

### III. Armed conflict and peace processes in Central Africa

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Four of the nine Central African states were involved in armed conflicts in 2021: Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Central Africa contains some of the world's severest and most protracted crises. Despite most of the region's countries being resource rich, these natural resources have often been a driver for competition and corruption (and hence weak governance), leading to high levels of poverty and food insecurity. The impact of climate change also drives life-threatening levels of vulnerability.<sup>1</sup> Conflict in the region's hotspots in 2021 persisted (in Cameroon and the DRC) or worsened (in CAR and Chad).

#### Cameroon

The two main but unrelated armed conflicts in Cameroon continued in 2021: the anglophone separatist insurgency in the Southwest and Northwest regions; and the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North region (part of the wider Lake Chad crisis). Both persisted in 2021, and although total estimated conflict-related fatalities in Cameroon fell by 21 per cent compared to 2020, only three of the last nine years had higher fatality levels (see table 7.6). The two conflicts have displaced nearly 1 million Cameroonians internally, while the country also hosts over 340 000 refugees fleeing insecurity in neighbouring CAR, and 120 000 Nigerians displaced by the Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) insurgencies.<sup>2</sup> The number of people requiring humanitarian support in Cameroon fell slightly from 4.4 million in 2020 to 4 million in 2021 (out of a total population of 27.2 million).<sup>3</sup>

#### *The conflict in the Lake Chad region*

Conflict over natural resources in the Lake Chad basin intensified in 2021, with the number of people displaced continuing to increase. In August intercommunal clashes between herders and fishermen/farmers in Logone-Birni over access to water displaced over 23 000 people, including almost 9000 who sought refuge in Chad. The Far North region also experienced drought in 2021 (after exceptional flooding in 2020), severely reducing crop

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022* (UN OCHA: Dec. 2021), pp. 182–85.

<sup>2</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Cameroon MCO', Fact Sheet, Jan. 2022.

<sup>3</sup> UN OCHA (note 1), p. 190.

**Table 7.6.** Estimated conflict-related fatalities in Cameroon, 2013–21

Event type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Battles	17	1 223	959	340	280	1 081	678	937	862
Explosions/remote violence	0	33	202	175	223	31	22	62	62
Protests, riots and strategic developments	1	0	0	11	48	7	2	41	36
Violence against civilians	14	110	278	195	190	544	601	724	435
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1 366</b>	<b>1 439</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>1 663</b>	<b>1 303</b>	<b>1 764</b>	<b>1 395</b>

Notes: For definitions of event types, see Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), ‘ACLED definitions of political violence and protest’, 11 Apr. 2019.

Source: ACLED, ‘Dashboard’, accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

yields and triggering acute food insecurity.<sup>4</sup> Further violent clashes occurred between Arab Shoa cattle herders and Massa farmers and Mousgoum fishermen in December.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Boko Haram and ISWAP continued to carry out attacks and commit serious human rights abuses, mostly targeting farmers and fishermen in remote areas. One study recorded 37 attacks by Boko Haram in Cameroon in 2021, resulting in 58 deaths.<sup>6</sup>

### *The conflict in anglophone Cameroon*

The origins of the anglophone crisis lie in colonial-era divisions of territory between Britain and France. Today, 5 million people in the Northwest and Southwest regions—about one-fifth of the country’s population—speak mainly English and have their own legal and educational systems. The anglophone demand for an autonomous republic called Ambazonia, which dates back to at least 1985, turned violent in October 2017.<sup>7</sup> Protests by anglophone teachers and lawyers against the use of French in anglophone schools and courts were harshly repressed, leading to an armed insurgency by separatist militias.

