Forum: United Nations Historical Security Council (UNHSC) - 1961

Topic: The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Student Officer: Dioni Elvira Kalpaka

Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Dioni Elvira Kalpaka, I am a 10th grade student at Costeas-Geitonas School, and it is my utmost honour to serve as a Deputy President for the Historical Security Council at this year's St. Catherine's British School Model United Nations Conference. This study guide will help you gain knowledge on the topic of: "The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo". This guide will help you to better understand the topic and it will support you when drafting your resolutions. However conducting your own research is extremely important as you can ensure gaining a deeper perspective on the issue.

With that in mind I would like to congratulate all of you for your dedication in preparing for and participating in this MUN conference! I hope all of you become aware of how such experience can contribute to self growth and enhance your understanding on global affairs, while also fostering meaningful relationships with notable individuals. As this marks my second time chairing, I hope that we will have a productive and memorable experience during the conference and that all procedures will be conducted smoothly and efficiently.

If you have any questions regarding this topic please feel free to contact me via my email: dioni.kalpaka@gmail.com. If you have any other general questions, please contact the President of the UNHSC Rea Karvouni at rea.karvouni@gmail.com.

I look forward to meeting you all!

Sincerely,

Dioni Elvira Kalpaka

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), soon after its decolonization experienced a significant political and national identity crisis.[1] Contributing significantly to the crisis were the secessionist movements and the assassination of former-Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, which resulted in the weakening of the central government.[2] Considering this, the deployment of United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Forces and the creation of the Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) were necessary to de-escalate tensions.[3] However, at that time some people believed that it was too early for Congo to gain its independence,[4] which led to political instability, social unrest and power struggles, reflecting the challenges of building a national identity after so many years of colonial rule. Consequently, what started as an internal crisis, turned into a major concern for global security, due to the region's strategic position and vast mineral wealth.[5] The involvement of the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) turned Congo into a major frontline for the Cold War, transforming the conflict into a matter of international security, while also deeming the Security Council responsible for its peaceful settlement.[6]

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[1] *"60 Years of Neo-Colonial Plundering – ISA."* Internationalsocialist.net, 2020, internationalsocialist.net/2020/06/drc-60th-anniversary-of-independence/. Accessed 13 Oct. 2025.

[2] Britanica. "How Did Patrice Lumumba Die?" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/story/how-did-patrice-lumumba-die.

[3] Peacekeeping UN. "ONUC." *Un.org*, 2019, peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onucB.htm.

[4] Cole, Jonathan. "The Congo Question: Conflicting Visions of Independence." Emporia State Research Studies, vol. 43, no. 1, 2006, pp. 26–37, esirc.emporia.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/387/200.4.pdf?sequence=1.

[5] Keyes, Justin. "A Dark Colonial Past, Foreign Politics, and Ineffective Leadership." *Digitalcommons.bryant.edu*, 18 Dec. 2021, digitalcommons.bryant.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=isbhs.

[6] "The Congo, Decolonization, and the Cold War, 1960–1965." *Office of the Historian*, history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization.

Secessionist movements, more particularly those in Katanga and the self-proclaimed Free Republic of the Congo, were movements led by Moïse Tshombe and Antoine Gizenga that threatened the stability of the African continent, as they aimed to cause separation from their political entities.[7] At the same time, foreign actors were also becoming increasingly involved, after the US and Belgium's involvement in the assassination of Prime Minister Lumumba as well as Soviets support of the Stanleyville secessionists as most prominent, the mobilisation of UN Peacekeeping Forces is justified in order to safeguard peace in the region.[8]

The situation in Congo is directly related to the conference theme, "Beyond Borders", as it illustrates how conflict and resource exploitation can easily cross boundaries and require international cooperation in order to be resolved. The people should be assisted by external actors, as the UN's aim to foster and preserve international security exceeds borders. At these difficult times for the international community, it is important to support developing and recently decolonised states in their efforts to become thriving, fully sovereign democracies, as UN peacekeeping forces work toward the goals of security, peace and stability "Beyond Borders".

