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RECENT INITIATIVES IN ADDRESSING GENDER VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CRISIS IN ZAIRE

Hussein Solomon

Senior Researcher, Regional Security, Institute for Security Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Zaire is, arguably, the quintessential reflection of the current malaise affecting Africa. In Mobutu's vast empire, many of the symptoms are reflected – from corruption, nepotism and kleptocracy, to ethnic conflict and an absence of democracy; from economic stagnation and environmental degradation, to foreign intervention. It is thus important to understand the unfolding crisis in the Zairian state: as a microcosm reflecting the larger continent's problems, understanding Zaire means understanding Africa.

There is also a more pressing reason to analyse the situation in Zaire. Zaire is potentially sub-Saharan Africa's superstate, covering a total area of 2 345 410 square kilometres. It shares its land boundaries of 10 271 kilometres with eight states: Angola (2 511 km); Burundi (233 km); the Central African Republic (1 577 km); the Congo (2 410 km); Rwanda (217 km); Sudan (628 km); Uganda (765 km); and Zambia (1 930 km).¹ The spillover effects of the conflict in Zaire could potentially affect the entire region. Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are already home to thousands of Zairian refugees fleeing from this war-torn land.² The trickle could turn into a flood of humanity if the situation worsens in Zaire. This, in turn, has adverse implications for regional stability.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first seeks to explore briefly the roots of the present conflict in Zaire. Next, an assessment is made of the possible future trajectory of the conflict. The third, and main thrust of the paper, aims to reflect on some of the lessons learned from the Zairian crisis.

THE GENESIS OF THE CONFLICT³

The roots of the current crisis in Zaire dates back to 1981 when Kinshasa promulgated a new nationality law that deprived the Banyamulenge of their citizenship. This group consists mainly of ethnic Tutsis who have resided in the Kivu region for generations.⁴ This was followed by a policy that sought to dislodge the Banyamulenge from the land they occupied legitimately.

In Zaire – with a population in excess of 45 million, a population growth rate of 3,18 per cent and with only three per cent of Zaire's total land area being arable⁵ – land hunger and the tensions surrounding it, are never far below the surface of its turbulent politics. Therefore, it came as no surprise when local tribes decided to exploit Kinshasa's new policy towards the Banyamulenge by aggressively pursuing land claims against the Tutsis. The inevitable result was a civil war that soon engulfed the whole of Kivu province. By 1993, there were tribal clashes between the local Hunde, Tembo, Nyanga and Nande tribes, and the Banyamulenge.⁶

Meanwhile, in neighbouring Rwanda tensions were also coming to a head, with events that were going to have far-reaching consequences for the Zairian state. On 6 April 1994, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana's aeroplane was shot down. Tutsi involvement was suspected and was the pretext used by the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and their Hutu extremist allies – the Interahamwe militia – to kill an estimated 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.⁷ This slaughter came to an abrupt end in July 1994, when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) defeated Hutu government forces. Fearing retribution for the genocide, two million Hutus fled Rwanda, with 1,2 million settling in refugee camps in neighbouring Zaire. These camps soon came under the control of the Interahamwe militia who used them as bases from which to launch assaults against the Tutsi-led Kigali government. This prompted Rwandan Vice President and Defence Minister, Paul Kagame to warn Zaire that if the attacks continued, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) would retaliate and exercise its right of pursuit.⁸

Meanwhile, the pogrom against Tutsis escalated in intensity. In May 1995, new legislation was passed forbidding Banyamulenge from acquiring homes or land in their adopted country. This was followed in December 1995, by an announcement of the Zairian Army Chief of Staff, General Eluki Monga Aundu, that the local Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo people has the right to "*expel the foreigners*" from the land. This served to escalate the tribal conflict on the vexing issue of land further. However, it was not only local tribesmen whom the Banyamulenge had to face, but also the Interahamwe, the FAR, and the Zairian army. These forces combined to intensify the genocidal campaign against the Tutsis. Thus in May 1996, one hundred Tutsis seeking sanctuary in Mokoto church were slaughtered. In June 1996, five Tutsis were arrested and jailed in Luberizi army camp. In July, Tutsi children were prevented from taking their exams, and in September, 35 Banyamulenge were murdered by Zairian troops.⁹ In fact, between September and October 1996, an estimated 2 000 Banyamulenge were massacred by Interahamwe militia, FAR and Zairian troops.¹⁰

But, the real catalyst for the Banyamulenge revolt occurred on 7 October 1996 when the Deputy Governor of Zaire's South Kivu Province claimed that the 300 000 strong Banyamulenge community were destabilising the region and had to leave Zaire within a week or "*be hunted down as rebels*."¹¹ This was the final straw and the Banyamulenge decided to fight back. On 10 October they began their war with an attack on Lamera hospital in Bukavu.

