POLICY BRIEF

Number 50 | November 2025

Peace Mediation in the Great Lakes Region: Voices from Below

Samuel Ajogwu Igba

Executive Summary

The focus of peacebuilding actors on high-level processes across the continent is often blamed for the recurrence of violent conflict.[1] In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), often described as the epicentre of conflict in the Great Lakes, peacebuilding since the early 1990s, involving several international interventions, has failed to achieve lasting peace,[2] leading to at least 10 major peace agreements[3] and six periods of short-lived peace. The situation, particularly in the eastern DRC, is also exacerbated by fragmentation among grassroots civil society actors, who are under-resourced and vulnerable to political manipulation.

Local peacebuilding in eastern DRC faces four key challenges. First, grassroots actors are often sidelined in high-level peace processes – leading to limited lower-level engagement and unresolved local disputes. Second, peace talks are mostly held abroad, making grassroots participation difficult. Third, Civil Society Organisations' (CSO) efforts are fragmented and vulnerable to manipulation. And fourth, local actors face significant capacity gaps in technical and financial resources. These challenges reflect the disconnection between state institutions and society, as described by Peter Ekeh's "two publics," where national elites dominate peacebuilding and exclude local communities.

Seven policy recommendations are highlighted in this policy brief: First, local peace and conflict influencers must be mapped and empowered to shift micro-level dynamics toward coexistence. Second, the African Union (AU), East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), United Nations (UN), and European Union (EU) should accurately identify and resource key grassroots actors, supported by listening tours and inclusion tools created by CSOs and researchers. Third, peace efforts must reflect the regional nature of the Great Lakes conflict by integrating Congolese, cross-border, and refugee community voices. Fourth, interveners must centre Congolese agency by expanding grassroots roles in high-level dialogues, revisiting past agreements, and supporting locally led peace hubs and joint listening missions. Fifth, local ownership should be strengthened through scaled-up peacebuilding training and expanded financial and technical support for universities, CSOs, and think tanks. Sixth, greater unity and strategic coordination among peacebuilding actors is essential to increase impact. Seventh, rebuilding state-society trust requires community-state forums, dialogue training, and platforms enabling citizens to rate institutions and voice concerns through local CSO-led mechanisms.

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)
and
Centre for Mediation in Africa (CMA)

Introduction – mapping the state of peacebuilding in the DRC

This policy brief maps the state of peacebuilding in the DRC, highlights some examples of ongoing micro-level peacebuilding in the eastern DRC, discusses the challenges facing local peacebuilding in the area, and offers six critical policy recommendations.

Peacebuilding since the early 1990s in the DRC has involved several international interventions – including: the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) established in July 2010, as a successor to the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC)[4]; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) created in December 2023[5]; the African Union (AU) periodic involvement through its Peace and Security Council; and EU-led Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) missions.

The limited inclusion of local voices, lived realities, and grassroots perspectives of ordinary people in the Great Lakes constrains the success of the past and current peace processes in the region.

International and national peace processes since 1990, resulted to at least 10 major peace agreements,[6] and six periods of short-lived peace including: the post-Mobutu Sesse Seko transition period from 1997–1998; the post-Lusaka Ceasefire agreement from 1999–2001; the subsequent transitional government period from 2003–2006; the post-elections periods between 2006 and 2008; the period following the defeat of the March 23 (M23) movement from 2013–2016; and the initial phase of President Felix Tshisekedi's tenure between 2019–2021.

Moreover, before the Congo–Rwanda peace agreement (the Washington Accord) of June 2025, recent international efforts have failed to bring peace in the region: the EAC-led Nairobi peace process focused on peacebuilding between over 200 armed groups operating out of the eastern DRC; the Southern African Development Community (SADC)-led Luanda process focused on dialogue between the governments of the DRC and Rwanda. Both had limited tangible results as violence escalated between January and June 2025.[7]

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 136,000 people had fled from the DRC to neighbouring countries between January and April 2025.[8] M23 forces intensified their incursions into North and South Kivu, especially in early 2025, despite international pressure. This prompted Qatar to broker the first effective political de-escalation, in March 2025, since renewed fighting in December 2024.

The April "Declaration of Principles" in Washington was signed, followed by the Washington Accord between DRC and Rwanda in June 2025. Since then, there has been a series of stalled negotiations and repeated ceasefire violations, culminating in the November 2025 Doha Framework for Comprehensive Peace, a roadmap built around eight protocols – including prisoner exchanges, ceasefire monitoring, humanitarian access, transitional security, reintegration, and the restoration of state authority.