In 2021 education and health facilities continued to be targeted by armed separatist groups. In September, for example, two out of every three schools in Cameroon’s anglophone regions were closed, leaving more than 700 000 students without education.<sup>8</sup> At least 29 attacks on health care facilities were

<sup>4</sup> Bourgois, X., ‘Dwindling rains in northern Cameroon spark conflict and displacement’, UNHCR, 10 Nov. 2021; and Hoinathy, R. and Delanga, C., ‘Cameroon’s community violence adds to Lake Chad Basin security woes’, ISS Today, 4 Oct. 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Kouagheu, J. and Ramadane, M., ‘North Cameroon violence between farmers, herders kills 22; residents flee’, Reuters, 9 Dec. 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), *Global Terrorism Index 2022: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (IEP: Sydney, Mar. 2022), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> International Crisis Group, *Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads*, Africa Report no. 250 (International Crisis Group: Brussels, 2 Aug. 2017). On developments in 2018 see *SIPRI Yearbook 2019*, pp. 124–25.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, ‘Violence in Cameroon, impacting over 700,000 children shut out of school’, UN News, 2 Dec. 2021; and Human Rights Watch, ‘“They are destroying our future”: Armed separatist attacks on students, teachers, and schools in Cameroon’s Anglophone region’, 16 Dec. 2021.

reported between January and June, while the use of improvised explosive devices by separatists also increased.<sup>9</sup>

Attempts at finding a solution to the conflict have been limited and ineffectual. After a national dialogue in October 2019 (that excluded all separatists), the government announced in January 2020 a new ‘special status’ for the two anglophone regions.<sup>10</sup> However, questions remained over the government’s commitment to engage in dialogue and grant political concessions to separatist groups. Swiss mediation efforts also failed to break the deadlock.<sup>11</sup> In February 2021 the Vatican’s secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, visited Cameroon and announced the readiness of the Catholic Church to facilitate a dialogue between the government and separatist groups.<sup>12</sup> Cameroon’s prime minister, Joseph Dion Ngute, visited the anglophone regions in October to call for peace, but added that those who refused to disarm would be killed.<sup>13</sup>

### The Central African Republic

Since 2013, despite the presence of multinational peace operations—currently the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)—almost the entire territory of CAR has been affected by conflict and violence provoked by shifting alliances of armed groups. A 2019 peace agreement and ceasefire between the government and 14 armed groups (the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, hereafter Political Agreement) initially curbed some of the violence.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, regular attacks against civilian populations, including conflict-related sexual violence, as well as killings and other crimes and violations at the hands of the ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka armed groups, have continued.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Health Cluster, World Health Organization, ‘Cameroon: Attacks on health care in the North-West and South-West regions (1 Jan–30 Jun 2021)’, 7 July 2021; Kindzeka, M. E., ‘Cameroon military says rebels turning to IEDs as numbers fall’, VOA, 11 May 2021; and Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, ‘Cameroon: The indiscriminate and disproportionate use of an improvised explosive device at the Buea Trade Fair event is unacceptable’, 13 Dec. 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Bone, R. M. and Nkwain, A. K., ‘Cameroon grants “special status” its restive regions. They don’t feel special’, African Arguments, 13 Jan. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Jeune Afrique, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis: Rivalries hamper peace talks’, Africa Report, 11 Aug. 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Finnan, D., ‘Cameroon: Can Vatican visit to Cameroon break the Anglophone crisis stalemate?’, AllAfrica, 5 Feb. 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Kindzeka, M. E., ‘Cameroon Prime Minister visits English-speaking western regions to ask for peace’, VOA, 8 Oct. 2021.

<sup>14</sup> The agreement is annexed to United Nations, Security Council, ‘Letter dated 14 February 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council’, S/2019/145, 15 Feb. 2019. On developments in CAR in 2019 see *SIPRI Yearbook 2020*, pp. 196–99.

<sup>15</sup> The Seleka, meaning an ‘alliance movement’ in Sango, was created in 2012, while the anti-Balaka, a collection of ‘self-defence’ armed groups, emerged in 2013. Since 2015 there has been a proliferation of armed groups in CAR as a result of divisions within the ex-Seleka and the anti-Balaka, mainly along ethnic lines and regional origins, or based on economic interests. See Vircoulon, T., *Écosystème des groupes armés en Centrafrique* [Ecosystem of Armed Groups in Central Africa] (IFRI: Paris, Apr. 2020).