Around this time the Banyamulenge became an integral part of and fought alongside Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). From 21 October 1996, the Banyamulenge and the AFDL began to make lightning fast advances into the heart of Zaire. Thus by December, the rebels were in possession of Uvira, Bukavu, Goma, Bunia, Walikale, Butembo and Lubero. The AFDL's capture of Kindu,¹² placed them 320 kilometres west of where the rebellion started, but still about 2 000 kilometres short of their ultimate objective – Kinshasa.

THE MURKY FUTURE

What does the future of the conflict hold for Kinshasa and the AFDL? Will the rebels be successful in achieving their aim of ousting Mobutu and his cohorts, or will the Marshall survive as he had in 1978 and 1993?

Mobutu has responded to the crisis on the military, political and diplomatic levels. On the military level, Mobutu suspended the Zairian Army Chief of Staff, General Eluki Monga Aundu, on 20 November 1996. He was replaced by Lieutenant-General Mahele Bokungo Lieko who has a history of successfully crushing armed rebellions.¹³ The army was also considerably strengthened by the transfer of the Presidential Division and the Civil Guard under Mahele's direct command. The significance of this move lies in the fact that both these units have been provided with superior quantities and qualities of arms.¹⁴

However, there are several reasons to doubt the effectiveness of these initiatives. If anything, the last three months has unequivocally revealed that Mobutu's Achilles heel is his armed forces. Dr Adebayo Williams has put it succinctly when he notes that, "*[a]rmies founded on internal pacification are always better at bullying and terrorising the local populace than fighting a well-disciplined force. The Zairian army rapidly disintegrated, exposing Mobutu's*

soft underbelly."¹⁵ At both Goma and Kindu, when confronted with people willing to fight back, Zairian forces turned on their heels and ran, looting and raping their own citizens as they fled.¹⁶ This could prove disastrous for Kinshasa: because of the army's actions, Zairian citizens could be alienated, driving them into the rebel camp. In Goma, for instance, residents fear the rebel occupiers less than Mobutu's army which was supposed to defend the city. One young Zairian resident puts it this way: "*The rebels are not as bad as the Zairian soldiers. Zairian soldiers were terrible. The Zairians took everything: radio's, televisions, everything. The Rwandans just steal money from us.*"¹⁷

If Laurent Kabila could exploit the pervasive negative feeling towards the Zairian army, his eastern Zairian insurrection could gather popular support and turn into a national insurrection against the despotic Marshall. For ordinary Zairians, the rebellion is something extra-national or extra-territorial. The rebels are seen as Rwandans or Rwandan-backed. From the perspective of Mobutu, playing the national card could prove effective in localising the uprising and turning ordinary Zairians against the rebels. The poignancy of the national card was recently revealed when Zairian students in Kinshasa were baying for the blood of the part-Tutsi Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo.¹⁸

But, Kinshasa faces other problems of a military nature. Two thousand kilometres of tropical jungle and a chain of volcanic mountains separate the capital from the battle front. With the major airports in rebel hands, there is only a tenuous connection of roads which, in the current rainy season, are more like rivers. Thus, it is doubtful whether Kinshasa can display the same mobility in transporting its troops to the battle front in the rainy season, that the rebels had displayed earlier. Moreover, it would be impossible to transport the troops by plane, even if the airports were not in rebel hands, as Zaire has no functional airlift capacity.¹⁹ But this is not all. Even if Mobutu did have the necessary aircraft and the airports were not in rebel hands, there is evidence to suggest that Kinshasa would not have the available soldiers to transport to the battlefield. William Wallis²⁰ explains the problem: "*Officially, there are 100 000 regular troops in the Zairian army and gendarmerie, but these figures are as much as double the reality. For years, dead or deserted soldiers have remained on the payroll, their tiny salaries slowly filling the pockets of their superiors. Now that Zaire really needs troops to defend its interests, there is only the ghost of an army to send to the front.*" The seriousness of the problem was recognised by General Eluki who, just before his suspension, employed Ingilima warriors from North Kivu, armed with spears and naked apart from a sprig of leaves covering their genitals, to fight alongside the regular army.²¹