Meanwhile, the UN's latest report, put together between March and August 2025,[9] documents severe violations by all parties: abuses by the Congolese armed forces and allied militias, and direct Rwandan involvement in M23 operations, facilitating territorial expansion and child recruitment.

These are all well-documented high-level peace processes, but little-known work is being done to unite communities and address micro-level grievances. The limited inclusion of local voices, lived realities, and grassroots perspectives of ordinary people in the Great Lakes constrains the success of the past and current peace processes in the region.[10]

Understanding grassroots peacebuilding in context

Grassroots peacebuilding in the eastern DRC aims to resolve micro-level disputes such as intercommunal clashes, without disputing the importance of international and national levels of peacebuilding. However, the repeated neglect of bottom-up peacebuilding by international and state-centric interventions results in recurring violent conflict in the Great Lakes. In this regard, local agendas – at the individual, family, clan, municipality, community, district, or ethnic group level – partly drive the continuation of violence while peace agreements are implemented.

Peace in the DRC, specifically, is also complicated by external actors within the region. This gives the conflict a Great Lakes-wide dimension. In this regard, the instability in North and South Kivu threatens regional security along the DRC's borders with Rwanda, Burundi, and the Central African Republic (CAR). Four major external armed groups operate in eastern DRC, including: first, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist-leaning Ugandan group of 1,600–2,500 members, that recruits children and has links to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).[11] Second, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), also with Ugandan origins, now reduced to 200–300 fighters, operates across the DRC, CAR, South Sudan, and Sudan.[12] Third, Burundi's National Liberation Forces (FNL), once the armed wing of Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU), remains active in eastern DRC despite being pushed from key border strongholds in 2020.[13] The fourth is the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF), which has also operated covertly in eastern DRC according to a UN report,[14] providing direct military, logistical, and material support to M23 and conducting cross-border operations.

At the grassroots level, within the DRC, age-old land tensions in Ruzizi Plain, in South Kivu Province, between the Bafuliru (predominantly farmers), and the Barundi or Banyamulenge (predominantly herders) remains a conflict requiring violence prevention[15]; fighting also escalated between the Batwa and Luba communities in Tanganyika Province between 2013 and 2018, and was a conflict over resources that resulted in over 1,400 deaths and the displacement of approximately 650,000 people[16]; there are land use tensions in the communities surrounding Virunga National Park with national restrictions on farming and charcoal production leading to disputes with the local population who rely on the resources[17]; moreover, following the April-July 1994 Rwandan genocide, fear of Tutsi retribution from the Kagame-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) resulted in about 1.2 million Rwandan Hutus fleeing into the eastern DRC – including an estimated 25,000 former soldiers of the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and 40,000 Interahamwe militiamen who were genocidaires – ethnic tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi's of the Congo has since been exacerbated, with the political elites at local, national, and international levels driving disparaging narratives that instigate local-level tensions.[18]

These micro-level conflicts and many others are fertile grounds for vulnerable and indignant individuals to be mobilised into various militia groups. Politicians, military leaders, and foreign actors also double down on existing tensions for parochial political and economic interests, resulting in a vicious cycle in which micro-conflicts generate macro-violence, and macro-conflicts exacerbate micro-level tensions.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the local and national levels. Local disputes create recruitment grounds for armed groups and are also instrumentalised by national and foreign actors. This forms a cyclical relationship between each variable, leading to widespread escalation of violence.

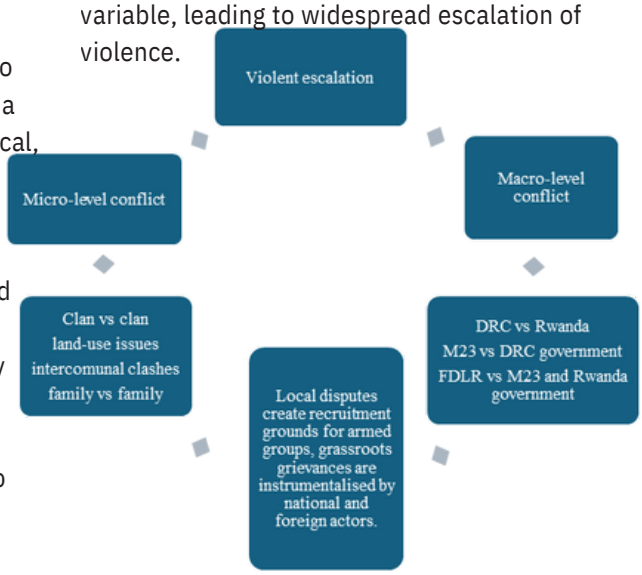

Figure 1: Micro-Macro level conflict nexus. © 2025 Centre for Mediation in Africa. All rights reserved.

