts

8.1. Score: 4 (High)

8.2. Description: The conflict in the DRC is deeply rooted in ethnic and cultural tensions, especially between the Hutu and Tutsi populations. The M23 rebellion is largely composed of Tutsi fighters, which fuels ethnic violence. These cultural divides have contributed to extensive violence, displacements, and human rights abuses.

9. Religious Tensions

9.1. Score: 2 (Low)

9.2. Description: While the ADF incorporates some religious extremist elements, religious tensions are not a major driver of the DRC conflict. The conflict is more significantly driven by ethnic, political, and resource-based causes. Religious issues play a minimal role in the broader context.

10. Socioeconomic Disparity

10.1. Score: 4 (High)



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- 10.2. Description: Socioeconomic disparity is a major factor in the DRC conflict. Poverty, unemployment, and resource inequality are widespread, fueling grievances. Armed groups exploit these disparities to recruit marginalized populations, exacerbating instability. The divide between the elite and the impoverished majority further fuels unrest.
11. Political Instability
- 11.1. Score: 5 (Critical)
- 11.2. Description: Political instability is a defining feature of the DRC. The central government struggles with weak governance, corruption, and internal factionalism. Armed insurgent groups, including M23, challenge the state's authority. These political challenges, combined with ethnic divisions, make effective state-building nearly impossible.
12. Technological Dependence
- 12.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)
- 12.2. Description: The DRC has a fragile technological infrastructure, with limited internet access and poor digital infrastructure. Despite this, the country's mining sector is highly dependent on global technology supply chains. A failure in this sector could have significant global implications, but overall technological dependence remains moderate.
13. Cybersecurity Threats
- 13.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)
- 13.2. Description: While not a central issue, cybersecurity threats are rising. Insurgents and external actors are increasingly targeting critical infrastructure through cyber-attacks. These threats complicate peace efforts and governance, posing risks to both military and civilian systems.
14. 14. Military Alliances
- 14.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)
- 14.2. Description: The DRC's military alliances are primarily regional, with the African Union and MONUSCO attempting peacekeeping efforts. However, these alliances



are weak, as Rwanda and Uganda often act outside the AU framework, supporting insurgent factions. The international response remains fragmented and ineffective.

15. 15. Industry Collapse

15.1. Score: 4 (High)

15.2. Description: The DRC's mining industry, crucial to the local and global economy, has been severely disrupted by conflict. Rebel groups control valuable mining territories, leading to illegal mining and smuggling, while foreign investment has slowed. This disruption has caused the collapse of vital sectors tied to mining, including infrastructure and transportation.

16. 16. Environmental Crises

16.1. Score: 4 (High)

16.2. Description: Armed groups and illegal mining operations have intensified environmental destruction in the DRC, particularly through deforestation and poaching. The country's ecosystems are under immense pressure, threatening biodiversity and crucial resources such as clean water and arable land. The environmental degradation worsens the overall crisis.

17. 17. Education & Knowledge Gaps

17.1. Score: 4 (High)

17.2. Description: The ongoing conflict has severely disrupted the DRC's education system. Millions of children are unable to attend school due to displacement and insecurity. In rural areas, access to education is limited, and instability hinders any efforts to implement reforms, leaving the country's future workforce unprepared for recovery.

18. Human Rights Violations

18.1. Score: 5 (Critical)

18.2. Description: The DRC is plagued by severe human rights violations, including massacres, sexual violence, child soldier recruitment, and forced displacements. Both state and non-state actors, particularly M23 and ADF, are implicated in war crimes, exacerbating the suffering of civilians and hindering peace efforts.



19. Migration & Refugee Crises

19.1. Score: 5 (Critical)

19.2. Description: The DRC conflict has resulted in one of Africa's largest refugee crises. Over 6 million people are displaced internally, and hundreds of thousands have fled to neighboring countries. This large-scale migration causes severe humanitarian challenges, including poor living conditions and strain on host countries' resources.

20. Media & Information Warfare

20.1. Score: 4 (High)

20.2. Description: Media manipulation is a key tactic used by both state and non-state actors. Disinformation and propaganda campaigns shape public perceptions of the conflict and fuel ethnic and political divisions. The media plays a significant role in exacerbating the conflict and undermining peace-building efforts.

21. Resource Scarcity

21.1. Score: 4 (High)

21.2. Description: The conflict in the DRC has worsened resource scarcity, particularly in regions rich in minerals. The competition for control over resources like water, food, and minerals has led to further violence and displacement. Armed groups often exploit local resources, exacerbating poverty and social instability.

22. Financial Instability

22.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)

22.2. Description: While the DRC's financial markets are not heavily integrated into the global economy, the conflict has caused significant instability. Inflation, currency depreciation, and the disruption of foreign investment have long-term impacts on national economic growth, though these effects are mostly contained within the country.

23. Climate Change

23.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)



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- 23.2. Description: The DRC is grappling with the effects of climate change, including deforestation and changing rainfall patterns. The conflict exacerbates these challenges, as armed groups contribute to illegal logging, while climate-induced displacement intensifies the refugee crisis.
24. Trade Wars & Sanctions
- 24.1. Score: 2 (Low)
- 24.2. Description: The DRC faces sanctions from the EU and US over human rights violations and illegal mining, but these sanctions have not escalated into a trade war. There are minimal international trade barriers, and the DRC's global trade role remains limited.
25. Intellectual Property Theft
- 25.1. Score: 2 (Low)
- 25.2. Description: While illegal mining is a significant issue, intellectual property theft is not a primary concern. The DRC's challenges are more focused on resource exploitation and human rights abuses than on intellectual property violations.
26. Energy Security
- 26.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)
- 26.2. Description: Energy security is a concern due to disrupted infrastructure. Rural areas face significant energy shortages, and conflict hampers the development of energy resources, particularly hydroelectric power. The inability to harness energy potential limits the country's economic development.
27. International Law & Governance
- 27.1. Score: 4 (High)
- 27.2. Description: The DRC faces substantial challenges in adhering to international law, as armed groups frequently violate humanitarian law. The government struggles with corruption and impunity, and international peace efforts have



largely been ineffective due to these obstacles.

28. Technological Innovation & AI

28.1. Score: 2 (Low)

28.2. Description: Technological warfare, including cyberattacks, is not a primary concern in the DRC. The conflict is primarily based on conventional military engagements, with cyber operations still in the early stages of development.

29. Nationalism & Populism

29.1. Score: 3 (Moderate)

29.2. Description: Nationalism plays a moderate role in the DRC conflict, as some armed groups mobilize support using ethnic and nationalistic rhetoric. This is particularly evident in groups like the M23, which is largely composed of ethnic Tutsi fighters and uses nationalist and ethnic identity to rally support. These sentiments often fuel violence as groups vie for control of territory and resources. However, populism is less pronounced in the DRC, with populist rhetoric primarily used by political factions to gain support during elections or crises. While nationalism is an important factor in certain insurgent movements, it is not the dominant force driving the conflict as a whole.

30. Public Health Crises

30.1. Score: 5 (Critical)

30.2. Description: Public health crises are a significant and critical issue in the DRC, particularly due to recurring outbreaks of diseases such as malaria, cholera, and Ebola. Conflict and displacement exacerbate the spread of these diseases, as overcrowded conditions in refugee and IDP camps create ideal environments for infections to spread. Limited access to healthcare, combined with insecurity that hampers humanitarian aid, worsens the crisis. The health system is already underdeveloped and heavily strained by the ongoing conflict, making it difficult to control outbreaks and prevent further casualties. The lack of infrastructure and healthcare access, particularly in conflict zones, contributes to a high mortality rate from preventable diseases.