Despite these problems, there is a good chance that Kinshasa could still win the war. Recent press reports indicate that General Mahele has been concentrating his troops in the Kisangani area for some time in preparation of the much awaited counteroffensive. In addition, Zaire has recently acquired three Russian MI-24 Hind gunships. These have been used to harass the AFDL's supply lines. Moreover, recent press reports have indicated the presence of up to 300 foreign mercenaries in Kisangani with General Mahele.²² However, these advantages enjoyed by Kinshasa, have to be weighed against the fact that Rwanda is unlikely to want to see the buffer zone that has been carved out by the AFDL and the RPA, invaded and occupied by a hostile Zairian army. Hence, a well co-ordinated counteroffensive against the AFDL by Mahele might well see the return of the RPA to Zairian soil.

But, Mobutu's strategy also relies on a political offensive against the AFDL. For instance, Mobutu pledged that Zaire would recognise the inalienable right to citizenship and nationality of all the people within its borders, including Tutsis, in December 1996.²³ This was obviously a tactic on Mobutu's part to separate the Banyamulenge, and hopefully their Rwandan backers, from the AFDL alliance. The success of Mobutu's move is not clear, however, but there are rumours of squabbling within the AFDL.²⁴

Recognising the importance of the business community, Kinshasa has gone to great lengths to woo this section of the community. Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo, for instance, declared that ample gratitude would be displayed to those businesses that remained in the country during these difficult times. The Government even hinted that it would favour these die-hard businessmen when it embarks on the privatisation of public assets in key sectors.²⁵ There is some evidence suggesting that the Kinshasa regime has been partially successful in making

these overtures.

Mobutu's diplomatic strategy was informed by his perception of the nature of the security threat. This perception, however, was fundamentally flawed and it could be argued that Kinshasa's diplomatic success was therefore inappropriate to the crisis at hand. From the outset, the Zairian state refused to recognise the indigenous nature of the rebellion, preferring to see it as a Rwandan-inspired uprising to annex Kivu province.²⁶ As such, the state focused its diplomatic activity on acquiring international support for the territorial integrity of Zaire. Kinshasa was certainly successful in this, as there was agreement on the territorial integrity of the Zairian state at the Nineteenth African Summit. However, Mobutu was missing the point. There was no support among the rebels for eastern Zaire to be annexed to Rwanda or secession along the lines of another Biafra or Katanga. What Mobutu was dealing with was a national liberation movement with national aims and objectives. Laurent Kabila, the leader of the AFDL expressed his organisation's aims and objectives as follows: *"The war in which our troops are engaged has as its aim the removal from power of a government which has led its people to unprecedented poverty, a government whose army has lost its head and is no more than a soldiering farce inflicting suffering on the people and pursuing individual ends. We have been forced by the obstinacy of Mobutu to have recourse to the same means that he uses to keep himself in power, which is nothing other than force. We need, for the next twelve months, a transitional government that will organise free elections to give the country democratic institutions from which all forms of power can draw their authority, with universal suffrage. Zaire has to return to becoming a legal state."*²⁷

There are further reasons to illustrate that the conflict is indeed the result of a national movement. Contrary to media speculation, the AFDL is not an entirely Tutsi organisation. In fact, it consists of four main groups. These are

- the Democratic People Alliance (DPA) consisting of Banyamulenge fighting for their right to Zairian citizenship;
- the Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire, whose leader, Mr Masasu Nindanga, is a member of the Bashi ethnic group based in southern Kivu;
- the National Resistance Council for Democracy, led by Mr Andre Kisase Ngandu, a Kasaian and the military commander of all AFDL forces; and
- the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), under the leadership of Mr Laurent-Desire Kabila, a Luba from northern Katanga; all AFDL members fall under his political leadership.²⁸

