

= Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo =

The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo ( French : Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo or FARDC ) is the state organisation responsible for defending the Democratic Republic of the Congo . The FARDC is being rebuilt as part of the peace process which followed the end of the Second Congo War in July 2003 .

The majority of FARDC members are land forces , but it also has a small air force and an even smaller navy . Together the three services may number between 144 @,@ 000 and 159 @,@ 000 personnel . In addition , there is a presidential force called the Republican Guard , but it and the National Congolese Police ( PNC ) are not part of the Armed Forces .

The government in the capital city Kinshasa , the United Nations , the European Union , and bilateral partners which include Angola , South Africa , and Belgium are attempting to create a viable force with the ability to provide the Democratic Republic of Congo with stability and security . However , this process is being hampered by corruption , inadequate donor coordination , and competition between donors . The various military units now grouped under the FARDC banner are some of the most unstable in Africa after years of war and underfunding .

To assist the new government , since February 2000 the United Nations has had the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo ( now called MONUSCO ) , which currently has a strength of over 16 @,@ 000 peacekeepers in the country . Its principal tasks are to provide security in key areas , such as the South Kivu and North Kivu in the east , and to assist the government in reconstruction . Foreign rebel groups are also in the Congo , as they have been for most of the last half @-@ century . The most important is the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda ( FDLR ) , against which Laurent Nkunda 's troops were fighting , but other smaller groups such as the anti @-@ Ugandan Lord 's Resistance Army are also present .

The legal standing of the FARDC was laid down in the Transitional Constitution , articles 118 and 188 . This was then superseded by provisions in the 2006 Constitution , articles 187 to 192 . Law 04 / 023 of November 12 , 2004 establishes the General Organisation of Defence and the Armed Forces . In mid @-@ 2010 , the Congolese Parliament was debating a new defence law , provisionally designated Organic Law 130 .

= = History = =

The first organized Congolese troops , known as the Force Publique , were created in 1888 when King Leopold II of Belgium , who held the Congo Free State as his private property , ordered his Secretary of the Interior to create military and police forces for the state . In 1908 , under international pressure , Leopold ceded administration of the colony to the government of Belgium as the Belgian Congo . It remained under the command of a Belgian officer corps through to the independence of the colony in 1960 . The Force Publique saw combat in Cameroun , and successfully invaded and conquered areas of German East Africa , notably present day Rwanda , during World War I. Elements of the Force Publique were also used to form Belgian colonial units that fought in the East African Campaign during World War II .

At independence on 30 June 1960 , the army suffered from a dramatic deficit of trained leaders , particularly in the officer corps . This was because the Force Publique had always only been officered by Belgian or other expatriate whites . The Belgian Government made no effort to train Congolese commissioned officers until the very end of the colonial period and there were only about 20 African cadets in training on the eve of independence . Ill @-@ advised actions by Belgian officers led to an enlisted ranks ' rebellion on 5 July 1960 , which helped spark the Congo Crisis . Lieutenant General Émile Janssens , the Force Publique commander , wrote during a meeting of soldiers that ' Before independence = After Independence ' , pouring cold water on the soldiers ' desires for an immediate raise in their status .

Vanderstraeten says that on the morning of 8 July 1960 , following a night during which all control had been lost over the soldiers , numerous ministers arrived at Camp Leopold with the aim of calming the situation . Both Patrice Lumumba and Joseph Kasa @-@ Vubu eventually arrived , and

the soldiers listened to Kasa @-@ Vubu " religiously . " After his speech , Kasa @-@ Vubu and the ministers present retired into the camp canteen to hear a delegation from the soldiers . Vanderstraeten says that , according to Joseph Ileo , their demands ( revendications ) included the following :

that the defence portfolio not be given to the Prime Minister

that the name Force publique be changed to Armée nationale congolaise

and that the commander @-@ in @-@ chief and chief of staff should not necessarily be Belgians

The " laborious " discussions which then followed were later retrospectively given the label of an " extraordinary ministerial council . " Gérald @-@ Libois writes that ' .. the special meeting of the council of ministers took steps for the immediate Africanisation of the officer corps and .. named Victor Lundula , who was born in Kasai and was burgomaster of Jadotville , as Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Armée Nationale Congolaise ( ANC ) ; Colonel Joseph @-@ Désiré Mobutu as chief of staff ; and the Belgian , Colonel Henniquiau , as chief advisor to the ANC . ' Thus General Janssens was dismissed . Both Lundula and Mobutu were former sergeants of the Force Publique . It appears that Maurice Mpolo , Minister of Youth and Sports , was given the defence portfolio .

On 8 ? 9 July 1960 , the soldiers were invited to appoint black officers , and ' command of the army passed securely into the hands of former sergeants , ' as the soldiers in general chose the most @-@ educated and highest @-@ ranked Congolese army soldiers as their new officers . Most of the Belgian officers were retained as advisors to the new Congolese hierarchy , and calm returned to the two main garrisons at Leopoldville and Thysville . The Force Publique was renamed the Armée nationale congolaise ( ANC ) , or Congolese National Armed Forces . However , in Katanga Belgian officers resisted the Africanisation of the army .

On 9 July 1960 , there was a Force Publique mutiny at Camp Massart at Elizabethville ; five or seven Europeans were killed . The army revolt and resulting rumours caused severe panic across the country , and Belgium despatched troops and the naval Task Group 218 @-@ 2 to protect its citizens . Belgian troops intervened in Elisabethville and Luluabourg ( 10 July ) , Matadi ( 11 July ) , Leopoldville ( 13 July ) and elsewhere . There were immediate suspicions that Belgium planned to re @-@ seize the country while doing so . Large numbers of Belgian colonists fled the country . At the same time , on 9 July , Albert Kalonji proclaimed the independence of South Kasai . Two days later on 11 July , Moïse Tshombe declared the independence of Katanga province in the south @-@ east , closely backed by remaining Belgian administrators and soldiers .

On 14 July 1960 , in response to requests by Prime Minister Lumumba , the UN Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 143 . This called upon Belgium to remove its troops and for the UN to provide ' military assistance ' to the Congolese forces to allow them ' to meet fully their tasks ' . Lumumba demanded that Belgium remove its troops immediately , threatening to seek help from the Soviet Union if they did not leave within two days . The UN reacted quickly and established the United Nations Operation in the Congo ( ONUC ) . The first UN troops arrived the next day but there was instant disagreement between Lumumba and the UN over the new force 's mandate . Because the Congolese army had been in disarray since the mutiny , Lumumba wanted to use the UN troops to subdue Katanga by force . Referring to the resolution , Lumumba wrote to UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld , ' From these texts it is clear that , contrary to your personal interpretation , the UN force may be used to subdue the rebel government of Katanga . ' Secretary General Hammarskjöld refused . To Hammarskjöld , the secession of Katanga was an internal Congolese matter and the UN was forbidden to intervene by Article 2 of the United Nations Charter . Disagreements over what the UN force could and could not do continued throughout its deployment .

The last Belgian troops left the country by 23 July , as United Nations forces continued to deploy throughout the Congo .