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[7] Miller, John. "The Katanga Secession, the Five Factors Model, and Counterinsurgency (COIN) Theory | Small Wars Journal by Arizona State University." *Small Wars Journal by Arizona State University*, 21 Nov. 2024, smallwarsjournal.com/2024/11/21/the-katanga-secession-counterinsurgency-coin-theory/.

[8] Keyes, Justin. "A Dark Colonial Past, Foreign Politics, and Ineffective Leadership." *Digitalcommons.bryant.edu*, 18 Dec. 2021, digitalcommons.bryant.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=isbhs.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to "the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another".[9] In such situations, the colonising country may be referred to as the colonial master of the colonised country. The establishment of the Trusteeship Council in 1945, whose purpose was to ensure that trust territories were administered in the best interests of their citizens as well as in the best interests of international peace and security, led to the consequent shrinkage of colonialism until no colonised territories were left. This shrinking in popularity was due to the fact that many anti-colonial movements evolved during the 20th century aiming to establish global norms against foreign domination.

Covert Operations

A covert operation refers to a type of surveillance that is carried out secretly, without the knowledge of the individuals being observed. The success of covert operations relies on blending with the surroundings.[10]

Coup d' État

The term "d' état", refers to a "sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a group of people".[11] In case of governments being overthrown, coordination and political connections are essential and that could lead to members of the group may already be high-ranked military officers or prominent political figures.

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[9] Cambridge Dictionary. "COLONIALISM | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Cambridge.org*, 27 Nov. 2019, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/colonialism.
[10] "Covert Operation - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics." Sciencedirect.com, 2014, www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/covert-operation.
[11] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Coup d'État | Political Intervention." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 Dec. 2014, www.britannica.com/topic/coup-detat.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation refers to the "process by which colonies become independent of the colonising country".[12] After the creation of the United Nations and the Trusteeship Council, decolonisation became an international movement until all colonised territories were decolonised.

Government-in-Exile

The term "government-in-exile" refers to "a government temporarily established on foreign soil following the occupation of its own territory by another authority".[13] In this case, an administration functioning similarly to a government-in-exile is that of Antoine Gizenga in the Free Republic of the Congo.

Mercenary

The term "mercenary" refers to "a soldier who fights for any country or group that pays them".[14] Mercenaries, although repeatedly proven less courageous and reliable than soldiers who are nationals or members of the country or group they're fighting for, have been featured in conflicts since the beginning of warfare.

Policy of Containment

The Policy of Containment is a US external policy developed during the 1940s and especially after the second World War, which aimed at limiting the spread of communist ideology and notions. The Policy of Containment was the beginning of the Cold War. The Cold War was a conflict between the US and at the time largest and strongest communist nation, the USSR. Furthermore, the policy forced the US to actively engage in some other smaller conflicts, like the situation in Congo, as they wanted to monitor

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[12] Britannica. "Decolonization." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 Jan. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/decolonization.

[13] Merriam-Webster Dictionary. "Definition of GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE." *Www.merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/government-in-exile.

[14] Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus. "Mercenary." *@CambridgeWords*, 20 July 2022, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mercenary.

and prevent the spread of Soviet influence as well as maintain Western political and economic interests in the region.[15]

Voting Proxy

Proxy refers to the authority given to a person to act for someone else, such as by voting for them in an election[16]. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, it refers to the case where the Congolese elected a president, Joseph Kasavubu, prime minister 7Patrice Lumumba, as well as a senate and an assembly.[17]

Secession

Secession refers to the "act of becoming independent and no longer part of a country, area or organisation, among other entities".[18] In the DRC crisis it refers to the declaration of independence of Katanga from DRC. Prominent secessionist movements in the Congolese area are those of Katanga and the Free Republic of the Congo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

Congo Free State (1885-1908)

The Congo Free State was, at first, the personal property of King Leopold II's of Belgium, which was recognised at the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), and later on was perceived as a Belgian colony.[19] As this territory was rich in rubber, ivory and minerals,[20] Leopold wanted to keep it for private economic ventures, with no direct oversight from the

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[15] Office of the Historian. "Kennan and Containment, 1947." *History.State.gov*, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan.

