



# Situation Report

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## Update on the status of army integration in the DRC

### Introduction

The 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 marked the end of two years of transitional government in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It can be said that very little was achieved during this period of political uncertainty, particularly with regard to demobilising former combatants and integrating various militias into a formal and unified army structure. While many analysts expected that the end of the transition period combined with the absence of a functioning defence force would be marred by violent public disturbances, this did not take place and the authorities were able to maintain public order.

A further six-month extension of the transitional authority (to the end of December 2005) presents the government of the transition and the Congolese security establishment with another opportunity to adequately proceed with the formation and integration of the army, of which a critical step concerns the implementation of the National Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration Plan (PNDDR). In the pages below, a brief update on the status of army integration is provided, including an appraisal of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process currently underway. This situation report reaffirms the centrality of the military (and the Congolese security sector in general) in sustaining peace in the DRC - in particular, its increasing relevance in the run-up to national elections in 2006. Beginning with a brief overview of the strategic plan developed for the establishment of a new armed force for the DRC (the FARDC or *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*), this situation report discusses some of the challenges facing national and internationally supported institutions mandated to coordinate Security Sector Reform (SSR) and DDR activities, and finally looks at the current status of the DDR process (outlining some of the key elements for the successful demobilisation and integration of the various forces).

### The Key Elements of Military Integration

#### *A Strategic Plan*

In May 2005, and after much anticipation, the FARDC produced a strategic plan that, for the first time, sets in detail the national military's vision for army integration. It is hoped that this plan will provide answers to some of the coordination and implementation problems that have plagued previous initiatives. The strategic plan is based on three stages of military reform: stage one concerning the creation of light infantry brigades in the run up to the election; stage two by the formation of a rapid reaction unit; and, finally, stage three by the establishment of the main defence force by 2010.

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The creation of light infantry brigades is planned as a five-step process. Firstly the census of all FARDC forces must be completed in order to minimise the already entrenched problem of 'ghost' beneficiaries (explained below). Secondly, the disarmament process will take place at assembly points after which troops will be transported to orientation centres. At the orientation centre troops will choose whether or not to be integrated into the new military or demobilised back into civilian life. Following this, forces will be integrated, mixed and trained at six *Centres de Brassage* (CBRs) into standard brigades of 4,200 troops.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the integrated forces will be divided into 9 brigades and deployed to Ituri and North and South Kivu. Furthermore, an additional 9 Brigades will be integrate and deployed to the rest of the country before the elections in March 2006 (as can be seen in the table below).

As regards the DDR component, the Strategic Plan classifies the CBRs as either permanent or temporary. The former includes centres located in Kitona, Kamina and Kisangani, while the latter will be at Mushaki (Rumangabo), Nyaleki and Luberizi. Detailed provision is made in the plan for the process of *brassage* and deployment to the operational areas - as can be seen in the table and maps below.

**Table 1: Deployment plan<sup>3</sup>**

Brigade	Brassage Centre	Start of Brassage	End of brassage	Area of deployment	Status of deployment
1	Kisangani	February 2004	June 2004	Ituri	Deployed
2	Kitona	March 2005	May 2005	Kinshasa	Deployed
3	Kamina	March 2005	May 2005	Mbuji Maye	Deployed
4	Mushaki	April 2005	July 2005	Ituri	-
5	Nyaleke	April 2005	July 2005	Ituri	-
6	Luberizi	July 2005	August 2005	N-Kivu	-
7	Kisangani	August 2005	October 2005	S- Kivu	-
8	Kitona	August 2005	October 2005	Bas Congo	-
9	Kamina	August 2005	October 2005	Katanga	-
10	Mushaki	August 2005	October 2005	N Kivu	-
11	Nyaleki	August 2005	October 2005	N Kivu	-
12	Luberizi	September 2005	November 2005	S Kivu	-
13	Kisangani	October 2005	December 2005	Reaction Force	-
14	Kitona	October 2005	December 2005	Reaction Force	-
15	Kamina	October 2005	December 2005	Reaction Force	-
16	Mushaki	October 2005	December 2005	Reaction Force	-
17	Nyaleke	October 2005	December 2005	Reaction Force	-
18	Luberizi	November 2005	January 2005	Reaction Force	-

#### *Institutions responsible for DDR and SSR*

It has often been emphasised that the success of any Security Sector Reform (SSR) process is largely a function of the extent to which all efforts involved (both internal as well as international) can be effectively coordinated - this is particularly true in the case of the DRC. Yet, the short history of the transition has shown that problems surrounding coordination are far from resolved.