During the crucial period of July ? August 1960 , Joseph @-@ Désiré Mobutu built up " his " national army by channeling foreign aid to units loyal to him , by exiling unreliable units to remote areas , and by absorbing or dispersing rival armies . He tied individual officers to him by controlling their promotion and the flow of money for payrolls . Researchers working from the 1990s have concluded that money was directly funnelled to the army by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency ,

the UN , and Belgium . Despite this , by September 1960 , following the four @-@ way division of the country , there were four separate armed forces : Mobutu 's ANC itself , numbering about 12 @,@ 000 , the South Kasai Constabulary loyal to Albert Kalonji ( 3 @,@ 000 or less ) , the Katanga Gendarmerie which were part of Moise Tshombe 's regime ( totalling about 10 @,@ 000 ) , and the Stanleyville dissident ANC loyal to Antoine Gizenga ( numbering about 8 @,@ 000 ) .

In August 1960 , due to rejection of requests to the UN for aid to suppress the South Kasai and Katanga revolts , Lumumba 's government decided to request Soviet help. de Witte writes that ' Leopoldville asked the Soviet Union for planes , lorries , arms , and equipment . . . Shortly afterwards , on 22 or 23 August , about 1 @,@ 000 soldiers left for Kasai . ' de Witte goes on to write that on 26 ? 27 August , the ANC seized Bakwanga , Albert Kalonji 's capital in South Kasai , without serious resistance . ' In the next two days it temporarily put an end to the secession of Kasai.'

The Library of Congress Country Study for the Congo says at this point that : " [ On 5 September 1960 ] Kasavubu also appointed Mobutu as head of the ANC . Joseph Iléo was chosen as the new prime minister and began trying to form a new government . Lumumba and his cabinet responded by accusing Kasa @-@ Vubu of high treason and voted to dismiss him . Parliament refused to confirm the dismissal of either Lumumba or Kasavubu and sought to bring about a reconciliation between them . After a week 's deadlock , Mobutu announced on September 14 that he was assuming power until December 31 , 1960 , in order to " neutralize " both Kasavubu and Lumumba . "

In early January 1961 , ANC units loyal to Lumumba invaded northern Katanga to support a revolt of Baluba tribesmen against Tshombe 's secessionist regime .

United Nations Security Council Resolution 161 of 21 February 1961 , called for the withdrawal of Belgian officers from command positions in the ANC , and the training of new Congolese officers with UN help . The various efforts made by ONUC to retrain the ANC from August 1960 to their effective end in June 1963 are described in Arthur House 's book *The UN in the Congo : The Civilian Operations* , pages 145 @-@ 155 . By March 1963 however , after the visit of Colonel Michael Greene of the United States Army , and the resulting ' Greene Plan , ' the pattern of bilaterally agreed military assistance to various Congolese military components , instead of a single unified effort , was already taking shape .

In early 1964 , a new crisis broke out as Congolese rebels calling themselves " Simba " ( Swahili for " Lion " ) rebelled against the government . They were led by Pierre Mulele , Gaston Soumialot and Christophe Gbenye who were former members of Gizenga 's Parti Solidaire Africain ( PSA ) . The rebellion affected Kivu and Eastern ( Orientale ) provinces . By August they had captured Stanleyville and set up a rebel government there . As the rebel movement spread , discipline became more difficult to maintain , and acts of violence and terror increased . Thousands of Congolese were executed , including government officials , political leaders of opposition parties , provincial and local police , school teachers , and others believed to have been Westernized . Many of the executions were carried out with extreme cruelty , in front of a monument to Lumumba in Stanleyville . Tshombe decided to use foreign mercenaries as well as the ANC to suppress the rebellion . Mike Hoare was employed to create the English @-@ speaking 5 Commando ANC at Kamina , with the assistance of a Belgian officer , Colonel Frederic Vanderwalle , while 6 Commando ANC was French @-@ speaking and originally under the command of a Belgian Army colonel , Lamouline . By August 1964 , the mercenaries , with the assistance of other ANC troops , were making headway against the Simba rebellion . Fearing defeat , the rebels started taking hostages of the local white population in areas under their control . These hostages were rescued in Belgian airdrops ( Dragon Rouge and Dragon Noir ) over Stanleyville and Paulis with U.S. airlift support . The operation coincided with the arrival of mercenary units ( seemingly including the hurriedly formed 5th Mechanised Brigade ) at Stanleyville which was quickly captured . It took until the end of the year to completely put down the remaining areas of rebellion .

After five years of turbulence , in 1965 Mobutu used his position as ANC Chief of Staff to seize power in the Congo . Although Mobutu succeeded in taking power , his position was soon threatened by the Kisangani Mutinies , also known as the Stanleyville Mutinies or Mercenaries ' Mutinies , which were eventually suppressed .

As a general rule , since that time , the armed forces have not intervened in politics as a body , rather being tossed and turned as ambitious men have shaken the country . In reality , the larger problem has been the misuse and sometimes abuse of the military and police by political and ethnic leaders .

On 16 May 1968 a parachute brigade of two regiments ( each of three battalions ) was formed which eventually was to grow in size to a full division .

= = = Zaire 1971 ? 1997 = = =

The country was renamed Zaire in 1971 and the army was consequently designated the Forces Armées Zaïroises ( FAZ ) . In 1971 the army 's force consisted of the 1st Groupement at Kananga , with one guard battalion , two infantry battalions , and a gendarmerie battalion attached , and the 2nd Groupement ( Kinshasa ) , the 3rd Groupement ( Kisangani ) , the 4th Groupement ( Lubumbashi ) , the 5th Groupement ( Bukavu ) , the 6th Groupement ( Mbandaka ) , and the 7th Groupement ( Boma ) . Each was about the size of a brigade , and commanded by ' aging generals who have had no military training , and often not much positive experience , since they were NCOs in the Belgian Force Publique . ' By the late 1970s the number of groupements reached nine , one per administrative region . The parachute division ( Division des Troupes Aéroportées Renforcées de Choc , DITRAC ) operated semi @-@ independently from the rest of the army .

In July 1972 a number of the aging generals commanding the groupements were retired . Général d 'armée Louis Bobozo , and Generaux de Corps d 'Armée Nyamaseko Mata Bokongo , Nzoigba Yeu Ngoli , Muke Massaku , Ingila Grima , Itambo Kambala Wa Mukina , Tshinyama Mpemba , and General de Division Yossa Yi Ayira , the last having been commander of the Kamina base , were all retired on 25 July 1972 . Taking over as military commander @-@ in @-@ chief , now titled Captain General , was newly promoted General de Division Bumba Moaso , former commander of the parachute division .

A large number of countries supported the FAZ in the early 1970s . Three hundred Belgian personnel were serving as staff officers and advisors throughout the Ministry of Defence , Italians were supporting the Air Force , Americans were assisting with transport and communications , Israelis with airborne forces training , and there were British advisors with the engineers .

On 11 June 1975 several military officers were arrested in what became known as the coup monté et manqué . Amongst those arrested were Généraux Daniel KATSUVA wa Katsuvira , Land Forces Chief of Staff , UTSHUDI Wembolenga , Commandant of the 2nd Military Region at Kalemie ; FALLU Sumbu , Military Attaché of Zaïre in Washington , Colonel MUDIAYI wa Mudiayi , the military attaché of Zaïre in Paris , the military attache in Brussels , a paracommando battalion commander , and several others . The regime alleged these officers and others ( including Mobutu 's civil secrétaire particulier ) had plotted the assassination of Mobutu , high treason , and disclosure of military secrets , among other offences . The alleged coup was investigated by a revolutionary commission headed by Boyenge Mosambay Singa , at that time head of the Gendarmerie . Writing in 1988 , Michael Schatzberg said the full details of the coup had yet to emerge .