**Table 7.7.** Estimated conflict-related fatalities in the Central African Republic, 2013–21

Event type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Battles	1 223	1 144	191	443	1 250	624	350	331	724
Explosions/remote violence	4	105	12	1	10	2	7	0	75
Protests, riots and strategic developments	122	105	56	8	14	25	4	5	4
Violence against civilians	1 210	2 264	266	287	555	520	235	110	904
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 559</b>	<b>3 618</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>1 829</b>	<b>1 171</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>1 707</b>

Notes: For definitions of event types, see Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 'ACLED definitions of political violence and protest', 11 Apr. 2019.

Source: ACLED, 'Dashboard', accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

The security situation became even more volatile during 2021 as government forces, backed by Russian private military companies (PMCs) and Rwandan troops, fought to recapture territory from armed groups.<sup>16</sup> Estimated conflict-related fatalities increased to over 1700 in 2021, after three consecutive years of decline (see table 7.7). The political situation also remained fragile in the aftermath of the presidential and legislative elections of December 2020.<sup>17</sup> Over half (3.1 million people) the population required humanitarian assistance and protection at the end of 2021, and one in four of the country's population was displaced, either within or outside CAR.<sup>18</sup>

### *The internationalized armed conflict*

On 19 December 2020 six rebel groups controlling two-thirds of the country's territory formed the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). This occurred after CAR's Constitutional Court rejected the candidacy of former president François Bozizé, who remains influential among anti-Balaka militia groups and the Gbaya community (the country's largest ethnic group). The newly formed CPC escalated attempts to obstruct the 27 December election and attempted a military coup in January 2021.<sup>19</sup> At the request of the CAR government, Russia and Rwanda deployed additional forces to support MINUSCA and government forces.<sup>20</sup> The temporary deployment of 300 Russian military instructors complemented existing Russian private military contractors, who had been present in CAR since at least 2018,

<sup>16</sup> Several Russian PMCs have reportedly been conducting activities in CAR, including the Wagner Group, Sewa Security Services and Patriot. See Arnold T. D., 'The geoeconomic dimensions of Russian private military and security companies', *Military Review*, Nov.–Dec. 2019; and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'CAR: Experts alarmed by government's use of "Russian trainers", close contacts with UN peacekeepers', Press release, 31 Mar. 2021.

<sup>17</sup> On developments in 2020 see *SIPRI Yearbook 2021*, pp. 211–14.

<sup>18</sup> UN OCHA (note 1), p. 194.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Security Council, 'Central African Republic', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/146, 16 Feb. 2021, pp. 1–2; and 'Central African Republic: One year later, Central Africans still remember the failed coup of January 13, 2021', Radio Ndeke Luka, 14 Jan. 2022.

<sup>20</sup> 'Rwanda bolsters force in CAR as rebels "held back"', BBC News, 21 Dec. 2020.

mostly associated with the Wagner Group (and thought to number 1200–2000 personnel).<sup>21</sup>

The security situation remained fragile throughout 2021, particularly in the west, north-west and centre of the country, with continued clashes between mainly CPC-affiliated armed groups and national military forces assisted by Russian PMCs and Rwandan troops. These clashes resulted in significant fatalities, displacement and reported human rights abuses by all parties.<sup>22</sup> The CAR and allied forces were able to recapture several towns from armed groups during the first half of 2021, diminishing the operational capabilities of the CPC and confining it to the far north-west of the country.<sup>23</sup>

In April 2021 Unity for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), then the biggest of the CPC-affiliated armed groups, withdrew from the coalition and sought talks with the government.<sup>24</sup> By the end of July much of the frontline fighting against the CPC was being carried out by the Russian PMCs, with government troops occupying the captured positions after they had been secured by the contractors.<sup>25</sup> Russia's increasing influence at the expense of France in the latter's former colony had led to a disinformation campaign between the two countries in December 2020, and in June 2021 France suspended aid and military cooperation with the CAR government.<sup>26</sup> In December 2021 the European Union Military Training Mission in Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) also suspended its training activities due to the growing influence of the Russian PMCs.<sup>27</sup>

### *The political context and implementation of the Political Agreement*

Although only 35 per cent of the 1.85 million registered voters took part in the December 2020 presidential and legislative elections—due to insecurity,

<sup>21</sup> Schreck, C., 'What are Russian military contractors doing in the Central African Republic?', RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 1 Aug. 2018; 'Russia sends 300 military instructors to Central African Republic', BBC News, 22 Dec. 2020; and Bax, P., 'Russia's influence in the Central African Republic', International Crisis Group, 3 Dec. 2021. On the role of the Wagner Group in Africa see Olivier, M., 'Russia/Africa: Wagner, an investigation into Putin's mercenaries', Africa Report, 28 July 2021.