[16] ---. *"Proxy." @CambridgeWords, 11 June 2025, dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/proxy*.

[17] "The Congo, Decolonization, and the Cold War, 1960–1965." Office of the Historian, history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization.

[18] Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus. "Secession." *Dictionary.cambridge.org*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/secession.

[19] McKenna, Amy. "Congo Free State | Historical State, Africa." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 27 Sept. 2011, www.britannica.com/place/Congo-Free-State.

[20] "Congolese Culture - Friends of the Congo." Friends of the Congo, 2018, friendsofthecongo.org/congolese-culture/.

Belgian government. Local populations were forced to collect rubber and ivory under brutal conditions, violating human rights, just so European companies could benefit.[21] Furthermore, indigenous people were subjected to forced labour, were taken hostage, there were floggings as well as executions. Soldiers of the Force Publique, which was Leopold's private army, were terrorising villages and a variety of practices was followed such, in order to enforce quotas.[22] The humanitarian consequences were severe, as millions of Congolese died due to violence, disease, famine and exhaustion caused by this brutal system.[23] The population decline estimates range from 10 million deaths during Leopold's rule.[24] However, global pressure and reform movements, forced Belgium to annex the territory in 1908, which resulted in the end of Leopold's rule and the creation of the Belgian Congo.[25]

Belgian Congo (1908-1960)

As previously mentioned, in 1908, the official annexation of the Congo Free State ended King Leopold's personal rule.[26] Now, the administration of the colony is shifted to the Belgian Parliament and the colony ministry. The Belgian Parliament's control significantly reduced some of the abuse and forced labour practices, but the coercive labour system and racial discrimination continued in modified forms. The Belgian government invested in many infrastructure projects, in a failed attempt to modernise the colony's economy. such as the development of roads, railways, ports, hospitals and mission schools. However, even though the Belgian government tried to improve the conditions in Congo, the economy remained extractive, centered on copper, rubber and

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[21] "King Leopold's "Heart of Darkness."" *Teach Democracy*, 13 Sept. 2024, teachdemocracy.org/online-lesson/king-leopolds-heart-of-darkness/.

[22] Dowd, Felicity. How Did the Force Publique Exercise an Intense Regime of Terror to Control the Congolese Natives during the Congo Free State? 2020.

[23] "Red Rubber: Atrocities in the Congo Free State in Confidential Print:…." AM, 16 Dec. 2010, www.amdigital.co.uk/insights/news/red-rubber-atrocities-in-the-congo-free-state-in-confidential-print-africa.

[24] Friends of the Congo. "D.R. Congo Primer - Friends of the Congo." Friends of the Congo, 26 Mar. 2024, friendsofthecongo.org/primer/.

[25] "Belgium Annexes the Congo | EBSCO." EBSCO Information Services, Inc. | Www.ebsco.com, 2023, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/belgium-annexes-congo.

[26] "Belgium Confiscates Congo Free State from King Leopold II | EBSCO." EBSCO Information Services, Inc. Www.ebsco.com, 2022, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/belgium-confiscates-congo-free-state-king-leopold-ii.

palm oil, which attracted many European settlers and companies[27], which benefited most, at the cost of Congolese labourers facing low wages. However, there was no meaningful political representation of Congolese people until the very late 1950s[28], when nationalist movements and calls for independence grew stronger, inspired by the current decolonisation trends. Continuous protests by the Congolese had as a result Belgium in 1960, granting independence. This resulted in the creation of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Secessionist Movements and Internal Power Struggles

The Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo-Léopoldsville)