In late 1975 , Mobutu , in a bid to install a pro @-@ Kinshasa government in Angola and thwart the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola ( MPLA ) ' s drive for power , deployed FAZ armored cars , paratroopers , and three infantry battalions to Angola in support of the National Liberation Front of Angola ( FNLA ) . On 10 November 1975 , an anti @-@ Communist force made up of 1 @, 500 FNLA fighters , 100 Portuguese Angolan soldiers , and two FAZ battalions passed near the city of Quifangondo , only 30 kilometres ( 19 mi ) north of Luanda , at dawn on 10 November . The force , supported by South African aircraft and three 140 mm artillery pieces , marched in a single line along the Bengo River to face an 800 @-@ strong Cuban force across the river . Thus the Battle of Quifangondo began . The Cubans and MPLA fighters bombarded the FNLA with mortar and 122 mm rockets , destroying most of the FNLA 's armored cars and six Jeeps carrying antitank rockets in the first hour of fighting .

Mobutu 's support for the FNLA policy backfired when the MPLA won in Angola . The MPLA , then , acting ostensibly at least as the Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo ( Front for the National

Liberation of the Congo ) , occupied Zaire 's Katanga Province , then known as Shaba , in March 1977 , facing little resistance from the FAZ . This invasion is sometimes known as Shaba I. Mobutu had to request assistance , which was provided by Morocco in the form of regular troops who routed the MPLA and their Cuban advisors out of Katanga . The humiliation of this episode led to civil unrest in Zaire in early 1978 , which the FAZ had to put down .

The poor performance of Zaire 's military during Shaba I gave evidence of chronic weaknesses ( which extend to this day ) . One problem was that some of the Zairian soldiers in the area had not received pay for extended periods . Senior officers often kept the money intended for the soldiers , typifying a generally disreputable and inept senior leadership in the FAZ . As a result , many soldiers simply deserted rather than fight . Others stayed with their units but were ineffective . During the months following the Shaba invasion , Mobutu sought solutions to the military problems that had contributed to the army 's dismal performance . He implemented sweeping reforms of the command structure , including wholesale firings of high @-@ ranking officers . He merged the military general staff with his own presidential staff and appointed himself chief of staff again , in addition to the positions of minister of defence and supreme commander that he already held . He also redeployed his forces throughout the country instead of keeping them close to Kinshasa , as had previously been the case . The Kamanyola Division , at the time considered the army 's best formation , and considered the president 's own , was assigned permanently to Shaba . In addition to these changes , the army 's strength was reduced by 25 percent . Also , Zaire 's allies provided a large influx of military equipment , and Belgian , French , and American advisers assisted in rebuilding and retraining the force .

Despite these improvements , a second invasion by the former Katangan gendarmerie , known as Shaba II in May ? June 1978 , was only dispersed with the despatch of the French 2e régiment étranger de parachutistes and a battalion of the Belgian Paracommando Regiment . Kamanyola Division units collapsed almost immediately . French units fought the Battle of Kolwezi to recapture the town from the FLNC . The U.S. provided logistical assistance .

In July 1975 , according to the IISS Military Balance , the FAZ was made up of 14 infantry battalions , seven " Guard " battalions , and seven other infantry battalions variously designated as " parachute " ( or possibly " commando " ; probably the units of the new parachute brigade originally formed in 1968 ) . There were also an armored car regiment and a mechanized infantry battalion . Organisationally , the army was made up of seven brigade groups and one parachute division . In addition to these units , a tank battalion was reported to have formed by 1979 .

In January 1979 General de Division Boyenge Mosambay Singa was named as both military region commander and Region Commissioner for Shaba .

In 1984 , a militarised police force , the Guard Civile , was formed . It was eventually commanded by Général d 'armée Kpama Baramoto Kata .

Further details of FAZ operations in the 1980s and onwards can be found in John W. Turner 's book *A Continent Ablaze* .

Thomas Turner wrote in the late 1990s that .. ' [ m ] ajor acts of violence , such as the killings that followed the ' Kasongo uprising ' in Bandundu Region in 1978 , the killings of diamond miners in Kasai @-@ Oriental Region in 1979 , and , more recently , the massacre of students in Lubumbashi in 1990 , continued to intimidate the population.'

The authors of the Library of Congress Country Study on Zaire commented in 1992 @-@ 93 that : " The maintenance status of equipment in the inventory has traditionally varied , depending on a unit 's priority and the presence or absence of foreign advisers and technicians . A considerable portion of military equipment is not operational , primarily as a result of shortages of spare parts , poor maintenance , and theft . For example , the tanks of the 1st Armored Brigade often have a nonoperational rate approaching 70 to 80 percent . After a visit by a Chinese technical team in 1985 , most of the tanks operated , but such an improved status generally has not lasted long beyond the departure of the visiting team . Several factors complicate maintenance in Zairian units . Maintenance personnel often lack the training necessary to maintain modern military equipment . Moreover , the wide variety of military equipment and the staggering array of spare parts necessary to maintain it not only clog the logistic network but also are expensive .

The most important factor that negatively affects maintenance is the low and irregular pay that soldiers receive , resulting in the theft and sale of spare parts and even basic equipment to supplement their meager salaries . When not stealing spare parts and equipment , maintenance personnel often spend the better part of their duty day looking for other ways to profit . American maintenance teams working in Zaire found that providing a free lunch to the work force was a good , sometimes the only , technique to motivate personnel to work at least half of the duty day .

The army 's logistics corps is to provide logistic support and conduct direct , indirect , and depot @-@ level maintenance for the FAZ . But because of Zaire 's lack of emphasis on maintenance and logistics , a lack of funding , and inadequate training , the corps is understaffed , underequipped , and generally unable to accomplish its mission . It is organized into three battalions assigned to Mbandaka , Kisangani , and Kamina , but only the battalion at Kamina is adequately staffed ; the others are little more than skeleton " units .

The poor state of discipline of the Congolese forces became apparent again in 1990 . Foreign military assistance to Zaire ceased following the end of the Cold War and Mobutu deliberately allowed the military 's condition to deteriorate so that it did not threaten his hold on power . Protesting low wages and lack of pay , paratroopers began looting Kinshasa in September 1991 and were only stopped after intervention by French ( ' Operation Baumier ' ) and Belgian ( ' Operation Blue Beam ' ) forces .

In 1993 , according to the Library of Congress Country Studies , the 25 @,@ 000 @-@ member FAZ ground forces consisted of one infantry division ( with three infantry brigades ) ; one airborne brigade ( with three parachute battalions and one support battalion ) ; one special forces ( commando / counterinsurgency ) brigade ; the Special Presidential Division ; one independent armored brigade ; and two independent infantry brigades ( each with three infantry battalions , one support battalion ) . These units were deployed throughout the country , with the main concentrations in Shaba Region ( approximately half the force ) . The Kamanyola Division , consisting of three infantry brigades operated generally in western Shaba Region ; the 21st Infantry Brigade was located in Lubumbashi ; the 13th Infantry Brigade was deployed throughout eastern Shaba ; and at least one battalion of the 31st Airborne Brigade stayed at Kamina . The other main concentration of forces was in and around Kinshasa : the 31st Airborne Brigade was deployed at N 'djili Airport on the outskirts of the capital ; the Special Presidential Division ( DSP ) resided adjacent to the presidential compound ; and the 1st Armored Brigade was at Mbanza @-@ Ngungu ( in Bas @-@ Congo , approximately 120 kilometres ( 75 mi ) southwest of Kinshasa ) . Finally the 41st Commando Brigade was at Kisangani .