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, 'Central African Republic: UN report calls for urgent end to mounting human rights abuses and violations', Press release, 4 Aug. 2021; and Surprenant, A., 'Central African troops and Russian mercenaries accused of abuses in anti-rebel offensive', New Humanitarian, 29 Apr. 2021.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, Security Council, 'Central African Republic', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/571, 16 June 2021, pp. 5–6; United Nations, Security Council, 'Central African Republic', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/867, 12 Oct 2021, pp. 4–5; and Munshi, N., 'Central African Republic troops beat back rebels with Russian help', *Irish Times*, 26 Jan. 2021.

<sup>24</sup> 'Powerful armed group in Central African Republic vows to leave rebel coalition', France 24, 6 Apr. 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Olivier, M., 'Russia/Africa: Wagner, an investigation into Putin's mercenaries', Africa Report, 28 July 2021.

<sup>26</sup> 'French and Russian Facebook trolls fight it out in CAR elections', Al Jazeera, 15 Dec. 2020; and 'France suspends aid, military support for Central African Republic', Reuters, 9 June 2021.

<sup>27</sup> 'EU suspends military training in Central Africa over Russian mercenaries', Reuters, 15 Dec. 2021; and Bax (note 21). On the impact of Russian PMCs on multilateral peace operations in CAR and elsewhere in Africa see chapter 2, section II, in this volume.

voting did not take place in roughly 40 per cent of the 140 National Assembly seats—President Faustin-Archange Touadéra secured the win with over 53 per cent of the vote.<sup>28</sup> He was inaugurated on 30 March 2021 and in April–June conducted national consultations with a variety of stakeholders, excluding armed groups affiliated with the CPC. On 10 June President Touadéra announced the imminent launch of a ‘republican dialogue’ and requested the international community’s support.<sup>29</sup> An organizing committee for the republican dialogue was established on 30 June and inaugurated on 1 September.<sup>30</sup>

Efforts to reinvigorate implementation of the Political Agreement continued in 2021, but only limited progress was made in disarmament and demobilization, and in the training and operationalization of the mixed security units.<sup>31</sup> The government, with the support of MINUSCA, did have some success with local-level dialogue and reconciliation efforts.<sup>32</sup> At a mini-summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on 16 September a joint roadmap to revitalize the peace process was adopted, notably calling for the declaration of a ceasefire by the CAR government.<sup>33</sup> On 15 October Touadéra declared a unilateral ceasefire to allow civilians access to aid, but even so military operations continued.<sup>34</sup> In November 2021 MINUSCA’s mandate was extended for a further 12 months until 15 November 2022.<sup>35</sup>

Having been founded in 2015, the CAR Special Criminal Court (SCC)—composed of national and international staff and applying a blend of national and international law—became operational in 2021.<sup>36</sup> Despite obstructions from government officials, the SCC has a mandate to investigate, prosecute and judge serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international criminal and humanitarian law committed in CAR since 1 January 2003. In November 2021 the SCC arrested former leader of the UPC turned minister Hassan Bouba, charging him with war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>28</sup> United Nations, ‘Central African Republic: Respect final results of the election, UN and partners urge’, UN News, 5 Jan. 2021.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, S/2021/571 (note 23), p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, S/2021/867 (note 23), pp. 1–2.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, S/2021/867 (note 23), pp. 2–3.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations, S/2021/867 (note 23), p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Final communiqué of the Mini-Summit of ICGLR on the political and security situation in the Central African Republic, 16 Sep. 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Yongo, J., ‘Central African Republic declares unilateral ceasefire in fight with rebels’, Reuters, 16 Oct. 2021.