What micro-level peacebuilding organisations in the eastern DRC are doing

Regardless of the difficult context they operate in, local-level peace initiatives led by CSOs in the eastern DRC have focused on five key areas, including: first, micro-level conflict mediation – for example, in the Bashali Mokoto groupement in North Kivu, the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), the Peace and Development committee, and local land authorities mediated 16 conflicts caused by illegal land occupation, resulting in the issuance of customary land titles to affected individuals.[19]In South Kivu, the Noyau Tujenge Amani (NJTA), with support from LPI, has facilitated the mediation of interpersonal conflicts since 2021.

Second, CSO work to promote reconciliation across the eastern DRC and the wider Great Lakes region. Some examples of successful peacebuilding in this area include: in Kigoma, a committee of respected leaders from Bafuliiru, Banyamulenge, and Banyindu communities promoted reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in their local communities.[20] The committee was formed by LPI and partners, and addressed issues like cattle theft, kidnappings, and movement restrictions, leading to the recovery of over 80 stolen cows in 2023.

Advocacy is also a strong tool to help address disinformation, misinformation, and ethnic manipulation, which have been major tools for local, national, and international leaders in the conflict.

Third, local peacebuilding CSOs also run advocacy campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence. In 2023, the Bafuliiru, Banyamulenge, and Banyindu leaders' committee led advocacy efforts that enabled community members to access markets and medical care in areas controlled by armed groups.[21] Their campaigns also secured safer movement between Kigoma, Lemera, and Bijombo. Other CSOs assisted with lobbying and advocacy for economic governance; as a result of their work in this area, around 60% of families in mining communities in Fizi, Mwenga, and Shabunda gained access to quality basic social services (healthcare, quality education, clean environment, and practicable roads).[22] There has also been a reduction in the rate of violence against women in the territories of Mwenga, Shabunda, Kalehe, Kabare, Uvira, and Fizi, thanks to the monitoring and advocacy efforts of CSOs. Advocacy is also a strong tool to help address disinformation, misinformation, and ethnic manipulation, which have been major tools for local, national, and international leaders in the conflict.

Fourth, CSOs have worked in the grassroots in the Great Lakes to improve representation in peace processes. In this regard, the Network for Organisational Innovation (NOI) specifically focuses on representing marginalised groups such as women and youth in important peace processes and cross-border peacebuilding, and has been present in several major peace talks.[23] Moreover, grassroots work across the plateaus of Fizi, Mwenga, and Uvira focuses on building a better future to strengthen young men and women's participation in decision-making in the DRC. Following the programme, the mobilisation of youth into armed groups in Fizi and Uvira decreased by 35% over four years.[24]

Fifth, capacity building. Although an area requiring further strengthening,[25] some work is being done. For example, the promotion of a culture of peace for sustainable development in the Great Lakes region is prioritised, leading to over 200 peace and conflict transformation organisations now intervening professionally following capacity building.[26]

The above five points are not exhaustive but represent some of the notable activities of grassroots peacebuilding led by CSOs in the DRC.

Challenges facing local peacebuilding efforts in the Eastern DRC

Local-level peacebuilding efforts in the eastern DRC face four specific challenges: first is limited grassroots representation due to high-level peacebuilding restricting local communities from the broader peace processes. In this regard, civil society would be brought in to fill quotas, but not actively or meaningfully participating due to limited strategic support, such as funding, location of meetings, and technical skills.[27]

Since the 1990s, the number of peacebuilding organisations operating in the DRC has grown. This has created a "peacebuilding industrial complex."