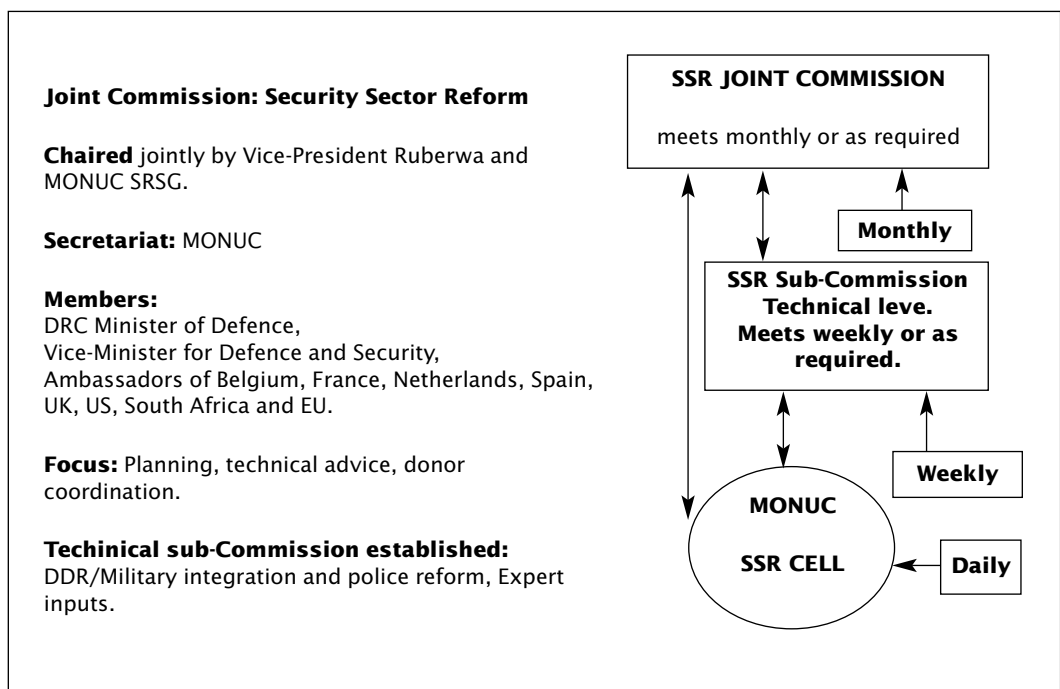
A number of bodies have been mandated by the transition government (TGoDRC) with responsibility for SSR (including DDR):

- The *National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration* (CONADER);

- The *Funding Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration* (CGFDDR); and,
- The *Structure for Military Integration* (SMI).

The substantive operationalization of these structures has been repeatedly delayed since 2003, not least by the lack of funds for military integration - in addition, the lack of financial control mechanisms within the transitional government has also hampered the process. More importantly, several donors have pointed to an apparent lack of political will within the transitional government to fully participate and engage in SSR, and in particular in the DDR programme. They refer particularly to different components that appear to be more interested in maintaining their individual capabilities, certainly until after the general election.<sup>4</sup>

For these reasons, and following several meetings held by the UN Deputy Secretary-General in 2004, an SSR planning and coordination structure was established. This structure consists of a steering committee of potential donors, a technical advisory group composed of SSR experts seconded from member states and international bodies, and a secretariat provided by MONUC (see Diagram 1 below). In July 2004, the members of the steering committee agreed on their terms of reference, which include reviewing the formulation of policy on SSR, tracking and monitoring progress, identifying potential support for training, equipment and other needs, and advising and assisting the TGoDRC activities.<sup>5</sup>