This superficially impressive list of units overstates the actual capability of the armed forces at the time . Apart from privileged formations such as the Presidential Division and the 31st Airborne Brigade , most units were poorly trained , divided and so badly paid that they regularly resorted to looting . What operational abilities the armed forces had were gradually destroyed by politicisation of the forces , tribalisation , and division of the forces , included purges of suspectedly disloyal groups , intended to allow Mobutu to divide and rule . All this occurred against the background of increasing deterioration of state structures under the kleptocratic Mobutu regime .

For a concise general description of the FAZ in the 1990s , see René Lemarchand , The dynamics of violence in Central Africa , University of Pennsylvania Press , 2009 , pages 226 @-@ 228 .

= = = Mobutu 's overthrow and after = = =

Much of the origins of the recent conflict in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo stems from the turmoil following the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 , which then led to the Great Lakes refugee crisis . Within the largest refugee camps , beginning in Goma in Nord @-@ Kivu , were Rwandan Hutu fighters , who were eventually organised into the Rassemblement Démocratique pour le Rwanda , who launched repeated attacks into Rwanda . Rwanda eventually backed Laurent @-@ Désiré Kabila and his quickly organised Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo in invading Zaire , aiming to stop the attacks on Rwanda in the process of toppling Mobutu 's government . When the militias rebelled , backed by Rwanda , the FAZ , weakened as is noted

above , proved incapable of mastering the situation and preventing the overthrow of Mobutu in 1997

When Kabila took power in 1997 , the country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo and so the name of the national army changed once again , to the Forces armées congolaises ( FAC ) . Tanzania sent six hundred military advisors to train Kabila 's new army in May 1997 . Command over the armed forces in the first few months of Kabila 's rule was vague . Gérard Prunier writes that ' there was no minister of defence , no known chief of staff , and no ranks ; all officers were Cuban @-@ style ' commanders ' called ' Ignace ' , ' Bosco ' , ' Jonathan ' , or ' James ' , who occupied connecting suites at the Intercontinental Hotel and had presidential list cell @-@ phone numbers . None spoke French or Lingala , but all spoke Kinyarwanda , Swahili , and , quite often , English . ' On being asked by Belgian journalist Colette Braeckman what was the actual army command structure apart from himself , Kabila answered ' We are not going to expose ourselves and risk being destroyed by showing ourselves openly ... . We are careful so that the true masters of the army are not known . It is strategic . Please , let us drop the matter . ' Kabila 's new Forces armées congolaises were riven with internal tensions . The new FAC had Banyamulenge fighters from South Kivu , kadogo child soldiers from various eastern tribes , such as Thierry Nindaga , Safari Rwekoze , etc ... [ the mostly ] Lunda Katangese Tigers of the former FNLC , and former FAZ personnel . Mixing these disparate and formerly warring elements together led to mutiny . On 23 February 1998 , a mostly Banyamulenge unit mutinied at Bukavu after its officers tried to disperse the soldiers into different units spread all around the Congo . By mid @-@ 1998 , formations on the outbreak of the Second Congo War included the Tanzanian @-@ supported 50th Brigade , headquartered at Camp Kokolo in Kinshasa , and the 10th Brigade ? one of the best and largest units in the army ? stationed in Goma , as well as the 12th Brigade in Bukavu . The declaration of the 10th Brigade 's commander , former DSP officer Jean @-@ Pierre Ondekane , on 2 August 1998 that he no longer recognised Kabila as the state 's president was one of the factors in the beginning of the Second Congo War .

The FAC performed poorly throughout the Second Congo War and " demonstrated little skill or recognisable military doctrine " . At the outbreak of the war in 1998 the Army was ineffective and the DRC Government was forced to rely on assistance from Angola , Chad , Namibia and Zimbabwe . As well as providing expeditionary forces , these countries unsuccessfully attempted to retrain the DRC Army . North Korea and Tanzania also provided assistance with training . During the first year of the war the Allied forces defeated the Rwandan force which had landed in Bas @-@ Congo and the rebel forces south @-@ west of Kinshasa and eventually halted the rebel and Rwandan offensive in the east of the DRC . These successes contributed to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement which was signed in July 1999 . Following the Lusaka Agreement , in mid @-@ August 1999 President Kabila issued a decree dividing the country into eight military regions . The first military region , Congolese state television reported , would consist of the two Kivu provinces , Orientale Province would form the second region , and Maniema and Kasai @-@ Oriental provinces the third . Katanga and Équateur would fall under the fourth and fifth regions , respectively , while Kasai @-@ Occidental and Bandundu would form the sixth region . Kinshasa and Bas @-@ Congo would form the seventh and eighth regions , respectively . In November 1999 the Government attempted to form a 20 @,@ 000 @-@ strong paramilitary force designated the People 's Defence Forces . This force was intended to support the FAC and national police but never became effective .

== = 1999 @-@ present == =

The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was not successful in ending the war , and fighting resumed in September 1999 . The FAC 's performance continued to be poor and both the major offensives the Government launched in 2000 ended in costly defeats . President Kabila 's mismanagement was an important factor behind the FAC 's poor performance , with soldiers frequently going unpaid and unfed while the Government purchased advanced weaponry which could not be operated or maintained . The defeats in 2000 are believed to have been the cause of President Kabila 's assassination in January 2001 . Following the assassination , Joseph Kabila assumed the

presidency and was eventually successful in negotiating an end to the war in 2002 @-@ 2003 .

The December 2002 Global and All @-@ Inclusive Agreement devoted Chapter VII to the armed forces . It stipulated that the armed forces chief of staff , and the chiefs of the army , air force , and navy were not to come from the same warring faction . The new ' national , restructured and integrated ' army would be made up from Kabila 's government forces ( the FAC ) , the RCD , and the MLC . Also stipulated in VII ( b ) was that the RCD @-@ N , RCD @-@ ML , and the Mai @-@ Mai would become part of the new armed forces . An intermediate mechanism for physical identification of the soldiers , and their origin , date of enrolment , and unit was also called for ( VII ( c ) ) . It also provided for the creation of a Conseil Supérieur de la Défense ( Superior Defence Council ) which would declare states of siege or war and give advice on security sector reform , disarmament / demobilization , and national defence policy .

A decision on which factions were to name chiefs of staff and military regional commanders was announced on 19 August 2003 as the first move in military reform , superimposed on top of the various groups of fighters , government and former rebels . Kabila was able to name the armed forces chief of staff , Lieutenant General Liwanga Mata , who previously served as navy chief of staff under Laurent Kabila . Kabila was able to name the air force commander ( John Numbi ) , the RCD @-@ Goma received the Land Force commander 's position ( Sylvain Buki ) and the MLC the navy ( Dieudonne Amuli Bahigwa ) . Three military regional commanders were nominated by the former Kinshasa government , two commanders each by the RCD @-@ Goma and the MLC , and one region commander each by the RCD @-@ K / ML and RCD @-@ N . However these appointments were announced for Kabila 's Forces armées congolaises ( FAC ) , not the later FARDC . Another report however says that the military region commanders were only nominated in January 2004 , and that the troop deployment on the ground did not change substantially until the year afterward .