The Democratic Republic of Congo, after hastily gaining its independence, faced some internal struggles. More precisely, in 1960, the Congo faced severe political instability as different factions were arguing for control.[29] The position of the Prime Minister was filled by Patrice Lumumba, who was a nationalist leader, advocating for full sovereignty and complete economic independence from foreign powers. However, Lumumba wanted to seek help from the Soviet Union, but such action provoked opposition from Belgium and other political factions in Congo. His career came to an end, after he contacted the Soviet Union for help, as he was dismissed, arrested and executed. After Lumumba, Joseph Desire Mobutu took power in September 1960, supporting the claim of neutralising political chaos.[30] The stage for future authoritarian rule was set at that moment, as Mobutu's intervention strengthened the army's influence and significantly shifted the political balance. The situation benefited the Soviet Union, which hoped that the DRC would be a potential ally in the Cold War. The fragility of the situation led to the United Nations deployed peacekeeping forces being sent in order to stabilise the

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[27] Snow, Dan. "DR Congo: Cursed by Its Natural Wealth." BBC News, 9 Oct. 2013, www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24396390.

[28] Nyinevi, Christopher, and Richard Fosu. "The African Union's Prohibition of Unconstitutional Changes of Government: An Uneasy Choice between Fidelity to Principle and Pragmatism." African Security, vol. 16, no. 1, 29 Mar. 2023, pp. 1–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2023.2195748.

[29] "The Congo, Decolonization, and the Cold War, 1960–1965." Office of the Historian, history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization.

[30] The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Mobutu Sese Seko | President of Zaire." Encyclopædia Britannica, 10 Oct. 2018, www.britannica.com/biography/Mobutu-Sese-Seko.

country, prevent any foreign interference and maintain Congo's territorial integrity. This was one of the UN's largest peacekeeping operations[31] as it was tasked to mediate between secessionists, the central government and foreign actors. What started as an internal conflict, has turned into an international security concern involving foreign governments, intelligence operations and global media attention, since Congo is now a proxy arena for Cold War rivalries.

The Free Republic of the Congo (Congo-Stanleyville)

The rival government in Congo was led by Antoine Gizenga, a former deputy prime minister under Lumumba. He established a rival administration in Stanleyville, located in eastern Congo, after Lumumba's dismissal and arrest.[32] This rival party acted as a parallel government that claimed legitimacy over the central government in Leopoldville. Its aim was to continue Lumumba's work. This party was interconnected actively to the Cold War, as it was receiving political and material support from both the Soviet Union and China. When it came to the Cold War, this faction represented the eastern left aligned faction of the Congo Crisis, opposing the Western aligned central government which was supported by the United States of America and the UN. It was clear that Congo's fragmentation after gaining its independence was significant, as well as the fact that the regional secessionist movements could become instruments of international ideological competition.

Katanga

In 1960, the Katanga Secession took place, when the Katanga Province submitted its withdrawal from the newly independent DRC. This secession was led by Moise Tshomb, who was a member of the local elite community and aristocracy. This withdrawal was primarily driven and supported by Belgian nationals, advisers and mercenaries, as during the Katanga Secession there was wealth due to copper, uranium and other valuable mineral economies. The motives between such an action was mainly about

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[31] United Nations Peacekeeping. "ONUC." Un.org, 2019, peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onucB.htm.
[32] Wikipedia Contributors. "Antoine Gizenga." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 13 Sept. 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_Gizenga.

mining interests seeking to regain control over some of the region's resources. This indicates how economic and political dissatisfaction was closely linked when it came to this particular problem. Their relationship with the Central Government was tense, as Leopoldville was considered by many unable to maintain orderly government.[33] In addition, they had received covert backing from Belgium and tacit support from Western powers, in an attempt to prevent Soviet influence.[34] However, Katanga seeking its own independence had a huge impact on the central Congo, which at the time was trying to promote a spirit of reunification among the country. As it opposes Soviet-backed factions in eastern Congo, it soon became a Cold War hotspot.