As a result, there have been limited attempts to settle land disputes, reconstruct grassroots institutions, or promote reconciliation within divided villages or communities, even though foreign and national actors are financially and technically capable of supporting such initiatives.[28] This gap is linked to Peter Ekeh's concept of the "two publics", which illustrates the disconnection between state institutions and society.[29] In this regard, national and international peacebuilding takes place in the civic public with the national and global elites, and sometimes rebel groups (as per the Nairobi process), while local peacebuilding takes place within the primordial public with limited interaction with higher levels.[30]

The second challenge is the limited recognition of civil society's role in the peace process. In this regard, when compiling lists of participants, mediators, government and leading political figures are prioritised with little attention paid to the grassroots.[31] Moreover, peace talks are often held abroad. For example, the Doha process unfolded in Qatar, while the Nairobi and Luanda processes took place in Kenya and Angola, respectively. This makes it geographically, logistically and financially difficult for grassroots actors to participate. The importance of grassroots actors lies in the fact that citizens tend to trust those closest to them, such as traditional leaders, elders, or grassroots mobilisers, rather than distant state representatives.

A third challenge facing grassroots peacebuilding in the eastern DRC is limited cooperation amongst the CSOs themselves. Since the 1990s, the number of peacebuilding organisations operating in the DRC has grown. This has created a "peacebuilding industrial complex" – a crowded field of actors working in the same region, often with overlapping and fragmented mandates. This fragmentation is exacerbated by division among CSOs, leaving them vulnerable to external manipulation.[32]

Fourth, there is a capacity gap in the technical, logistical, and financial tools needed for peacebuilding in the eastern DRC.[33] In this regard, MONUSCO and the LPI have been vocal about the need for increased training, financial, and logistical support for local peace actors.

Policy Recommendations:

Seven recommendations emerge from the above discussions:

1.Actors who influence local conflict and peace dynamics need to be mapped, from those building peace to conflict instigators. Individuals who can shift the dynamics towards peace by coordinating grassroots efforts effectively and sustainably should be identified. Local community leaders with formal or nationally recognised offices often have micro-level influence capable of triggering conflict or peaceful co-existence at the grassroots – locating and empowering such local opinion leaders can help shape positive narratives and resolve micro-level conflicts.

2.The AU, EAC, SADC, UN, or EU must correctly map important local actors to empower and identify the correct quotas necessary for meaningful grassroots contributions in peace forums. This will help with accurate budgeting and funding mechanisms for local participation. Regional envoys must hold pre-negotiation and listening tours, while peacebuilding CSOs, academia, and think tanks conduct research to craft inclusion toolkits to guide regional peacebuilders towards genuine inclusion of local actors, such as farmers, women, youth, community leaders, and civil society organisations, throughout peace processes.

3.The internal challenges within other Great Lakes countries further necessitate peacebuilding interventions. Limited security governance in eastern DRC continues to make the region attractive to rebel groups seeking refuge and operational bases, turning it into the epicentre of the Great Lakes conflict.[34] To address this, there is a need for the inclusion of Congolese community voices and those of neighbouring countries. This includes refugee communities residing on different sides of the DRC border, as well as community leaders and civil society actors in their zones of origin, who must be involved to ensure safe returns, reconciliation, and reintegration.

4.Interveners must actively seek and centre Congolese agency in the peace process instead of acting on their behalf, as is the case with top-down peacebuilding. This can be achieved through increased participation of local actors in high-level dialogues, and requires re-examining previous peace dialogues and agreements, reassessing pre-dialogue consultations, the number and type of grassroots actors who have speaking roles, and what community delegations were involved in actual negotiation processes. Practically achieving this will include legislation and policy changes in regional organisations, as well as initiatives such as the establishment of peace hubs run by local civil society actors with substantial financial and technical backing from international and regional actors. Organising jointly hosted SADC and EAC listening missions in local communities will also help centre Congolese voices for lasting peace in the Great Lakes.

5.Centring Congolese voices and enhancing local ownership further requires fostering local peacebuilding capacities by scaling up peacebuilding training initiatives at local, national and regional levels, with technical and financial support for institutions such as universities, think tanks, and CSOs working at all levels. Technical support can take the form of negotiation, mediation, and peace facilitation training for local actors. In this regard, training curricula can be developed through local and international collaborations to incorporate international best practices into locally owned processes.

6.It is crucial to foster greater unity and strategic coordination among peacebuilding actors to strengthen impact on the ground. LPI work in this regard is ongoing and requires further strengthening.

7.There is an urgent need to rebuild state–society relations, transforming broken trust between the citizens and the state. This can include establishing community-state forums where citizens can actively engage with their national government in Kinshasa. This will entail training civil society and state officials on large and small-scale dialogue facilitation, mediation, and public engagements.