On 24 January 2004 , a decree created the Structure Militaire d 'Intégration ( SMI , Military Integration Structure ) . Together with the SMI , CONADER also was designated to manage the combined tronc commun DDR element and military reform programme . The first post @-@ Sun City military law appears to have been passed on 12 November 2004 , which formally created the new national Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo ( FARDC ) . Included in this law was article 45 , which recognized the incorporation of a number of armed groups into the FARDC , including the former government army Forces Armées Congolaises ( FAC ) , ex @-@ FAZ personnel also known as former President Mobutu 's ' les tigres ' , the RCD @-@ Goma , RCD @-@ ML , RCD @-@ N , MLC , the Mai @-@ Mai , as well as other government @-@ determined military and paramilitary groups .

Turner writes that the two most prominent opponents of military integration ( brassage ) were Colonel Jules Mutebusi , a Munyamulenge from South Kivu , and Laurent Nkunda , a Rwandaphone Tutsi who Turner says was allegedly from Rutshuru in North Kivu . In May ? June 2004 Mutebusi led a revolt against his superiors from Kinshasa in South Kivu . Nkunda began his long series of revolts against central authority by helping Mutebusi in May ? June 2004 . In November 2004 a Rwandan government force entered North Kivu to attack the FDLR , and , it seems , reinforced and resupplied RCD @-@ Goma ( ANC ) at the same time . Kabila despatched 10 @, @ 000 government troops to the east in response , launching an attack which was called ' Operation Bima . ' In the midst of this tension , Nkunda 's men launched attacks in North Kivu in December 2004 .

There was another major personnel reshuffle on 12 June 2007 . FARDC chief General Kisempia Sungilanga Lombe was replaced with General Dieudonne Kayembe Mbandankulu . General Gabriel Amisi Kumba retained his post as Land Forces commander . John Numbi , a trusted member of Kabila 's inner circle , was shifted from air force commander to Police Inspector General . U.S. diplomats reported that the former Naval Forces Commander Maj. General Amuli Bahigwa ( ex @-@ MLC ) became the FARDC 's Chief of Operations ; former FARDC Intelligence Chief General Didier Etumba ( ex @-@ FAC ) was promoted to Vice Admiral and appointed Commander of Naval Forces ; Maj. General Rigobert Massamba ( ex @-@ FAC ) , a former commander of the Kitona air base , was appointed as Air Forces Commander ; and Brig. General Jean @-@ Claude Kifwa , commander of the Republican Guard , was appointed as a regional military commander .

Much of the east of the country remains insecure , however . In the far northeast this is due



primarily to the Ituri conflict . In the area around Lake Kivu , primarily in North Kivu , fighting continues among the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and between the government FARDC and Laurent Nkunda 's troops , with all groups greatly exacerbating the issues of internal refugees in the area of Goma , the consequent food shortages , and loss of infrastructure from the years of conflict . In 2009 , several United Nations officials stated that the army is a major problem , largely due to corruption that results in food and pay meant for soldiers being diverted and a military structure top heavy with colonels , many of whom are former warlords . In a 2009 report itemizing FARDC abuses , Human Rights Watch urged the UN to stop supporting government offensives against eastern rebels until the abuses ceased .

In 2010 , thirty FARDC officers were given scholarships to study in Russian military academies . This is part of a greater effort by Russia to help improve the FARDC . A new military attaché and other advisers from Russia visited the DRC .

On 22 November 2012 , Gabriel Amisi Kumba was suspended from his position in the Forces Terrestres by president Joseph Kabila due to an inquiry into his alleged role in the sale of arms to various rebel groups in the eastern part of the country , which may have implicated the rebel group M23 . In December 2012 it was reported that members of Army units in the north east of the country are often not paid due to corruption , and these units rarely counter attacks made against villages by the Lord 's Resistance Army .

The FARDC deployed 850 soldiers and 150 PNC police officers as part of an international force in the Central African Republic , which the DRC borders to the north . The country had been in a state of civil war since 2012 , when the president was ousted by rebel groups . The DRC was urged by French president François Hollande to keep its troops in CAR .

In July 2014 , the Congolese army carried out a joint operation with UN troops in the Masisi and Walikale territories of the North Kivu province . In the process , they liberated over 20 villages and a mine from the control of two rebel groups , the Mai Mai Cheka and the Alliance for the Sovereign and Patriotic Congo .

= = Current organisation = =

The President , Major General Joseph Kabila is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces . The Minister of Defence , formally Ministers of Defence , Disarmament , and Veterans ( Ancien Combattants ) , with the French acronym MDNDAC , is Alexandre Luba Ntambo .

The Colonel Tshatshi Military Camp in the Kinshasa suburb of Ngaliema hosts the defence department and the Chiefs of Staff central command headquarters of the FARDC . Jane 's data from 2002 appears inaccurate ; there is at least one ammunition plant in Katanga .

Below the Chief of Staff , the current organisation of the FARDC is not fully clear . There is known to be a Military Intelligence branch - Service du Renseignement militaire ( SRM ) , the former DEMIAP . The FARDC is known to be broken up into the Land Forces ( Forces Terrestres ) , Navy and Air Force . The Land Forces are distributed around ten military regions , up from the previous eight , following the ten provinces of the country . There is also a training command , the Groupement des Écoles Supérieures Militaires ( GESM ) or Group of Higher Military Schools , which , in January 2010 , was under the command of Major General Marcellin Lukama . The Navy and Air Forces are composed of various groupments ( see below ) . There is also a central logistics base .

It should be made clear also that Joseph Kabila does not trust the military ; the Republican Guard is the only component he trusts . Major General John Numbi , former Air Force chief , now inspector general of police , ran a parallel chain of command in the east to direct the 2009 Eastern Congo offensive , Operation Umoja Wetu ; the regular chain of command was by @-@ passed . Previously Numbi negotiated the agreement to carry out the mixage process with Laurent Nkunda . Commenting on a proposed vote of no confidence in the Minister of Defence in September 2012 , Baoudin Amba Wetshi of lecongolais.cd described Ntolo as a ' scapegoat ' . Wetshi said that all key military and security questions were handled in total secrecy by the President and other civil and military personalities trusted by him , such as John Numbi , Gabriel Amisi Kumba ( ' Tango Four ' ) , Delphin Kahimbi , and others such as Kalev Mutond and Pierre Lumbi Okongo .

= = = Armed Forces Chiefs of Staff = = =

The available information on armed forces ' Chiefs of Staff is incomplete and sometimes contradictory . In addition to armed forces chiefs of staff , in 1966 Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Malila was listed as Army Chief of Staff .

= = = Command structure in January 2005 = = =

Virtually all officers have now changed positions , but this list gives an outline of the structure in January 2005 . Despite the planned subdivision of the country into more numerous provinces , the actual splitting of the former provinces has not taken place .