Impact on the International Community

The international community was significantly affected by the instability and tension in Congo. The situation was so severe that it resulted in the deployment of the UN's first Peacekeeping force that was also one of the largest Peacekeeping missions ever led by the UN. Violent conflicts between peacekeepers and Katangese secessionists and foreign mercenaries were frequent. Additionally, the global community was shocked by the death of the UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold during a peace mission to Katanga, which resulted in the strengthening of preexisting global tensions, as well as it indicating the dangers of UN operations during the Cold War. Consequently, Congo became a battleground for influence between both the US and the Soviet Union, states with contradicting political views. Both powers aimed to expand ideological influence among the newly colonized state, as well as a power struggle for control in the African Union. As a result, African States faced internal instability and external manipulations by the superpowers, due to the complicated post-World War II recovery crisis and decolonisation efforts. The already tense Cold War environment in collaboration with the escalating violence and the intense foreign intervention, increased international instability. A balance between respect for state sovereignty alongside with the need to

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[33] CIA. "THE KATANGA INTEGRATION PROBLEM" https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000399420.pdf
[34] Saleh, Souleyman. Cold War Battleground in Africa Foreign Policy and the Congo Crisis, January 1959-January 1961. May 2013

maintain international peace and cooperation, could be proven crucial for the deescalation of the Congo Crisis, which resulted in the UN Security Council attempting to reinforce these two. However, such intervention raised some significant concerns regarding the extent to which the UN should be allowed to intervene in internal matters of newly independent states. This was primarily due to the fact that many times states that were trying to find their balance might pose a threat to international security.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of the Event	Event
30 June 1960	Congo gained independence from Belgium, with Joseph Kasavubu as President and Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister.[35]
5 July 1960	Congolese soldiers begin to mutiny against their Belgian Commanders all over the country.[36]
11 July 1960	The mineral-rich Katanga province declares its independence from the rest of the DRC.[37]
14 July 1960	The Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) is established by the

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[35] "The Congo, Decolonization, and the Cold War, 1960–1965." *Office of the Historian*, history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization.

[36] ibid

[37] Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. "Congo in Crisis: The Rise and Fall of Katangan Secession - Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training." *Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training*, 8 Sept. 2015, adst.org/2015/09/congo-in-crisis-the-rise-and-fall-of-katangan-secession/.

	United Nations and all Belgian troops are called to withdraw from the DRC.[38]
5 September 1960	Prime Minister Lumumba is dismissed from the government by President Kasavubu.[39]
14 September 1960	Amid political tensions and pressure from Lumumba's supporters, the Congolese National Army (CNA) successfully orchestrates a coup d' état, aiming to avoid a civil war. Soviet advisors are immediately expelled from the country.[40]
12 December 1960	The Free Republic of the Congo, gets established, a rival government to the central Kasavubu/Mobutu one.[41]
17 January 1961	Patrice Lumumba is arrested, transferred to Katanga and executed by firing squad under the supervision of Katanga and Belgian authorities.[42]

[38] Peacekeeping UN. "ONUC." *Un.org*, 2019, peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onucB.htm.
[39] Britanica. "How Did Patrice Lumumba Die?" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/story/how-did-patrice-lumumba-die.
[40] "The Congo, Decolonization, and the Cold War, 1960–1965." *Office of the Historian*, history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization.
[41] "Historical Documents - Office of the Historian." *State.gov*, 2025, history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v23/d52.
[42] Prosper Heri Ngorora. "'Symbol of Resistance': Lumumba, the Congolese Hero Killed before His Prime." *Al Jazeera*, 17 Jan. 2025, www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/1/17/symbol-of-resistance-lumumba-the-congolese-hero-killed-before-his-prime.

18 September 1961	The plane of the UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who was flying to Katanga to negotiate a ceasefire with the secessionists, burns in flames and crashes under mysterious circumstances.[43]

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Belgium

Belgium was a hereditary constitutional monarchy and all political decisions were taken by a caretaker or a coalition government. Additionally, Belgium was the former colonial ruler as well as the State that used to benefit more from Congo's resources, due to their close association.[44] A major role in transforming Belgium's economy was the extensive extraction of Congolese resources, as well as the exploitation of Congolese labour during the colonial era. That indicated the strong association between Belgium and Congo financially, so even after Congo gained its independence, they made efforts to maintain their strong relationships. Therefore, the reason Belgium supported the Katanga secession was due to their extended mineral and corporate benefits. Furthermore, it was involved in the assasination of the Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, as Belgium Intelligence worked in cooperation with the CIA in covert operations, that aimed for the secret surveillance of the situation without the realisation of the citizens.[45]

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[43] "Death of Dag Hammarskjöld | Research Starters | EBSCO Research." *EBSCO*, 2023, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/death-dag-hammarskjold.