While this is a national uprising, it does have certain regional overtones. This is not surprising, given the interconnectedness of the central African region. For years, Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania have been caught up in a vortex of ever spiralling conflict. In early November, it resulted in the Rwandan army's 211th Brigade, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Nzaramba of the RPA 7th Battalion, attacking Kibumba refugee camp near Goma.²⁹ In the same vein, Uganda shelled the area around Kasindi in Zaire. These regional overtones, however, should not detract from the fact that the conflict is intra-state, as opposed to inter-state. In the case of Rwanda, the attack on Kibumba refugee camp was in line with Kigali's strategy to rid the camps of the control of the Interahamwe and FAR troops, who posed a security threat to Rwanda as attacks into Rwanda was launched from these camps.³⁰ From the perspective of Kampala, similar concerns led to the artillery barrage on Kasindi. For years, Kinshasa provided sanctuary to Ugandan rebels who proved to be an increasing menace to the Yoweri Museveni regime. The attack on Kasindi was deliberately aimed at destroying the Ugandan rebel bases.³¹ Thus, any support the AFDL is receiving from regional states is more due to Mobutu's counter-productive foreign policy of destabilising his neighbours than any regional designs to annex Zairian territory, as Mobutu claims.

But, Kinshasa has made other diplomatic blunders. Confident of French support, which has bailed him out of difficult situations before, Mobutu has snubbed African initiatives to resolve the impasse. This was graphically illustrated when Zaire refused to attend the Nairobi Summit convened by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi in December 1996 to mediate in the stand-off between Kinshasa and the AFDL.³² This was a terrible miscalculation on the part of Mobutu: he alienated regional states while at the same time placing his faith in French power, which – as will be explained below – is on the wane in Africa.

If Mobutu was shooting himself in the foot in the diplomatic terrain, Laurent Kabila certainly was not. He realised that his movement was dependent on financial support and arms from neighbouring countries. Thus recognising the importance of holding the moral high ground, Kabila declared a unilateral cease-fire the day before the 5 November Nairobi Summit occurred with eight African leaders attending.³³

At a political-military level, Kabila has also launched new initiatives. The AFDL has launched a massive recruitment campaign. The success of this was testified to by journalists in the area who witnessed truck loads of new recruits flocking to the area under the banner of the AFDL.³⁴ But, the success of the recruitment drive will also depend on the extent to which the AFDL can break Zaire's "passivity syndrome." According to Professor Herbert Weiss, "*[t]here has been astonishingly little violent political protest in Zaire in the last 30 years. This 'passivity syndrome' was the reaction to the bloodletting which occurred in the mid-1960s. Of course, authoritarian rule, playing ethnic group against ethnic group, bullying security forces and the impression that the West would always bail out the Mobutu regime, also helped produce this result.*"³⁵ There are signs suggesting that the passivity syndrome is being broken, helped in large measure by the spectacle of troops running away from an advancing enemy and thus minimising the fear they used to inspire. Kofi Annan, the new UN Secretary-General notes that, "*there are indications that there may be insurrections in other parts of Zaire.*"³⁶ Should such insurrections occur, it is important that they are co-ordinated and that they share in the AFDL's objectives. If this does not occur, it runs the danger of leading to further state fragmentation.

War is an expensive occupation: one needs to purchase weapons, pay one's troops, feed and clothe them, and purchase fuel and a plethora of other things. In this, the rebels have been fortunate to capture a number of mines. According to one analyst, the rebels are in possession of between 150 and 250 tonnes of gold metal reserves.³⁷ The rebels, however, will need Western expertise and equipment if they are to make any money from the mines. But, many of the foreign mineworkers and owners have fled from their mines in the wake of the fighting. In order to entice them back, the AFDL has embarked on a 'carrot and stick' strategy. The carrot is that rebels would leave mining concessions untouched in the areas they control, provided mining companies paid taxes to the rebel administration.³⁸ The stick is that those foreign mining companies that do not resume operations within rebel-held territory, risk losing their leases.³⁹ It is too early to gauge the success or failure of the strategy. However, should it succeed, it will give the AFDL's war effort a massive boost.

Reflections on the crisis in Zaire bring to the fore several vexing questions facing the international community.

REFUGEES

The issues of 'armed refugees' and 'fortified refugee camps' constitute daunting challenges to international refugee agencies and humanitarian assistance. Since 1994, international agencies fed, clothed and provided medical assistance to the Interahamwe militia, as well as to *bona fide* refugees. The militia, however, was responsible for the genocide of almost 800 000 people, in addition to launching attacks on neighbouring Rwanda and conducting a reign of terror against its own people within the camp. Clearly, this is an untenable state of affairs.