Yet, the MONUC SSR architecture that was to be implemented proved to be neither successful nor adequate. This is largely because MONUC was unable to rally government and diplomatic support for the plan. It was argued by some in the field that the SSR architecture as set out by MONUC was too complicated and did not reflect national ownership of the process. Moreover, all levels of the military hierarchy were unwilling to participate in such a structure, particularly without real financial support for the integration of the army.<sup>6</sup>

What little coordination did take place was largely in the form of bilateral or multilateral cooperation. It was also becoming increasingly evident that the Congolese government were maximising bilateral agreements so as to extract as much as possible from individual countries. As a result, a Contact Group was created as a relatively centralised forum for donor engagement, as detailed below. The EU (European Union) also established the EUSEC (Counsel and Assistance Mission) to support the FARDC with coordination within the force.

Belgium, France, the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) created a "Contact Group" in order to establish a common donor position on SSR in the DRC, and in particular coordinate donor support to the process of army integration.<sup>7</sup> The group was later extended to include Angola, South Africa and the Netherlands; MONUC, the World Bank and EUSEC (see below) are invited to attend its meetings to ensure better coordination of actors. It should be noted that the TGoDRC does not attend the meetings and that the group coordinates the issues discussed through its members' embassies in Kinshasa. Since its creation, the Contact Group has met five times in Kinshasa and, more recently, on 1 August 2005 in Cape Town. The next meeting is scheduled for 19 September 2005 in New York.

EUSEC consists of a military and police cell established in Kinshasa in May 2005. It is tasked with assisting the Congolese authorities in defining sound, transparent security policies. The military cell will concentrate on improving coordination within the Department of Defence and the FARDC. The officers in EUSEC have been posted as follows:

- Second in Command of EUSEC (Belgium);
- FARDC General Staff (Portugal);
- SMI (Hungary);
- Army Staff (UK);
- CONADER (UK); and,
- CCOC (UK and Portugal)

#### *Coordination of the Strategic Plan*

The Congolese Ministry of Defence has requested that the CCOC (Coordinated Joint Operations Centre) study the Strategic Plan to ensure that there is sufficient coordination between the FARDC, CONADER, SMI, MONUC, the Contact Group and EUSEC. The CCOC has prepared a plan to coordinate the activities of the Strategic Plan with the aim of integrating 12 brigades before 12 December 2005. The tasks and responsibilities have been allocated as follows:

#### FARDC

- Identify units for *brassage* in the second and third phases of the strategic plan;
- Identify 18 re-groupment centres (CR) for phase 2;
- Movement to the CR for phase 2;
- Move units from the orientation centres to the CBRs.

#### MONUC is:

- To oversee the control of weapons in the CR; and
- Secure the area in the immediate vicinity of the *brassage* process.

#### Structure for Military Integration is:

- To make available six CBRs;
- Responsible for the CBRs at Kitona, Kamina and Kisangani; and
- Responsible for the CBRs at Mushaki, Nyaleke and Luberizi.

#### CONADER is:

- To prepare Orientation Centres (COs) at Muanda, Boyeka, Kabare, Madula, Mangongo, Luvungi and Mubambiro;
- Reinforce the capacity of the CO at Luvungi by 500 persons;
- Reinforce the capacity of the CO at Mangango by 700 persons; and
- Deploy units of the FARDC in the areas of Bukavu, Kibwa, Walikale and Isiro.

The international community is involved in the process largely through logistical

support and training to the different CBRs as agreed between the DRC government and individual countries. Moreover, the establishment of the Contact Group and the deployment of the European Union military cell (and in particular the inclusion of its officers within the FARDC command structures) have increased the pace of developments. The FARDC is now involved on all levels of coordination to ensure that the strategic plan is implemented, and all institutions involved seem to be working in close coordination, in approach best described as one based on complementarity. In fact, there is a marked improvement on cooperation and coordination between the different role players.

Developments in the East of the DRC are a good example of cooperation between all structures involved: Belgium and South Africa directly supporting the FARDC; SMI and CONADER providing training and logistical support at Kamina; and the Dutch government (through South Africa) and in coordination with FARDC, SMI and CONADER planning the training of more brigades in Mushaki and Nyaleki.