[44] Lumen Learning. "The Belgian Congo | World Civilizations II (HIS102) – Biel." Courses.lumenlearning.com, courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-fmcc-worldcivilization2/chapter/the-belgian-congo/.

[45] "Case." Www.ecchr.eu, www.ecchr.eu/en/case/crimes-during-liberation-wars-the-lumumba-murder/.

Dominion of Ceylon

The dominion of Ceylon, tried to maintain a neutral stance, as they were seeking to prevent any further escalation of the Congo Crisis. It proposed some UN resolutions in an attempt to limit foreign influence in the region, to succeed in the withdrawal of Belgian troops and in order to restore lawful governance. As they were aiming to avoid a full-scale civil war in the Congo, they fully supported diplomatic initiatives in order to achieve peace.[46] Multilateral diplomacy, respect for sovereignty and constructive dialogue were the policies that Ceylon believed should be followed, in order to restore the stability of any nation. Congo's political transitions could be enhanced through the consistently peacekeeping initiatives as well as mediation efforts through the international cooperation backed by Ceylon. Such actions would ensure that no further violence or foreign domination would occure.

United States of America (US)

The fear that Patrice Lumumba's government policies would align with the Soviet Union resulted in the United States of America being actively involved in the crisis, as they aimed to avoid the spread of communism by the Soviet Union in Central Africa. After all, Western countries interested in Africa, were viewing Lumumba's pro-Soviet Union leanings, as a potential threat. This resulted in the US attempting to minimize Soviet influence in the newly independent and vulnerable state of Congo, the US implemented the policy of containment. Political instability was increasing by cover operations that undermined Lumumba, which were organised by the CIA in coordination with the Belgium Intelligence, in order to secretly monitor the political situation. At the same time political and financial support was offered to Colonel Joseph Desire Mobutu. Moreover, military training and equipment was provided by the US in an attempt to encourage the creation of more pro-Western factions.[47]

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[46]"Sri Lanka - Growth of Nationalist Power." Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com/place/Sri-Lanka/Growth-of-nationalist-power.

[47] Uknowledge, Uknowledge, and Erik Davis. THE UNITED STATES and the CONGO, 1960-1965: CONTAINMENT, MINERALS and STRA , MINERALS and STRATEGIC L TEGIC LOCATION. 2013.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

The USSR wanted to expand its influence in Africa during decolonisation, as they thought that newly decolonised states were more vulnerable and easy to influence. For them, Congo was a new Cold War battlefield. They provided military advisors and equipment to Lumumba's pro-communist government. However, UN operations and Western countries significantly pressured the Soviet Union, as they didn't want the area to be ideologically influenced by them. This limited the Soviet Union's influence. Later on, the USSR offered support to rival pro- communist governments, like Gizenga's Stanleyville regime.[48]

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The Non-Aligned movement was composed of non-aligned nations navigating through the Western and Eastern bloc pressures. They promoted neutrality and independence instead of Cold War rivalries, as they aimed to protect the interests of developing nations that had colonial histories, without choosing a side. They strongly wanted to resist domination by global superpowers and aimed to uphold self-determination.[49]

RELEVANT UN TREATIES CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 143 of the UN Security Council

This United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution authorised the creation of the Operation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), on 14th of July 1960 which called for the withdrawal of the Belgian troops from the territory.[50] It was an early UN effort to minimise the crisis that arose after Congo gained its independence. Its aim was to maintain peace and support a lawful government while assisting the Congolese in restoring their stability. It was one of the first and bigger UN peacekeeping task forces,

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[48] Office of the Historian. "Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945–1960." Office of the Historian, 2024, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa.