FARDC chief of staff : Major General Sungilanga Kisempia ( PPRD )

FARDC land forces chief of staff : General Sylvain Buki ( RCD @-@ G ) Major General Gabriel Amisi Kumba appears to have been appointed to the position in August 2006 , and retained this position during the personnel reshuffle of 12 June 2007 . In November 2012 he was succeeded by François Olenga .

FARDC navy chief of staff : General Major Dieudonne Amuli Bahigwa ( MLC ) ( Commander of the Kimia II operation in 2009 )

FARDC air force chief of staff : Brigadier General Jean Bitanirwa Kamara ( MLC ) . Military training at the Ecole de formation d 'officiers ( EFO ) , Kananga , and other courses while in the FAZ . Brigade commander in the MLC , then named in August 2003 ' chef d 'etat @-@ major en second ' of the FARDC air force .

1st Military Region / Bandundu : Brigadier General Moustapha Mukiza ( MLC )

2nd Military Region / Bas @-@ Congo : Unknown . General Jean Mankoma 2009 .

3rd Military Region / Equateur : Brigadier @-@ General Mulubi Bin Muhemedi ( PPRD )

4th Military Region / Kasai @-@ Occidental : Brigadier @-@ General Sindani Kasereka ( RCD @-@ K / ML )

5th Military Region / Kasai Oriental : General Rwabisira Obeid ( RCD )

6th Military Region / Katanga : Brigadier @-@ General Nzambe Alengbia ( MLC ) - 62nd , 63rd , and 67th Brigades in Katanga have committed numerous acts of sexual violence against women .

7th Military Region / Maniema : Brigadier @-@ General Widi Mbulu Divioka ( RCD @-@ N )

8th Military Region / North Kivu : General Gabriel Amisi Kumba ( RCD ) . General Amisi , a.k.a. ' Tango Fort ' now appears to be Chief of Staff of the Land Forces . Brig. Gen. Vainqueur Mayala was Commander 8th MR in September 2008

9th Military Region / Province Orientale : Major @-@ General Bulenda Padiri ( Mayi @-@ Mayi )

10th Military Region / South Kivu : Major Mbuja Mabe ( PPRD ) . General Pacifique Masunzu , in 2010 . Region included 112th Brigade on Minembwe plateaux . This grouping was " an almost exclusively Banyamulenge brigade under the direct command of the 10th Military Region , [ which ] consider [ ed ] General Masunzu as its leader . "

= = = Updates to command structure in 2014 = = =

As of 2014 , several changes took place among the FARDC command staff :

Chief of General Staff : Army General Didier Etumba Longomba

Land forces chief of staff : Major General Dieudonné Banze Lubundji

Navy chief of staff : Vice Admiral Rombault Mbuayama Nsiona

Air force chief of staff : Brigadier General Numbi Ngoie Enoch

= = Land forces = =

The land forces are made up of about 14 integrated brigades , of fighters from all the former warring factions which have gone through a brassage integration process ( see next paragraph ) , and a not

@-@ publicly known number of non @-@ integrated brigades which remain solely made up from single factions ( the Congolese Rally for Democracy ( RCD ) ' s Armée nationale congolaise , the ex @-@ government former Congolese Armed Forces ( FAC ) , the ex @-@ RCD KML , the ex @-@ Movement for the Liberation of Congo , the armed groups of the Ituri conflict ( the Mouvement des Révolutionnaires Congolais ( MRC ) , Forces de Résistance Patriotique d 'Ituri ( FRPI ) and the Front Nationaliste Intégrationniste ( FNI ) ) and the Mai @-@ Mai ) .

It appears that about the same time that Presidential Decree 03 / 042 of 18 December 2003 established the National Commission for Demobilisation and Reinsertion ( CONADER ) , ' .. all ex @-@ combatants were officially declared as FARDC soldiers and the then FARDC brigades [ were to ] rest deployed until the order to leave for brassage .

The reform plan adopted in 2005 envisaged the formation of eighteen integrated brigades through the brassage process as its first of three stages . The process consists firstly of regroupment , where fighters are disarmed . Then they are sent to orientation centres , run by CONADER , where fighters take the choice of either returning to civilian society or remaining in the armed forces . Combatants who choose demobilisation receive an initial cash payment of US \$ 110 . Those who choose to stay within the FARDC are then transferred to one of six integration centres for a 45 @-@ day training course , which aims to build integrated formations out of factional fighters previously heavily divided along ethnic , political and regional lines . The centres are spread out around the country at Kitona , Kamina , Kisangani , Rumangabo and Nyaleke ( within the Virunga National Park ) in Nord @-@ Kivu , and Luberizi ( on the border with Burundi ) in South Kivu . The process has suffered severe difficulties due to construction delays , administration errors , and the amount of travel former combatants have to do , as the three stages ' centres are widely separated . Following the first 18 integrated brigades , the second goal is the formation of a ready reaction force of two to three brigades , and finally , by 2010 when MONUC is anticipated to have withdrawn , the creation of a Main Defence Force of three divisions .

In February 2008 , the current reform plan was described as :

" The short term , 2008 @-@ 2010 , will see the setting in place of a Rapid Reaction Force ; the medium term , 2008 -2015 , with a Covering Force ; and finally the long term , 2015 @-@ 2020 , with a Principal Defence Force . " He added that the reform plan rests on a programme of synergy based on the four pillars of dissuasion , production , reconstruction and excellence . " The Rapid Reaction Force is expected to focus on dissuasion , through a Rapid Reaction Force of 12 battalions , capable of aiding MONUC to secure the east of the country and to realise constitutional missions , " Defence Minister Chikez Diemu said .

Amid the other difficulties in building new armed forces for the DRC , in early 2007 the integration and training process was distorted as the DRC government under Kabila attempted to use it to gain more control over the dissident general Laurent Nkunda . A hastily negotiated verbal agreement in Rwanda saw three government FAC brigades integrated with Nkunda 's former ANC 81st and 83rd Brigades in what was called mixage . Mixage brought multiple factions into composite brigades , but without the 45 @-@ day retraining provided by brassage , and it seems that actually , the process was limited to exchanging battalions between the FAC and Nkunda brigades in North Kivu , without further integration . Due to Nkunda 's troops having greater cohesion , Nkunda effectively gained control of all five brigades , which was not the intention of the DRC central government . However , after Nkunda used the mixage brigades to fight the FDLR , strains arose between the FARDC and Nkunda @-@ loyalist troops within the brigades and they fell apart in the last days of August 2007 . The International Crisis Group says that ' by 30 August [ 2007 ] Nkunda 's troops had left the mixed brigades and controlled a large part of the Masisi and Rutshuru territories ' ( of North Kivu ) .

Both formally integrated brigades and the non @-@ integrated units continue to conduct arbitrary arrests , rapes , robbery , and other crimes and these human rights violations are " regularly " committed by both officers and members of the rank and file . Members of the Army also often strike deals to gain access to resources with the militias they are meant to be fighting .