### *Military census*

A census of FARDC soldiers is an essential starting point for integration. This is particularly important to curb the numbers of 'ghost' soldiers that continue to drain military resources. South Africa in cooperation with the SMI has provided a team of 35 officers and support staff to carry out such a census. The census team will issue soldiers with identification cards to ensure that numbers are not duplicated at any further stage of the process - green coloured cards are to be distributed to soldiers capable of continuing military service, while those who are disabled or otherwise incapacitated will receive red cards. In addition, the census information is captured on a detailed database that will be maintained by trained personnel of the FARDC.<sup>8</sup>

The team has completed an inventory of six provinces as well as of the capital city, Kinshasa. According to their findings, between 30 and 40 percent of the soldiers named as members of the FARDC do not exist. Not surprisingly, there are suggestions that the Congolese government is unhappy with the South African administered census because it draws attention to the high levels of corruption in the Congolese military.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the census team has run into logistical and technical difficulties in North and South Kivu, Katanga and Oriental Province.

Meanwhile a separate census carried out under the instructions of President Kabila has been met with some scepticism. According to the EU's Special Representative to the Great Lakes, Ambassador Aldo Ajello, the government-led survey was broadened to include disabled soldiers, family members and widows of dead soldiers. At the most recent Contact Group meeting in early August the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary General) of MONUC, Ambassador William Swing, once more emphasised the importance of completing the military census noting that the rest of the SSR programme is dependent on accurate information.

### *Current status of the brassage process*

The current *brassage* process consists of a combination of the two-track integration and demobilisation process (also called "*tronc commun*") and an 'emergency plan' as put forward by South African mediators.<sup>10</sup>

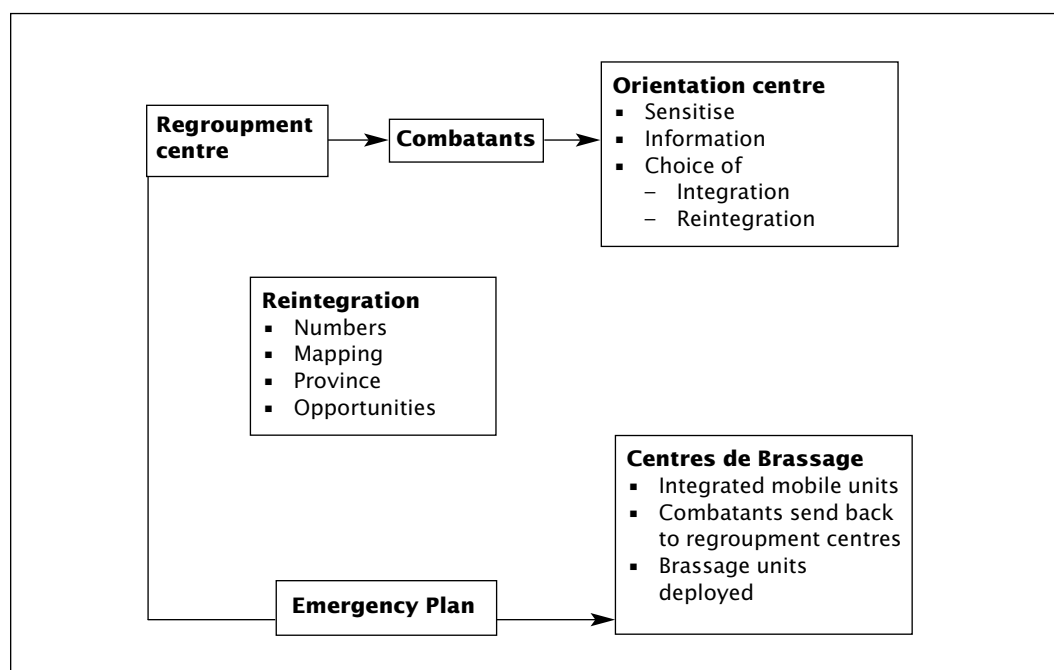
According to the emergency plan all armed forces would regroup under the instruction of the Chief of General Staff. Activities in the regrouping centres would include identification of forces leading to the separation of eligible and ineligible elements, and an initial selection and orientation of these troops. Combatants would then be moved to CBRs according to a plan drawn up by the SMI where intermixing and retraining would take place - see table below on regrouping, orientation and *brassage* centres.<sup>11</sup> This is to be followed by the final selection and deployment of the new units.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2: Regroupment, orientation and *brassage* centres**