One practical way to achieve this would be to launch platforms across the eastern DRC where community members can rate police, judiciary, and local administration and propose reforms. There can also be listening posts, led by local CSOs, where citizens can voice their complaints and offer solutions to community challenges that can be addressed at the national level.

About this policy brief

This policy brief was produced following a Webinar organised by the Centre for Mediation in Africa (CMA) and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) on 16 April 2025. The webinar was titled “Peace Mediation in the Great Lakes Region: Voices from Below.” It involved the academic, policy, and civil society communities and aimed to capture the experiences, insights, and aspirations of conflict-affected local communities and actors in the eastern DRC.

The event featured a panel discussion facilitated by Professor Cori Wielenga, Director of the CMA. The panel included Mr Johan Borgstam, EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region; Ms Odile Bulabula Mbila, Coordinator of the Network for Organisational Innovation (NOI) in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Mr Amedee Fikirini from the LPI in the DRC; Dr Sonja Theron, Lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria; and Professor Isaac Kitoka Moke Mutondo, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Université Évangélique en Afrique in Bukavu.

About the author

Samuel Ajogwu Igba is a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship (CAS), and Researcher at the Centre for Mediation in Africa (CMA), University of Pretoria (UP)

References

1. Cori Wielenga reiterated this point as she introduced the topic.
2. Autesserre, Séverine. The trouble with the Congo: Local violence and the failure of international peacebuilding. Vol. 115. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. United Nations. Peacemaker. May 2025. Retrieved from: https://peacemaker.un.org/en/search/node?keys=Drc; PeaceRep. "Stable Instability: Political Settlements and Armed Groups in the Congo." 2017. Retrieved from: https://peacerep.org/publication/stable-instability/; The University of Edinburgh. "PA-X Tracker: Past Agreements in DRC Peace and Transition Process Data." 2025. Retrieved from: https://www.peaceagreements.org/tracker/democratic-republic-of-congo/process/.
4. United Nations Peacekeeping. United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) Fact Sheet. February 2025. Retrieved from: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/monusco#:~:text=Protecting%20civilians%20&%20consolidating%20peace%20in,phase%20reached%20in%20the%20country.
5. Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Deployment of the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. January 2024. Retrieved from: https://www.sadc.int/fr/node/5230#:~:text=The%20Southern%20African%20Development%20Community,by%20the%20resurgence%20of%20armed.
6. United Nations. Peacemaker. May 2025. Retrieved from: https://peacemaker.un.org/en/search/node?keys=Drc; PeaceRep. "Stable Instability: Political Settlements and Armed Groups in the Congo." 2017. Retrieved from: https://peacerep.org/publication/stable-instability/; The University of Edinburgh. "PA-X Tracker: Past Agreements in DRC Peace and Transition Process Data." - 2025. Retrieved from: https://www.peaceagreements.org/tracker/democratic-republic-of-congo/process/.
7. Bram Verelst. Eastern DRC: unpacking the difficult task of regional diplomacy". Institute for Security Studies (ISS). February 2025.
8. UNHCR Southern Africa Regional External Update #12: Eastern DRC Situation." April 2025. Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/unhcr-southern-africa-regional-external-update-12-eastern-drc-situation-25-april-2025.
9. United Nations Human Rights Council, Report of the OHCHR Fact-Finding Mission on the Situation in North and South Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (A/HRC/60/80), advance unedited version, 5 September 2025, UN-OHCHR. Retrieved from: ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/ffmk-drc/a-hrc-60-80-auv-en.pdf
10. This point was admitted by Johan Borgstam, the European Union (EU) Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region during the webinar: Autesserre, Séverine. The frontlines of peace: An insider's guide to changing the world. Oxford University Press, 2021; Boschi, Alysson Araldi. "Resenha: Autesserre, Séverine. Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20141." Revista Conjuntura Global v 10, no. 2 (2021): 1.
11. United Nations. Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) | Security Council. December 2016. https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1533/materials/summaries/entity/allied-democratic-forces-%28adf%29.
12. United Nations Security Council. LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY | Security Council. 07 March 2016 https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/2745/materials/summaries/entity/lord%E2%80%99s-resistance-army.
13. Al Jazeera. DR Congo army says Burundi rebels forced from strongholds. October 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/26/dr-congo-army-says-burundi-rebels-ousted-from-strongholds.
14. United Nations, Security Council. Letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council. S/2024/969. 27 December 2024.
15. International Crisis Group. Understanding Conflict in Eastern Congo (I): The Ruzizi Plain. Africa Report N°206 | 23 July 2013. Translation from French.
16. Human Rights Watch (HRW). DR Congo: Ethnic Militias Attack Civilians in Katanga. 2015. https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-ethnic-militias-attack-civilians-katanga.
17. Daan van Uhm, Milou Tjoonk, Eliode Bakole. Business as Usual?Illegal Charcoal and Timber Trade in Eastern DRC. December 2022. Retreived from: https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Daan-Van-Uhm-Milou-Tjoonk-Eliode-Bakole-Business-as-usual-Illegal-Charcoal-and-Timber-Trade-in-Eastern-DRC-GITOC-December-2022.pdf.
18. Council Foreign Relations. Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. March 2025. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo.
19. According to Amedee Fikirini of the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), who presented at the event.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Follow-up interview with Kitoka Moke Mutondo Isaac, a professor at the Faculté des sciences sociales et Directeur du Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche en Ethique, Université Évangélique en Afrique (UEA), who presented on local peacebuilding during the webinar.
23. This point was emphasised by Odile Bulabula Mbila, a presenter at the webinar. She is the Coordinator of the Network for Organisational Innovation (Democratic Republic of Congo).
24. Kitoka Moke Mutondo Isaac, in follow-up interview.
25. Each CSO participant during the webinar mentioned the need for training for peacebuilders throughout the eastern DRC.
26. Ibid.
27. Follow-up interview with Amedee Fikirini of the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), one of the presenters at the webinar.
28. John Ahere. "The peace process in the DRC." ACCORD. December 2012. Retrieved from: https://www.accord.org.za/publication/peace-process-drc/#:~:text=Inadequate%20local%20ownership%20of%20peacebuilding,intervention%20at%20higher%20political%20levels.&text=Most%20of%20the%20grassroots%20conflicts,with%20the%20resources%20at%20hand.
29. Peter Ekeh. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." 1975. Comparative Studies in Society and History 17 no. 1 (1975):91 – 112. doi10.1017/S0010417500007659.
30. As illustrated by Sonja Theron during her presentation at the Webinar. Amedee Fikirini of the LPI, and Kitoka Moke Mutondo Isaac noted the need for capacity building including trainings.
31. According to Amedee Fikirini of the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), who presented at the webinar.
32. All three grassroots peacebuilders (Kitoka Moke Mutondo Isaac, Amedee Fikirini, Odile Bulabula Mbila), who presented at the webinar, buttressed this point.
33. This was noted by participants during the webinar.
34. Center for Preventive Action, Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, CFR Global Conflict Tracker, updated 9 June 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo#:~:text=Since%201996%2C%20conflict%20in%20eastern (accessed 15 July 2025).