The various brigades and other formations and units number at least 100 @, @ 000 troops . The status of these brigades has been described as " pretty chaotic . " A 2007 disarmament and repatriation study said " army units that have not yet gone through the process of brassage are

usually much smaller than what they ought to be . Some non @-@ integrated brigades have only 500 men ( and are thus nothing more than a small battalion ) whereas some battalions may not even have the size of a normal company ( over a 100 men ) . "

= = = Known integrated brigades in 2007 = = =

See also U.S. State Department , 07KINSHASA452 Congolese Military Proposes Redeployment , Renaming Of Integrated Brigades , 19 April 2007 . Like the Force Publique in the Congo Free State , FARDC brigades have been deploying to their areas of operation with their families in tow . 2nd Commando Battalion of the Belgian Paracommando Brigade trained one of the first integrated brigades from January to June 2004 . By 13 September 2006 , the Government had established 13 out of the 18 integrated brigades it had planned to create before the elections . ( S / 2006 / 759 , 21 September 2006 , 12 ) A fourteenth brigade was created by March 2007 . ( S / 2007 / 156 , 20 March 2007 , 7 )

1st Brigade ( integrated ) , Belgium began training this brigade in Kisangani on 9 February 2004 , graduated June 2004 . Human rights reports in April and August 2007 place the Brigade in the Mahagi territory , Ituri area , Orientale Province . At Bavi , 30 kilometres ( 19 mi ) south of Bunia , between August and November 2006 forty civilians were slaughtered and buried in three different graves by soldiers of the 1st integrated Brigade .

2nd Brigade ( integrated ) , trained by Angola at Kitona. ordered to move to North Kivu from Kinshasa , February 2006 . ( 06KINSHASA178 , 2 February 2006 ) Butembo , North Kivu , 28 July 2007 See also U.S. State Department , 06KINSHASA629 North Kivu : Struggling to Survive in Rutshuru Territory , 20 April 2006 .

3rd Brigade ( integrated ) , trained by Belgium and South Africa at Kamina . Graduated 1 June 2005 . ( 05KINSHASA950 , 10 June 2005 ) In the Bukavu area , late March 2007 ( now 101st Brigade )

4th Brigade ( integrated ) , training process finished [ Monday ] c.23 August 2005 , then under the command of Colonel Willy Bonané RCD @-@ G ) , a Tutsi officer close to Governor Eugene Serufuli , and was dispatched to Ituri . ( ICG Africa Report 108 , 27 April 2006 , p . 16 , and IRIN , Former militiamen now form army 's 4th Brigade , 23 August 2005 ) Cholera broke out amongst the brigade , Aug @-@ Sept 2005 . Elements reported at Lopa , Ituri area , 24 ? 25 July 2007

5th Brigade ( integrated ) , deployed to North Kivu in August ? September 2005 . See ICG Africa Report 108 , 27 April 2006 , p . 16 . " In January [ 2006 ] , tensions escalated after human rights abuses were committed by soldiers of the FARDC 5th integrated brigade against Kinyarwanda speakers in Rutshuru territory , in command the colonel Thierry Nindaga . Insurgents belonging to the Laurent Nkunda militia , with elements of the 83rd brigade , attacked the FARDC 5th integrated brigade . They subsequently took over Rwindi and Kibrizi , prompting the withdrawal of FARDC from Rutshuru to Kanyabayonga . On 21 January , MONUC launched operations and successfully cleared Rwindi and Kibrizi of rebel elements . " Brigade now at Kananga , Kasai @-@ Occidental . See also U.S. State Department , 06KINSHASA481 , 23 March 2006 .

6th Brigade ( integrated ) , said that ' the sixth and last brigade from the first phase of army integration is expected to be ready for deployment in late September ' [ 2005 ] . Located Jiba , Ituri area , Orientale Province , May 2007 . Ordered to leave Ituri for North Kivu for offensive against Laurent Nkunda , June 2007 .

7th Brigade ( integrated ) , finished forming Kitona March 2006 . On 3 May 2006 , it was reported that ' elements such as the 7th Integrated Brigade are still taking up space at the Rumangabu brassage center ( North Kivu ) , for instance , and because they have not been fully deployed to Lubero ( North Kivu ) , it isn 't possible for the next group of soldiers to arrive at Rumangabu for integration . ' ( State Department , 06KINSHASA711 , SSR : Blockages Remain , 8 May 2006 ) Stationed in Maluku , Kinshasa August 2006 Elements of this brigade at Bolobo , Bandundu province , May 2007 .

8th Brigade ( integrated ) , Elements at Lubero & Luvungi , in South Kivu , May 2007 .

9th Brigade ( integrated ) , North Kivu . Involved in a 5 August 2006 , firefight between the 94th Battalion ( of the 9th Integrated Brigade ) against the 834th Battalion ( of the non @-@ integrated

83rd Brigade ) , at Sake , North Kivu .

10th Brigade ( integrated ) , headquartered at Gemena , Equateur , 31 August 2007 . ( 07KINSHASA1033 , 31 August 2007 ) Deployed to the Dongo crisis in October 2009 , suffering two defeats at the hands of Odjani Mangbama 's forces . ( Congo Siasa )

12th Brigade ( integrated ) , HQ at Baraka , South Kivu

13th Brigade ( integrated ) , Marabo , North Kivu , mid June 2007 . Second battalion of this brigade in process of formation near Bunia mid August 2007 .

14th Brigade ( integrated ) , Kalima , South Kivu , May 2007 , now numbered 105th Brigade . Africa Confidential reported in January 2008 that the brigade was a part of a 25 @, @ 000 strong government attack on 4 @, @ 000 of Laurent Nkunda 's soldiers in December 2007 , but was beaten back , with the loss of its ' entire arms and equipment . ' Human Rights Watch 's ' Soldiers Who Rape , Commanders Who Condone : Sexual Violence and Military Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo , ' July 2009 , is a detailed study of this brigade 's history and crimes .

15th Brigade ( integrated ) ( waiting for deployment on 30 May 2007 , with 2 @, @ 837 men assigned . Ordered to leave Kisangani for North Kivu for offensive against Laurent Nkunda , June , and then routed by Nkunda troops in the Sake area , early September 2007 .

16th and 17th Brigades ( integrated ) ( beginning ' brassage ' integration process on 30 May 2007 , both over 4 @, @ 000 strong at the beginning of the process ) 17th Bde was later referred to in the Oxfam report ' Waking the Devil , ' as well as later being in the Luhago / Kabona localities of Kabare territoire .

18th Brigade

103rd Brigade ( integrated ) ? previously designated 11th Brigade . Elements reported at Walungu , 110 km SW of Bukavu , South Kivu in the course of rape allegation 27 March 2007 .

A number of outside donor countries are also carrying out separate training programmes for various parts of the Forces du Terrestres ( Land Forces ) . The People 's Republic of China has trained Congolese troops at Kamina in Katanga from at least 2004 to 2009 , and the Belgian government is training at least one ' rapid reaction ' battalion . When Kabila visited U.S. President George W. Bush in Washington D.C. , he also asked the U.S. Government to train a battalion , and as a result , a private contractor , Protection Strategies Incorporated , started training a FARDC battalion at Camp Base , Kisangani , in February 2010 . The company is being supervised by Special Operations Command @-@ Africa Command . The various international training programmes are not well integrated .

= = = Equipment = = =

Attempting to list the equipment available to the DRC 's land forces is difficult ; most figures are unreliable estimates based on known items delivered in the past . The IISS 's Military Balance 2007 and Orbat.com 's Concise World Armies 2005 give only slightly differing figures however ( the figures below are from the IISS Military Balance 2007 ) . Much of the Army 's equipment is non @-@ operational due to insufficient maintenance ? in 2002 only 20 percent of the Army 's armoured vehicles were estimated as being serviceable .