Military region	Regroupment centres	Orientation centres	Brassage centres
2	Boma Kitona	Muanda	Kitona
3	Mbandaka	Boyeka	Kamina
6	Kamina Kabongo Nort Katanga Kalemie	Kamina Lubumbashi Kalemie	Kamina
7	Kindu Opienge Lubutu	–	–
8	Goma Beni/Butembu Kibwa/Walikali	Mubambiro	–
9	Kisangani Isiro Nyaleke Bunia Minembwe Mambasa	Kisangani Mangango Isiro	Kisangani Nyaleke
10	Bukavu Uvira	Luvungi Kabare	Luberizi
Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa

Following this the FARDC, in coordination with the various role-players will identify six CBRs to be used for the intermixing of 12 brigades before the elections in March 2006. The following CBRs have been identified: Kitona, Kamina, Kisangani, Mushaki, Nyaleke and Luberizi. (The current *brassage* process is illustrated in Diagram 2<sup>13</sup>)

**Diagram 2: The *brassage* process.**



Due to capacity constraints, the SMI and CONADER (The National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration) were unable to set up orientation centres for the identification of combatants for the DDR process. Consequently, the FARDC, supported by various donor countries took the responsibility of regrouping the combatants and transporting them directly to the

CBRs, and in doing so the combatants bypassed the orientation centre phase. To ensure that this 'short cut' did not compromise the activities performed in the CBRs, mobile teams were set up to carry out the functions that were to have taken place in the orientation centres.

The *brassage* process began with the training of the first integrated brigade with assistance from the Belgian government in February 2004 in Kisangani. After undergoing the full training process the brigade was given the necessary equipment and deployed to the Ituri region. It has since been deployed on an operational basis and receives ongoing support training from MONUC.

During 2005 Angola, Belgium and South Africa supported the training of additional FARDC brigades at Kamina. The FARDC was responsible for training at Mushaki and Nyaleke (North Kivu), Luberizi (South Kivu) - see map below on the location of the *brassage* Centres. The situation at the CBRs in Mishaki and Luberizi has improved since the SSR Joint Commission's visit to eastern DRC in April this year. Soldiers are now receiving salaries, food and accommodation - issues that were highlighted as problematic during the Commission's visit. Indeed, the living conditions in the *brassage* centres were so appalling that between March and August 2005 it is estimated that 2,500 of the 6,000 integrated troops deserted.<sup>14</sup> The situation at Nyaleke and Luberizi centres remains problematic and the EU is to finalise its involvement in upgrading facilities for the latter in the near future.

The Belgian government will continue to help upgrade the facilities at Kamina while the Dutch government has made €5 million available to South Africa to upgrade facilities at the Nyaleke and Mushaki CBRs. After a visit in July 2005 by the South African implementation team it was decided that the Mushaki centre will be replaced by a new CBR at Rumangabo near the Rwandan border.

### Map 1: Location of *Brassage* Centres



It should be noted that the level of tension between CONADER and the CGFDDR regarding the disbursement of funds for the DDR process has contributed to the difficulty of implementing the NPDDR. To address the problem, the World Bank and the MDRP convened a three-day seminar between 14 and 16 February 2005. The meeting concluded with the establishment of a CCOC (Coordinated Joint Operations Centre) with the aim of directing the NPDDR, ensuring coordination and information sharing and analysis among the various parties. One of the main

problems has been the refusal or inability of the CGFDDR to proceed with the procurement of the necessary equipment for the orientation centres. The CGFDR was finally dismantled by presidential decree in June 2005.<sup>15</sup>

During the August Contact Group meeting a representative of the World Bank assured the attendants that the problems of coordination and availability of funds has been resolved. He also emphasised that the first six orientation areas are ready and open for the next *brassage* process due to start in August 2005.