[49] Munro, André. "Non-Aligned Movement." Encyclopædia Britannica, 26 Apr. 2015, www.britannica.com/topic/Non-Aligned-Movement.

[50] "Security Council Resolution 143 (1960) [the Congo Question] | Refworld." Refworld, 2023, www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/1960/en/75865.

counting more than 20000 operators from all around the world.[51] Balancing neutrality and peace enforcement could be hard as it clashes with different factions' opinions, meaning that Member States with opposing political views would fail to cooperate. However, this action could be enhanced if there was a clearer and stronger peace mandate that would ensure Congolese authority coordination to achieve legitimacy.[52]

UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld's Diplomatic Efforts

UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld's diplomatic efforts in the situation of Congo were indicating that to establish peace, personal engagement of both Member States and the DRC on that matter in order to respect and value DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, is necessary. However, the Cold War rivalries made cooperation almost impossible, since impartiality would make actual action difficult. It was impossible for actions supported by both sides to be taken, due to contradicting policies and any action against one of the sides would escalate the conflict. Dag Hammarskjöld's death stopped all the efforts made in order to achieve amelioration the situation in Congo. A stronger political backing from the UNSC aiming for the enhanced protection of officials, alongside with the engagement between Congolese civil societies and political parties was necessary for the existence of international cooperation.[53]

Resolution 161 of the UN Security Council

This UNSCR, which was adopted on the 21st of November in 1961, followed the executions of Patrice Lumumba, Maurice Mpolo and Joseph Okito. It expresses concern over the situation in Congo, and its aim is to prevent the outbreak of a civil war. Additionally, it requested the withdrawal of all foreign personnel not under the UN supervision. The aim of such an action was to prevent the escalation of the dispute, through minimising foreign interference.[54]

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[51] United Nations Peacekeeping. "ONUC." Un.org, 2019, peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onucB.htm.
[52] United Nations Peacekeeping. "ONUC." Un.org, 2019, peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onucB.htm.
[53] "DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD: The UN Years ..." Www.un.org, www.un.org/depts/dhl/dag/time1961.htm.
[54] "Security Council Resolution 161 (1961) [the Congo Question] | Refworld." Refworld, 2023, www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/1961/en/113011.

Resolution 169 of the UN Security Council

This resolution, which was adopted on 24th of November in 1961, condemned secessionist movements, especially the one in Katanga, underlining Congo's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The need for such a resolution came from the armed actions in Katanga against UN forces, which then resulted in the Secretary General having to deport foreign personnel associated with the conflict. It urged all Member States to not violate the UN principle and try to not escalate tensions. It mainly addressed the primacy of diplomacy and peaceful negotiations instead of military intervention and it was an attempt to cease the conflict between the UN officials and the Katangese people.[55]

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The Léopoldville Round Table

The Leopoldville Round Table was a negotiation meeting. That marked the beginning of Congolese independence through the creation of a constitution. Additionally, it supervised the creation of other institutions, while also dividing power. The main reasons this failed was because it was Belgian dominated, as the majority of its members were supporting Belgium's policies and interests, and thus it lacked discussions about ethnic and regional diversity, since it was not an action led by Belgium. The success of this attempt would be based on two main aspects. Firstly, the increase in the number of neutral mediators and secondly, the promotion of ethnic and regional diversity as well as the prioritisation of security and economic authority. This way its decisions would represent more the people of Congo, making it more impactful, effective as well as respected .[56]

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[55] "Security Council Resolution 169 (1961) [the Congo Question]." Refworld, www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/1961/en/113012.

[56] "THE RIOTS of 4 JANUARY 1959 | INDÉPENDANCE !" Independance.africamuseum.be, independance.africamuseum.be/en/exhibition/independance/independance-emeutes.