<sup>35</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2605, 12 Nov. 2021.

<sup>36</sup> UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), ‘CAR Special Criminal Court (SCC) now fully operational’, 9 June 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘Central African Republic: Minister faces atrocity charges’, 24 Nov. 2021.

## Chad

Chad has been one of the most important regional states in the fight against armed groups in the Central Sahel and Lake Chad regions (see section II). In 2021 the country was affected by growing insecurity both within its borders and in neighbouring countries. In addition to the political and military turmoil following the killing of President Idriss Déby in April 2021, attacks by Boko Haram and Chadian armed groups, as well as intercommunal violence, continued.<sup>38</sup> These conflicts flowed partly from farmer–herder competition, but also from deeper identity-based rivalries over land and power-sharing. There were an estimated 831 conflict-related fatalities in 2021, the third consecutive annual increase and the largest total seen in the past decade.<sup>39</sup> The combined effects of armed conflict, health emergencies and climate change resulted in 5.5 million people—one-third of the population—needing humanitarian assistance in 2021. Chad was host to over 528 000 refugees and asylum seekers in 2021—a figure that rises to over 1 million if internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Chadian returnees are included—making it one of the largest refugee host countries in Africa. Meanwhile, severe food insecurity affected more than 1.8 million people.<sup>40</sup>

In April 2021 President Idriss Déby was killed in clashes with the armed group, Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), which had invaded from Libya.<sup>41</sup> Unwilling to adhere to the constitution's succession plan, the military organized a coup and installed Déby's son, Mahamat, as leader of a 15-member Transitional Military Council (TMC). The TMC announced that it would rule Chad for an 18-month period, renewable once, during which time it would organize an inclusive national dialogue prior to elections.<sup>42</sup> By early May the army had pushed the FACT insurgents back into Libya. However, the security context continued to be tense for the remainder of the year.

## The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The DRC—the second-largest country in Africa, with a population of about 80 million—is suffering from one of the longest and most complex crises in the world. Armed conflict, epidemics and natural disasters have combined with high levels of poverty and weak public infrastructure and services, with

<sup>38</sup> 'At least two dozen Chadian soldiers killed in suspected jihadist attack', France 24, 5 Aug. 2021; and UN OCHA, 'Chad: Overview of intercommunal conflicts', 6 Aug. 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 'Dashboard', accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

<sup>40</sup> UN OCHA (note 1), p. 197.

<sup>41</sup> 'Rebels threaten to march on capital as Chad reels from president's battlefield death', Reuters, 21 Apr. 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Eizenga, D., 'Chad's "political transition" is a smokescreen for military rule', World Politics Review, 12 Oct. 2021.

**Table 7.8.** Estimated conflict-related fatalities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2013–21

Event type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Battles	1 093	603	748	898	1 364	1 790	1 966	3 349	3 002
Explosions/remote violence	77	10	13	4	108	9	15	1	101
Protests, riots and strategic developments	16	38	65	145	79	63	129	204	299
Violence against civilians	787	579	936	693	1 660	1 330	1 696	2 502	2 281
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 973</b>	<b>1 230</b>	<b>1 762</b>	<b>1 740</b>	<b>3 211</b>	<b>3 192</b>	<b>3 806</b>	<b>6 056</b>	<b>5 683</b>

Notes: For definitions of event types, see Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 'ACLED definitions of political violence and protest', 11 Apr. 2019.

Source: ACLED, 'Dashboard', accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

competition over land and mineral resources a primary driver of conflict.<sup>43</sup> Since the end of the 1998–2003 Second Congo War, conflict has persisted in the eastern DRC, where dozens of armed groups remain and a major UN peacekeeping force—the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO)—has been deployed since 2010.<sup>44</sup> The armed groups vary in capacity, size and objectives.<sup>45</sup> MONUSCO personnel increased by 3.8 per cent over the course of 2021—the first increase since 2016—and on 20 December 2021 the UN Security Council extended the mission's mandate to 20 December 2022, with an authorized personnel strength of approximately 16 000. A transition plan for the mission's drawdown and eventual exit continues to be discussed.<sup>46</sup>