What is needed is a firm policy to separate bona fide refugees from combatants inside refugee camps. At the very least, such combatants need to be disarmed. Failure to do so, results in refugees and their camps to be targeted for attack. Rwanda's attack on refugee camps was not the only such instance. During the eighties, South Africa, for example, regularly attacked camps in Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Lesotho; Vietnamese forces repeatedly shelled Cambodian refugees encamped along the Thai border. Claiming that refugee camps were harbouring guerrillas and subversive elements, the Guatemalan army crossed the border into Mexico in the early 1980s and ruthlessly attacked settlements in Chiapas. More recently, Ethiopia has regularly carried out raids against refugees inside Sudan.⁴⁰

Several additional examples can be cited, but the underlying point is that where refugee warrior communities exist in fortified refugee camps, using such camps as launching pads to

attack neighbouring states, the refugees themselves become military targets. In the process, the sovereignty of the host state is compromised and the international refugee regime is undermined.

ISSUES IN PEACEKEEPING

The crisis in Zaire also highlighted various problem areas in international peacekeeping.

This was revealed in the ambiguous nature of the Western response. Talks of a proposed Canadian-led force became bogged down in discussions between the United States (US) and Canada on a variety of details, including the size of the force, its mandate, and the duration of its stay in the operations area.⁴¹ No such force eventually materialised, as it was scuttled following the US's insistence that there should first be a cease-fire before they commit their troops,⁴² thus underlining the fact that the US was still suffering from the 'Somali Syndrome'.

But, it also highlighted the crisis inherent within African peace initiatives – at both the regional level seen in the Nairobi Summit, and at the level of the Organisation of African Unity – which was generally too slow and inadequate to deal with the situation. Within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), for instance, the Zairian crisis revealed deep organisational problems. As the situation in eastern Zaire deteriorated, South Africa, as Chair of SADC, called a meeting of all member states to discuss the situation. Zimbabwe reacted negatively. As Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, Harare felt that it should be its prerogative to convene a meeting. As a result, no SADC meeting was convened – and hence, there is no SADC position on the unfolding tragedy in Zaire – even though two SADC member states, Tanzania and Zambia, are severely affected by the crisis. Clearly, this dichotomy in SADC leadership has to be resolved.

At the national level, it also revealed that South Africa does not see itself as some kind of 'middle power', clad in the mantle of 'regional leader', 'moral champion' or 'hegemon'. Faced with a lack of consensus within SADC member states and receiving little direction from the Nairobi Summit, Pretoria chose not to engage in any unilateral action, with the exception of the South African Air Force (SAAF) transporting twenty tons of relief supplies to Rwanda, where thousands of refugees have returned from neighbouring states.⁴³ Instead, South Africa seemed quite content to be a member of a special committee (consisting of the Heads of State of Cameroon, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa) elected at the Nairobi Summit to assist in facilitating the dialogue between the warring parties.⁴⁴ Two possible reasons account for Pretoria's satisfaction with its 'backseat' role. Firstly, conscious of the pervasive fears among African states of its supposed 'big brother' role on the continent, South Africa is content to be a player as opposed to a leader, in the hope of allaying such fears. Secondly, there is the legacy of the 1995 Nigerian crisis. Soon after the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders, Pretoria called for an oil embargo against Lagos. Not only did this fail to materialise, but at both the level of SADC and the OAU, states distanced themselves from South Africa's call. This led to Pretoria being forced to beat a humiliating retreat from its much vaunted moral high ground. But, the Nigerian debacle was also instructive to South African foreign policy makers: it brought home the message that unilateral action, within the African context, was counterproductive.

At the continental level, it illustrated the fragmentation of the OAU as an organisation, when Francophone African states decided not to attend the Nairobi Summit. Instead, they reportedly convened their own summit to establish their own separate peace initiative.⁴⁵

The crisis in Zaire brought into sharp relief the traditional dilemma facing international peacekeeping efforts: the unresolved issue of national sovereignty *versus* the humanitarian imperative. This was underlined when Zaire insisted that it should approve the nations participating in the proposed peacekeeping force,⁴⁶ and when it later refused to grant the international force permission to overfly or enter its territory.⁴⁷ It is imperative that this dilemma is resolved speedily, unless the world intends to watch idly as human tragedy unfolds on television sets, while it seeks refuge in the concept of sovereignty. In the words of one commentator, perhaps this *impasse* can be resolved by the United Nations developing a set of criteria to determine what constitutes a sovereign state. States failing to pass this litmus test (Zaire, Liberia, Somalia) will waive their right to sovereignty.