Kitona Agreement

The Kitona agreement is an agreement signed in December 1960 between President Joseph Kasavubu, Colonel Joseph Desire Mobutu and Antoine Gizenga's representatives. Its aim was to reunify the divided government and the Congolese people after the political chaos caused by the succession. It called for the release of political prisoners, the reestablishment of central authority, as well as, for the reconciliation between the rival factions. It was supervised by the UN, however, ultimately it failed to achieve lasting unity. The main reasons for this result was the division as well as the foreign interference was very intense and persistent.[57]

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strengthening International Peacekeeping Efforts

Expanding the ONUC's mandate in order to make it clear and robust and ensure that it includes ways to enforce peace, in order to protect the Congolese and disarm secessionists. This could be achieved if the UN worked closely with the Congolese to strengthen institutions, like the Congolese National Parliament and improve security in the region by authorising the use of force against dangerous secessionist movements. This would help with protection of civilians, while at the same time promoting Congolese sovereignty and assisting in gradually rebuilding the state, as well as reducing non-UN intervention through a clear mandate. However, the consistent engagement of peacekeepers in combat could lead to the occurrence of an escalation of the crisis, especially as it relies on international consensus, since it may not fully address political and ethnic tensions.

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[57] Stejskal, James. The Kitona Operation Rwanda'S Gamble to CapTuRe KinShaSa and the MiSReadinG of an "Ally."

Restructuring the Congolese State

In an attempt to establish a more stable Congolese state a federation-like or decentralised government restructuring could happen, by giving the emphasis on regional autonomy and the right to self-determination. This could be achieved by implementing defense and foreign policy centralised, to ensure that some crucial decisions can be made only by the national government, while greater control over internal affairs is allowed, and by creating a revenue sharing framework in order to avoid economic dominion. The benefits of such a solution would be the fact that it ensures that ethnic and regional diversity are addressed, while it also manages to reduce incentive to secede and it improves previous power-sharing initiatives as well as strengthening inclusive local governance. On the other hand, coordination between central regional authority can be challenging, due to disagreements over the division of powers or resources, resulting in slower decision-making and bureaucratic difficulties.

Inclusive Political Dialogue and Reconciliation Process.

A national conference with various political leaders and ethnic groups, including those of secessionist factions and Belgian nationals, could be held, aiming to negotiate a new and improved power-sharing agreement, reconciling mechanisms to heal divisions, and addressing colonial past as well as invasive resource control. To be successful it would require a national consensus and inclusivity promoting long-term stability, while also ensuring that all differences are resolved internally, making any further UN-intervention unnecessary, and consequently strengthening the authority and credibility of the unified central government However, it could fail as it challenges the organisation amid conflict, it requires infrastructure and security guarantees, as it may be used as a both parties could potentially use it as a way to postpone conflict.

Non-Interference Agreement

An attempt to disassociate the DRC from the concept of a Cold War battlefield would be by making the major superpowers agree to not interfere in Congo. This could be

achieved through the creation of a non-interference agreement regarding proxy conflicts in the DRC and the establishment of a UN body to prevent covert interference and monitor violations. Taking under consideration, how international peace is at stake all states should be willing to contribute. On the one hand, it could reduce Cold War-related tensions, which may have been what started the conflict, as both the US and the Soviet Union attempted to assert their influence on the newly decolonised area. and it encourages independent development of the DRC without foreign interference. On the contrary, it can be difficult to achieve amid conflict and with Cold War dynamics already entrenched, and enforcement might be proven difficult.

International Neutral Economic Oversight Commission

Encouraging the creation of a UN and African-led commission, in order to temporarily oversee Congo's core natural resources, like copper, uranium and diamonds, these resources being the primary reason why superpowers want to gain ideological influence over the region. This could ensure that the resources benefit the entire Congolese population, rather than foreign entities, which deescalates any existing conflict and minimises foreign exploitation. The commission would manage all resources as transparently as possible, using them mainly to fund the national reconstruction of Congo. On the one hand, this solution promotes equity as it is driven by both the UN and African region, meaning there is representation from both parties. On the contrary, there could be many disagreements as many countries benefit from Congo's revenues, therefore making the establishment of such a commission difficult.

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