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), established in 2000, is a pan-African organisation that works collaboratively with governments, inter-governmental and civil society actors to contribute towards building fair, democratic and inclusive societies across the continent, through transitional justice and peacebuilding interventions. The IJR's work is informed by the insights gained from working with governmental stakeholders and grassroot communities in countries such as Burundi, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Historically, the IJR has worked on interventions in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda. Internationally, the IJR has provided strategic and technical advice to stakeholders in Colombia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UK and USA.

The IJR is a trusted advisor to key decision makers and inter-governmental actors on transitional justice and peacebuilding initiatives, and engages with the AU, Southern African Development Community, EAC, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, European Union and the United Nations (UN) system. The IJR has partnered with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on a number of in-country interventions in Africa. On this basis, in 2021, the IJR was tasked by the UNDP to develop its Guidelines on Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and Peacebuilding. The IJR has positioned itself as a provider of choice of reliable qualitative data on public perception in the areas of peace and security. The pioneering South African Reconciliation Barometer enables the IJR to be the leading African think tank in terms of providing public opinion data in these areas. We welcome collaboration with like-minded partners and invite you to find out more about our work on our website: www.ijr.org.za.

IJR expresses its appreciation to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Swedish Government for its generous support to the Institute. The views expressed in this Policy Brief remain those of the author.

Sweden
Sverige

CONTACT US
Tel: +27 21 202 4071
Email: info@ijr.org.za

Physical and Postal Address
105 Hatfield Street
Gardens
8001
Cape Town
South Africa

IJR
THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

www.ijr.org.za