

EUFOR DR CONGO

The EU's military presence in the DRC

EUFOR's Mandate

The European Union's Force in the DRC (EUFOR) was established at the request of the UN to reinforce its MONUC operation. EUFOR was launched on 12 June 2006 and was fully operational by 30 July.

The primary objective of the EUFOR DR Congo military operation is to give timely and focused support to the 17,600 blue helmets from the UN's peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) in fulfilling its mandate to stabilising the country. Other tasks include the protection of civilians in the areas of deployment (including the evacuation of individuals in danger), as well as contributing to airport security in Kinshasa and freedom of movement of personnel. The Congolese Police, MONUC and EUFOR have been controlling the inner city, and key security points such as the IEC building, the residences of Kabila and Bemba, the port, and the major broadcasting and communication centres.

EUFOR aims mainly to act as a dissuasive presence in Kinshasa. The operation does, however, have the authority to open fire, but only under strict guidelines.

Legal base

EUFOR is deployed in accordance with the mandate set out in the UNSC Resolution 1671 (2006) adopted unanimously on 25

April 2006. This Joint Action Plan forms the EU legal basis and sets out the framework for the operation.

The autonomous EU-led operation is conducted in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The Political and Security Committee (PSC) exercises the political control and strategic direction of the military operation, taking all relevant decisions in accordance with Article 25 of the EU Treaty. Thus the PSC has the authority to amend the planning documents, including the Operational Plan, the Chain of Command and the Rules of Engagement. It shall also include the powers to take further decisions on the appointment of the EU Operations Commander and/or the EU Force Commander.

The EU Operational Headquarters is located in Potsdam, Germany, where planning and command of the operation takes place. Lieutenant General Karlheinz Viereck (Germany) is the EU Operation Commander based at the EU's Headquarters in Belgium. Major General Christian Damay (France) is the EU Force Commander and is presently stationed in Kinshasa.

The powers of decision with respect to the objectives and termination of the EU military operation remains vested in the European Council.

EUFOR's presence in DRC

1,100 EUFOR troops are based at the Ndolo military airport in Kinshasa. This is a strategic base from which the EU can rapidly deploy troops by helicopter/aircraft to any area where intervention is necessary. Troops on the ground include command, protection and intervention units. MONUC has not requested the presence of EUFOR in the east of the Congo.

The EU has made provision for a 1200 battalion-size, rapid deployment force "over the horizon" in neighbouring Gabon. This will support and complement the UN's peacekeeping operations for limited times.

There is a 1,500-strong reserve battalion available in Europe.

Funding

The financial reference amount for the common costs of EUFOR for the original four-month period was €16,700 000. These costs are paid through contributions by EU member states to a financial mechanism (Athena) based on their individual GDP's.

Composition of EUFOR

The operation comprises of approximately 2,300 troops from 20 EU member states, as well as from Turkey. Two-thirds of the troops are provided by Germany and France. The remaining third is made up of contributors from Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal.

Background of EU missions in DRC

EUFOR is part of the EU's more comprehensive approach in the DRC. The mission is the second armed force organised by the EU outside the framework of NATO (after the EU sent 1850 troops to the DRC in 2003 under ARTEMIS).

Since the signing of the comprehensive and inclusive agreement signed in Pretoria in 2002, the EU has demonstrated its commitment to supporting the transition process in the DRC. This has been done both through diplomatic and institutional action, as well as through military and technical support. Previous operations under ESDP include the ARTEMIS operation in Ituri, the ongoing EU Police mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL Kinshasa) and the EU advisory and assistance mission for the DRC security reform (EUSEC DR Congo).¹

¹ EUPOL Kinshasa, launched in April 2005, is the first civilian mission for crisis management in Africa under the context of ESDP. In close co-operation with the UN, EUPOL's objective is to provide a framework for and advice to the Integrated Police Unit (IPU) under a Congolese line of command. The purpose is to guarantee that the actions of the IPU are in line with international police best practice.

EUSEC-RD Congo, launched in June 2005, provides advice and assistance to Congolese security authorities to ensure that practices are compatible with human rights regulations and the rule of law. A key project of EUSEC addresses the chain of payment for soldiers.

EU's exit strategy from the DRC

The original mandate of the EUFOR was for a period of four months after the date of the first round of the presidential and parliamentary elections. However, the failure of any presidential candidate to ensure a 50% majority has resulted in a second round of elections on 29 October 2006. EUFOR's mandate has been extended until the end of November 2006. However, EUFOR's mandate does stipulate that EU deployment in the DRC shall not exceed the term of MONUC's mandate, and is therefore subject to the extension of MONUC's term of deployment.

The EU has emphasised the great importance of the presence of the international community in the post-elections phase – both in rebuilding the DRC, as well as ensuring the security of Congolese citizens. Both the UN and EU mandates should consider these issues carefully and extend their presence in the DRC accordingly. The support for the Integrated Police Unit is key, as well as support for the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process and *Brassage* process.

Role of EUFOR since its deployment

After the preliminary election results were announced by the IEC on Sunday 20 August 2006 there was an escalation of fighting between Joseph Kabila's Presidential Guard and Jean-Pierre Bemba's protection element in Kinshasa. A hundred and fifty-strong Spanish contingent from EUFOR escorted diplomats in danger to safety. However, with knowledge of this potentially volatile situation, could MONUC and the EUFOR not have collectively developed a more proactive, high-density operation that would have prevented the violence?

On 22 August Kabila and Bemba officially brokered a truce and agreed to cede control of parts of the city to the Congolese National police force. The EU, and others, are responsible for the verification of the compliance of this process.

In response to the unrest, the EU's rapid reaction force for Congo brought in 200 more German and Dutch soldiers from

Gabon to Kinshasa, as well as flying in 3 helicopters and about 60 French, Portuguese and Swedish special forces troops overnight in anticipation of further clashes.

In light of the second round of elections – role of EUFOR

Both presidential candidates are not ready to accept defeat but rather plan to reject the results and may opt for a repeat of the violence that characterised the first round of elections.

What can MONUC and EUFOR do to ensure that Kabila's Presidential Guard and Bemba's protection group become part of the demobilisation process and are restricted to barracks? It is important to establish the mandate of these two forces. The Presidential Guard is responsible for the protection of the President and is not mandated to enforce law and order in the DRC. The maintenance of public order is the responsibility of the Congolese Police. This issue again emphasises the importance to complete the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration process (DDR), which must include the Presidential Guard and elements of Bemba's protection force. It is also apparent that EUFOR and other international bodies should provide the national police force with logistical and technical support during this time.

The most important aspect of the election process at present is to prevent either of the candidates from rejecting the ultimate election results and going to war. EUFOR must ensure that the costs of Bemba going to war far outweigh those of co-operation in a government of national unity. If Kabila wins the elections it is unlikely that Bemba will be part of the executive government and visa versa. It is important to discuss the role of Bemba in the new government and make the possibility as attractive to him as possible. It is necessary, at a minimum, that Bemba's political party is represented sufficiently.

One must remember that these elections are not to control territory, but rather to control the state. This means that Kinshasa and the surrounding province (where Bemba has a stronghold) are integral to the process and potentially are the most volatile.

As part of its holistic approach, EUFOR must use the period before the second round to ensure that both candidates and their supporters act responsibly. The EUFOR needs to check that there is also minimal intimidation and violence and that campaigning is free and fair. There is a need to improve civic education and voter turn-out. If unhappy with the election results, spoiler factions within Bemba and Kabila's support structure will use any reason to cry foul and declare the election outcome unfair. The EUFOR must make the necessary preparations for this scenario.