#### *Transportation*

Transportation of combatants from the grouping areas to the orientation centres or CBRs is another key logistical challenge. As mentioned previously the trained brigades were transported from the grouping areas directly to the CBRs by the FARDC, but the transportation of outstanding brigades from the CBRs to deployment areas remains a challenge. Perhaps more importantly, aside from the first and third brigades, none of the other troops are equipped with relevant arms. The DRC's Minister of Defence has made it clear that brigades that are not equipped will not be deployed.

During the aforementioned August meeting in Cape Town the World Bank reported that it would provide transport for soldiers from the grouping areas to the orientation centres. Since combatants are not allowed to carry weapons when transported by the World Bank, weapons are stored at the initial grouping areas and then transported by the FARDC to the *brassage* centres. The World Bank is currently undertaking an assessment of requirements for air operations, as it is believed that this will help alleviate the transport problem. Furthermore, the six CBRs yet to be built will be constructed in short distance to the orientation centres making it easier to continue the *brassage* process smoothly. Transportation from the CBRs to the deployment areas is also not expected to be problematic since most of the CBRs are located in the east in close proximity to the final deployment locations. Transportation for troops trained at Kitona, Kisangani and Kamina will nevertheless continue to be a problem.

#### *Payment of Salaries*

The delay and frequent failure to pay military salaries is a major problem that has resulted in soldiers engaging in banditry and violence against the civilian population. At the August Contact Group meeting, it was proposed that the current US \$10 per month per soldier be increased to an amount that would constitute a 'living wage'. The IMF opposes increasing military salaries because of the budgetary implications - the argument being that until such time that the issue of 'ghost soldiers' is resolved (up to 40% of soldiers have been found to be 'ghost soldiers') the proposed increase is not possible.

However, the dramatic decrease in the number of soldiers revealed through the census should free up enough resources to double salaries within the existing FARDC budget. The EU has since announced that it will send three technical experts, under the auspices of EUSEC, to review the salary situation and make relevant suggestions. Ambassador Swing has indicated that the UN would be willing to explore the possibility of assisting in the payment of salaries, although he noted that UN aircraft are prohibited from carrying payment in the form cash. The Ambassador requested that the UN Security Council waive this prohibition in July and a response is still awaited on this question<sup>16</sup>

#### *Equipment*

The importance of equipping the integrated brigades appropriately is self-evident. Should the new brigades not be equipped it could undermine the entire SSR process and with it any prospect for durable peace. According to a recent



MONUC survey it is estimated that the operational cost of a brigade is some US \$220,000 per month excluding the cost of vehicles, weapons and communications. Belgium is so far the only country to have assisted with equipping the new brigades. The remaining seven brigades are yet to receive international donor assistance and there are no signals that this will be forthcoming in the near future.

### *Training*

Training is currently focused on the combatants in the CBRs. Combatants spend 45 days in the CBRs during which time “mixing” takes place (a process which includes various team-building exercises and some basic military training). It is expected that substantive training will take place when the newly integrated brigades are deployed from the CBRs to the operational areas. International training support to the FARDC in the CBRs is as follows:

- Belgium - Kisangani
- Angola - Kitona
- Belgium and South Africa - Kamina
- DRC, Netherlands and South Africa - Nyaleke
- DRC, the Netherlands and South Africa - Mushake (Rumangabo)
- DRC and the EU - Luberizi

Since the onset of the DDR process, Belgium has supported the FARDC in specific training areas. The Belgian Defence Force, supported by other international role-players, trained the first integrated brigade in Kisangani and also assisted with ‘train the trainers programme’. These refer to 700 Congolese military personnel who will be expected to train the newly formed FARDC members after completing training by the Belgian Defence Force. A programme to train officers from platoon to brigade level is expected to begin in the coming weeks.

### Conclusion

The successful implementation of the *brassage* process should be the most urgent priority of the TGoDRC, MONUC and the international community. Failing to do so will severely threaten the relative stability of the transitional process, and more particularly the planned elections. Without an advanced reform of the security sector, it will be extremely difficult to conduct the different polls in a secure environment. The author contends that such reform should not be done with the aim of simply guaranteeing that the military will secure the up-coming elections - rather, the aim must be that of restructuring the FARDC so that it is a relevant, well staffed and well equipped defence force for the DRC.