Main Battle Tanks : 30 x Type 59 , 30 x T @-@ 55 , 100 x T 72

Reconnaissance vehicles : 40 + Type 62 light tanks , 40 + Panhard AML armoured cars

Infantry Fighting Vehicles : 20 BMP @-@ 1

Armoured Personnel Carriers : IISS reports M @-@ 113 , Type 63 , and wheeled vehicles including Casspir , Panhard M3 , TH 390 Fahd , Wolf Turbo 2

Artillery : 100 field guns , ranging from M116 howitzer 75 mm to D @-@ 30 130 mm , and 30 Type 81 MRL

In addition to these 2007 figures , In March 2010 , it was reported that the DRC 's land forces had ordered USD \$ 80 million worth of military equipment from Ukraine which included 20 T @-@ 72 main battle tanks , 100 trucks and various small arms . 20 x T @-@ 72 have been reported by World Defence Almanac . Tanks have been used in the Kivus in the 2005 @-@ 9 period .

In February 2014 , Ukraine revealed that it had achieved the first export order for the T @-@ 64

tank to the DRC Land Forces for 50 T @-@ 64BV @-@ 1s .

In June 2015 it was reported that Georgia had sold 12 of its Didgori @-@ 2 to the DRC for \$ 4 million . The vehicles were specifically designed for reconnaissance and special operations . Two of the vehicles are a recently developed conversion to serve for medical field evacuation .

= = = Republican Guard = = =

In addition to the other land forces , President Joseph Kabila also has a Republican Guard presidential force ( Garde Républicaine or GR ) , formerly known as the Special Presidential Security Group ( GSSP ) . FARDC military officials state that the Garde Républicaine is not the responsibility of FARDC , but of the Head of State . Apart from Article 140 of the Law on the Army and Defence , no legal stipulation on the DRC 's Armed Forces makes provision for the GR as a distinct unit within the national army . In February 2005 President Joseph Kabila passed a decree which appointed the GR 's commanding officer and " repealed any previous provisions contrary " to that decree . The GR , more than 10 @,@ 000 strong ( the ICG said 10 @,@ 000 to 15 @,@ 000 in January 2007 ) , has better working conditions and is paid regularly , but still commits rapes and robberies in the vicinity of its bases .

In an effort to extend his personal control across the country , Joseph Kabila has deployed the GR at key airports , ostensibly in preparation for an impending presidential visit . At the beginning of 2007 there were Guards deployed in the central prison of Kinshasa , N 'djili Airport , Bukavu , Kisangani , Kindu , Lubumbashi , Matadi , and Moanda , where they appear to answer to no local commander and have caused trouble with MONUC troops there .

The GR is also supposed to undergo the integration process , but in January 2007 , only one battalion had been announced as having been integrated . Formed at a brassage centre in the Kinshasa suburb of Kibomango , the battalion included 800 men , half from the former GSSP and half from the MLC and RCD Goma .

= = = Other forces active in the country = = =

There are currently large numbers of United Nations troops stationed in the DRC . The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ( MONUSCO ) , on had a strength of over 19 @,@ 000 peacekeepers ( including 16 @,@ 998 military personnel ) and has a mission of assisting Congolese authorities maintain security . The UN and foreign military aid missions , the most prominent being EUSEC RD Congo , are attempting to assist the Congolese in rebuilding the armed forces , with major efforts being made in trying to assure regular payment of salaries to armed forces personnel and also in military justice . Retired Canadian Lieutenant General Marc Caron also served for a time as Security Sector Reform advisor to the head of MONUC .

Groups of anti @-@ Rwandan government rebels like the FDLR , and other foreign fighters remain inside the DRC . The FDLR which is the greatest concern , was some 6 @,@ 000 strong , in July 2007 . By late 2010 the FDLR 's strength however was estimated at 2 @,@ 500 . The other groups are smaller : the Ugandan Lord 's Resistance Army , the Ugandan rebel group the Allied Democratic Forces in the remote area of Mt Rwenzori , and the Burundian Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu ? Forces Nationales de Liberation ( PALIPEHUTU @-@ FNL ) .

Finally there is a government paramilitary force , created in 1997 under President Laurent Kabila . The National Service is tasked with providing the army with food and with training the youth in a range of reconstruction and developmental activities . There is not much further information available , and no internet @-@ accessible source details the relationship of the National Service to other armed forces bodies ; it is not listed in the constitution . President Kabila , in one of the few comments available , says National Service will provide a gainful activity for street children . Obligatory civil service administered through the armed forces was also proposed under the Mobutu regime during the ' radicalisation ' programme of December 1974 @-@ January 1975 ; the FAZ was opposed to the measure and the plan ' took several months to die.'

= = Air Force = =

All military aircraft in the DRC are operated by the Air Force . Jane 's World Air Forces states that the Air Force has an estimated strength of 1 @, @ 800 personnel and is organised into two Air Groups . These Groups command five wings and nine squadrons , of which not all are operational . 1 Air Group is located at Kinshasa and consists of Liaison Wing , Training Wing and Logistical Wing and has a strength of five squadrons . 2 Tactical Air Group is located at Kaminia and consists of Pursuit and Attack Wing and Tactical Transport Wing and has a strength of four squadrons . Foreign private military companies have reportedly been contracted to provide the DRC 's aerial reconnaissance capability using small propeller aircraft fitted with sophisticated equipment . Jane 's states that National Air Force of Angola fighter aircraft would be made available to defend Kinshasa if it came under attack .

Like the other services , the Congolese Air Force is not capable of carrying out its responsibilities . Few of the Air Force 's aircraft are currently flyable or capable of being restored to service and it is unclear whether the Air Force is capable of maintaining even unsophisticated aircraft . Moreover , Jane 's states that the Air Force 's Ecole de Pilotage is ' in near total disarray ' though Belgium has offered to restart the Air Force 's pilot training program .

= = Navy = =

The 2002 edition of Jane 's Sentinel described the Navy as being " in a state of near total disarray " and stated that it did not conduct any training or have operating procedures . The Navy shares the same discipline problems as the other services . It was initially placed under command of the MLC when the transition began : the current situation is uncertain .

The 2007 edition of Jane 's Fighting Ships states that the Navy is organised into four commands , based at Matadi , near the coast ; the capital Kinshasa , further up the Congo river ; Kalemie , on Lake Tanganyika ; and Goma , on Lake Kivu .

The IISS , in its 2007 edition of the Military Balance , confirms the bases listed in Jane 's and adds a fifth base at Boma , a coastal city near Matadi .

Various sources also refer to numbered Naval Regions . Operations of the 1st Naval Region have been reported in Kalemie , the 4th near the northern city of Mbandaka , and the 5th at Goma .

The IISS lists the Navy at 1 @, @ 000 personnel and a total of eight patrol craft , of which only one is operational , a Shanghai II Type 062 class gunboat designated " 102 " . There are five other 062s as well as two Swiftships which are not currently operational , though some may be restored to service in the future . According to Jane 's , the Navy also operates barges and small craft armed with machine guns .

Before the downfall of Mobutu , a small navy operated on the Congo river . One of its installations was at the village of N 'dangi near the presidential residence in Gbadolite . The port at N 'dangi was the base for several patrol boats , helicopters and the presidential yacht .