While most of the DRC's 26 provinces were stable in 2021, several of the eastern provinces (particularly Ituri and North Kivu) faced continued instability from external and Congolese armed groups engaged in multiple armed conflicts with the government, as well as a resurgence of intercommunal violence. The high levels of violence in the eastern DRC recorded in 2020 continued into 2021, reflected in the estimated conflict-related fatalities for these two years being the highest recorded in the 2013–21 period (see table 7.8). Serious and widespread human rights and international humanitarian law violations continued to take place in the eastern DRC, including conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations

<sup>43</sup> For detailed analysis of the armed conflict see United Nations, Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, S/2020/482, 2 June 2020.

<sup>44</sup> The UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) was deployed in 1999 and succeeded by MONUSCO in 2010.

<sup>45</sup> For details of the armed groups see United Nations, S/2020/482 (note 43), pp. 5–12; and Vogel C. et al., *The Landscape of Armed Groups in Eastern Congo: Missed Opportunities, Protracted Insecurity and Self-fulfilling Prophecies* (Kivu Security Tracker: Feb. 2021).

<sup>46</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2612, 20 Dec. 2021; and United Nations, 'Senior official in Democratic Republic of Congo spotlights violence in eastern provinces, outlines mission transition plans, briefing Security Council', SC/14655, 5 Oct. 2021. On developments in MONUSCO see also chapter 2, section II, in this volume.



against children.<sup>47</sup> As part of this ongoing, complex and multi-layered humanitarian crisis, 26.2 million people faced acute food insecurity in 2021 (the highest absolute number ever recorded globally), while an estimated 5.5 million people remained internally displaced—the largest IDP population in Africa—including 1.5 million people displacements in 2021.<sup>48</sup>

### *The armed conflicts in eastern DRC*

A temporary ‘state of siege’ in North Kivu and Ituri provinces was declared by President Felix Tshisekedi on 3 May 2021. These special measures included the replacement of all civil authorities—including elected governors—with military authorities granted the power to arrest and prosecute civilians.<sup>49</sup> The state of siege was extended multiple times during the year and was still extant at the end of December 2021. Even so, the security situation in the two provinces continued to deteriorate as a result of ongoing armed group activity, causing further population displacement.<sup>50</sup>

Some of the most violent clashes in North Kivu were between government forces and the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist armed group that originated in Uganda. In Ituri, the Cooperative for the Development of Congo, a loose association of ethnic Lendu militias, carried out attacks against civilians. Attacks on civilians and government forces by armed groups in other provinces included, in South Kivu, local Mai-Mai armed groups and external armed groups such as the Burundian Resistance for Law in Burundi (RED-Tabara); and in Katanga, attacks by the secessionist group Bakata-Katanga and other militias.<sup>51</sup> A new Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization programme introduced by the government during the second half of 2021 has the potential to meet armed group grievances if implemented successfully.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> United Nations, Security Council, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/987, 1 Dec. 2021, pp. 5–6; Amnesty International (AI), *Amnesty International Report 2021/22: The State of the World’s Human Rights* (AI: London, 2022), pp. 145–49; and United Nations, General Assembly and Security Council, ‘Children and armed conflict’, Report of the Secretary-General, A/75/873-S/2021/437, 6 May 2021, pp. 8–10.

<sup>48</sup> Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, ‘Democratic Republic of Congo: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification snapshot: March 2021’, 30 Mar. 2021; and UN OCHA (note 1), p. 201.

<sup>49</sup> United Nations, Security Council, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/587, 21 June 2021, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law’, 15 Sep. 2021; and United Nations, ‘Human rights abuses intensifying in eastern DR Congo—UNHCR’, UN News, 10 Sep. 2021.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations, Security Council, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/807, 17 Sep. 2021, pp. 3–4; and United Nations, S/2021/987 (note 47), pp. 3–4.

<sup>52</sup> Kivu Security Tracker, ‘Does the new disarmament and demobilization program stand a chance of success?’, 10 Sep. 2021.