But, the Zairian crisis has also served to reveal the counterproductive nature of some international peacekeeping operations. Consider the following: rebels only attacked the Hutu militia holed up in the Mugunga refugee camp after news erupted in Goma that the multinational force being set up, will not try to disarm Hutu fighters when they bring aid to the refugees displaced by the Tutsi rebellion. Some commentators believe that the rebels were trying to take on the Hutu fighters before the arrival of the proposed Canadian-led force.⁴⁸ In other words, at the heart of another international peacekeeping dilemma lies the question whether there can be long term peace, where there is no justice.

DECLINING FRENCH INFLUENCE IN AFRICA

The waning of Mobutu's power is mirrored in the decline of French neo-colonial adventurism in Africa.

As the crisis in Zaire unfolded, France pushed hard for foreign intervention, seeing itself as the leader of an international force. Zaire, after all, fell within the French sphere of influence. In this, Paris was rudely awakened. Recalling French intervention in Rwanda in 1994 that witnessed French troops protecting those guilty of genocide,⁴⁹ the US and its allies put pressure on Paris not to support Mobutu. In the face of US pressure, France capitulated. As a face-saving device, Jacques Chirac informed Zairian Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo that France would only help Kinshasa if it "*restructured its army*", an unrealistic goal which France knew only too well.

But, international pressure was not the only impediment to French intervention. People's attitudes in Francophone Africa had hardened towards French paternalistic benevolence towards its former colonies, seeing it as merely propping up undemocratic regimes. Hence, one of Kabila's demands was an end to French support of Mobutu – a demand echoed by mutineers in the neighbouring Central African Republic. Reflecting on these changed circumstances, the US Ambassador to Zaire, Daniel Simpson commented: "*France is no longer capable of imposing itself in Africa. Neo-colonialism is no longer tolerated. The French attitude no longer reflects the reality of the situation.*"⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Whichever way the conflict in Zaire may proceed, there are a few things that one can be sure of. Contrary to the pundits of doom, Zaire is not about to implode. As Richard Cornwell recently noted, Zaire is too weak to implode, as an implosion indicates a release of energy, violence and destruction. This view is supported by John Seiler who, in a recent article, observed that regional de facto governments have been the norm within Zaire for some time with little effective governance from Kinshasa.⁵¹ One author described the situation of Zaire's provinces as follows: "*Kivu lives from informal trade with East Africa; East Kasai refuses to accept the national currency [the New Zaire]; Shaba has become a virtual extension of South Africa.*"⁵²

Secondly, whoever may emerge as the victor of the current conflict, the knock-on effects of the crisis in the political arena are profound. It is unmistakable that since October 1996, Zairian politics have undergone a veritable sea-change. These have seen the strengthening of the pro-democracy forces within Etienne Tshisikedi's *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* (UDPS). Concomitant to this has been the rapid erosion of Mobutu's authority, seen so graphically in the army taking control over his personal Presidential Guards.

Thirdly, if the international community is serious about resolving the Zairian crisis, it should proceed on two assumptions. Lasting peace in Zaire and the region can only be attained in a post-Mobutu era. Mobutu is not only a disruptive influence within his own country – pitting one ethnic group against another and one region against another region – but is also a source of regional destabilisation. Consider here his support for armed groups in Rwanda, Uganda and Angola. Therefore, every effort must be made by the international community to marginalise Mobutu within the Zairian body politic and to isolate him internationally.

Furthermore, given the interconnectedness of the countries of the Great Lakes region; any

solution to the crisis in Zaire needs to be considered regionally. For instance, should the crisis in Zaire be resolved and a new stronger Zaire emerge under a democratic government, it could increase the propensity of interstate war in the region, given the historic animosity among the states in the region and the fact that there are several unsettled territorial claims. Thus, the crisis in Zaire will only be fully settled if the situation inside Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania can also be resolved. This is a tall diplomatic order. However, unless a holistic regional approach is followed, violent conflict will continue to plague the Great Lakes region.

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