The FARDC’s Strategic Plan is a nationally initiated framework, which if fully implemented could significantly alleviate the problems of coordination that have plagued the process. Since the SSR’s Joint Commission visit to the eastern part of the DRC, considerable progress has been made on the FARDC’s integration process. The new impetus by MONUC and the Contact Group has resulted in a more serious effort by the FARDC, CONADER and SMI to move the military integration process forward. Furthermore, the establishment of EUSEC has given momentum to initiatives to complete the *brassage* process. In the short term it is important to involve all the role-players concerned with the DDR and army integration process. This strategic plan is particularly important for it represents the first real effort by the FARDC to put forward ways of implementing the emergency plan - and in so doing, helping MONUC, the Contact Group and the donor community to adequately support the DDR process, and in particular the *brassage* process. In fact, it is the first time that all role players involved have figures on combatants, locations for regroupment centres, orientation centres and *brassage* centres. The plan also indicates the method of transport, equipment needed by the soldiers and equipment needed in the CBRs.

As was previously discussed, the greatest threat to the implementation of the

strategic plan is the lack of funds. Except for the support being given by Angola, Belgium, France, Netherlands, South Africa and the European Union, no other support is forthcoming, in particular as regards transport and equipment. In fact, the implementation of the process may be compromised because the first brigades to be selected and integrated may not be able to deploy due to a lack of equipment (combatants have already left the CBR's because of a lack of food, shelter and salaries).

In the last week, this situation has worsened by a threat by General Nkunda that he wants to re-invade the eastern part of the DRC, in what he says is an effort to bring "peace" to the area. This resulted in further desertion of combatants from the mixed brigade stationed in North Kivu and on 31 August, 1,000 combatants from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mixed Battallion near Burungu went missing. There are allegations that they have joined General Nkunda's forces near Masisi. Once again, the centrality of the DDR process is emphasised - as a prerequisite for stability, and a fundamental part of the extension of state administration throughout the country.

It is expected that 12 more brigades will be integrated before the national elections start in March 2006. By this time, problems with the transportation of troops, regular payment of salaries and training must be resolved. If CONADER is given the necessary funds it requires it will have the capability to put in place the structures and infrastructure needed for implementing the NPDDR. Having gone through the arduous process of outlining various plans it is now time for all the role-players to implement them as a matter of urgency.

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  - 2 Kisangani (supported by Belgium), Kitona (Angola), Kamina (Belgium and South Africa) Nyaleke (DRC, Netherlands and South Africa), Mushake (DRC, Netherlands and South Africa) and Luberizi (DRC, EU).
  - 3 *Plan Stratégique National Pour L'Intégration des Forces Armées*, Kinshasa, July 2005
  - 4 See in this regard H Boshoff, *Summary overview of Security Sector Reform Process in the DRC*, Situation Report, Africa Security Analysis Programme, Institute for Security Studies, 6 January 2005, <[www.iss.org.za](http://www.iss.org.za)>.
  - 5 Briefing by Ambassador William Swing, op cit.
  - 6 R Onana, From planning to situational activities: MONUC'S involvement in the integration of the Army and DDR in DRC, unpublished paper, 2005.
  - 7 Interview with Belgian Military officer, op cit.
  - 8 Interview with US Diplomat, Pretoria, 3 August 2005.
  - 9 Interview with US diplomat, Pretoria, 7 August 2005.
  - 10 See in this regard H Boshoff, *Summary overview of Security Sector Reform Processes in the DRC*, Situation Report, Africa Security Analysis Programme, Institute for Security Studies, 6 January 2005.
  - 11 *Plan Stratégique National Pour L'Intégration des Forces Armées*, Kinshasa, July 2005.
  - 12 H Boshoff, op cit.
  - 13 Interview with Belgian Military officer, Kinshasa, 11 July 2005.
  - 14 Discussion with Dutch military delegation to South Africa, ISS Pretoria, 2 August 2005.
  - 15 R Onana, op cit.
  - 16 Briefing by Ambassador William Swing, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) on 1 August 2005 in Cape Town to the Contact Group.