



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADIAN ACTION**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs  
and International Development**

**Michael Levitt, Chair**

**MAY 2019  
42<sup>nd</sup> PARLIAMENT, 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION**

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### **Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

has the honour to present its

## **TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied the situations in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has agreed to report the following:





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS .....	1
PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADIAN ACTION .....	5
Introduction.....	5
The Situation in Somalia .....	6
The Struggle for Security .....	8
Fostering Inclusion and Reconciliation .....	12
The Situation in South Sudan.....	13
New Attempts at Peacemaking .....	15
Supporting the Implementation of the Revitalized Agreement .....	17
The Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo .....	19
Pre-electoral Unrest and Persistent Corruption .....	20
December 2018 Elections .....	22
Strengthening Electoral Integrity .....	24
Contexts of Fragility.....	26
Humanitarian Emergencies.....	28
Population Displacement.....	32
Supporting Local Organizations .....	36
Multi-dimensional and Persistent Insecurity.....	38
The Protection of Civilians.....	40
Women, Peace and Security .....	42
Conflict Minerals.....	44
Combatting Impunity .....	45
Conclusion .....	47

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES.....	49
APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS.....	53
REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE .....	55

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

### Recommendation 1

The Government of Canada should consider offering greater assistance to Somalia to address attacks by al-Shabaab, including through contributions to the United Nations Security Council-mandated African Union Mission in Somalia, and by providing technical advice and support for improved engagement of marginalized groups.....12

### Recommendation 2

The Government of Canada should support projects aimed at fostering inclusive governance and reconciliation in Somalia. In so doing, the government should explore mechanisms through which it can engage Somali-Canadians, as well as local stakeholders and organizations in Somalia, who are working to build peace and a better future for the country.....13

### Recommendation 3

The Government of Canada should consider an initiative, such as hosting an international conference, to mobilize greater international assistance for humanitarian efforts in Somalia and better donor engagement on the ground. Such a conference should have a dedicated session on engagement of the diaspora communities.....13

### Recommendation 4

The Government of Canada should work with its international partners, regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and local organizations and stakeholders in South Sudan, to ensure the full and timely implementation of the *Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*.....19

### **Recommendation 5**

**The Government of Canada, consistent with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, should consider providing new, additional, predictable and sustained development assistance in support of national and grassroots organizations and stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the objective of strengthening the electoral process and democratic institutions, and, in particular, of enhancing the engagement of women and girls. ....26**

### **Recommendation 6**

**The Government of Canada, consistent with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, should consider increasing its international assistance to Somalia and South Sudan for women-led households and for basic education, in particular for primary school for girls. ....30**

### **Recommendation 7**

**The Government of Canada should consider increasing its international assistance to Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in the area of democratic governance. ....31**

### **Recommendation 8**

**The Government of Canada should expand its support to local and international organizations that are providing skills and vocational training opportunities to refugee populations from fragile and conflict-affected states, including from Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ....35**

### **Recommendation 9**

**The Government of Canada, in providing any humanitarian assistance to Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, should, where possible, prioritize that support as direct support to local organizations, including for capacity building, so that they may better assume leadership roles in this delivery. ....37**

#### **Recommendation 10**

The Government of Canada should work through multilateral channels to build support for innovative approaches such as the *Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations* and the *Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers* that prioritize the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, and for other initiatives that prioritize the protection of women and girls from sexual violence in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ....42

#### **Recommendation 11**

The Government of Canada should work with local and international humanitarian organizations, regional organizations, government officials and other stakeholders in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure the safety of women and girls, as well as displaced populations, and to ensure consistent and full humanitarian access to all areas in need, while also working to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers in these contexts. ....42

#### **Recommendation 12**

The Government of Canada should consider investing in projects aimed at ensuring the meaningful involvement of women in peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.....44

#### **Recommendation 13**

The Government of Canada should consider supporting initiatives focused on building the capacity of women to run for elected political office and assume other leadership positions in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ....44

#### **Recommendation 14**

The Government of Canada should, as a matter of policy to counter the illicit industry of conflict minerals, consider increasing its aid envelope to enable greater support for initiatives aimed at curbing the exploitation of, and trade in, illicit natural resources, including minerals extracted by, or for the benefit of, armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ....45

**Recommendation 15**

The Government of Canada should study ways in which it can help foster the legitimate use of natural resources in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a manner that respects human rights obligations, and contributes to stable, sustainable and self-sufficient economies.....45

**Recommendation 16**

The Government of Canada should consider increasing its aid envelope in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enable greater support for the efforts of local civil society organizations and human rights defenders that are working to combat impunity and to strengthen accountability and the rule of law. ....47



# PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADIAN ACTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Committee) studied the situations in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).<sup>1</sup> Over the course of its study, the Committee heard from academics, development practitioners, human rights advocates, Canadian government officials, and the representatives of regional and international organizations. The Committee also received written briefs from civil society organizations and other stakeholders.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the Committee's study benefitted from the witness testimony that had been received by its Subcommittee on International Human Rights, which conducted hearings in relation to the three countries in 2017 and 2018.<sup>3</sup>

It was not by accident that the Committee chose to focus its study on Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. They were selected because they are three of the most fragile states in the world. Each is affected by armed conflict and other forms of violence, as well as by population displacement. The three countries also suffer from economic underdevelopment, poverty, political instability, and challenges in the areas of human rights, governance and the rule of law. Each country is also home to a United Nations (UN) or African Union (AU)-led peacekeeping mission – a fact that underlines the extent of the insecurity they face. Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC were also chosen as countries of study to further the Committee's understanding of their need for continued international support and of the most effective means through which that support can

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1 The purpose of the Committee's study was to learn about how Canada can better address the issues of peace and security, gender-based violence, justice, human rights, and economic development in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). House of Commons, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), *Minutes of Proceedings*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2018.

2 See: FAAE, *Situations in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

3 See: Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Human Rights Situation in Democratic Republic of Congo*; *Human Rights Situation in Somalia*; and *Human Rights Situation in South Sudan*.





be provided. The humanitarian situations in these countries are among the most serious in the world.

While Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC face many challenges of a similar nature, they also defy simple comparison. Each country confronts a different set of complex circumstances that have been informed by their unique histories. This report is structured to reflect these areas of convergence and divergence. The report begins by discussing, in turn, the situations in each country, including recent political and security developments. The report then considers Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC together through the lens of state fragility, focusing on armed conflict and humanitarian needs. In that half of the report, the specific issues of child soldiers, humanitarian access, and population displacement are addressed, among others. Throughout the report, the Committee's thoughts and recommendations on the role that Canada can play in advancing peace and stability are highlighted.

## THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

Somalia has experienced internal violence and political instability for nearly 30 years. In 1991, after 22 years in power, President Siad Barre was overthrown and forced out of the country by a movement of armed groups. The violent civil conflict that followed featured intense inter-clan fighting, and the rise and fall, and rise again, of radical militant and Islamic extremist groups. The overall result was a humanitarian emergency, including massive population displacement, as well as famine, and the collapse of the Somali economy.

Numerous peace operations and reconciliation initiatives have been undertaken in Somalia. UN and United States (U.S.)-led peacekeeping forces were deployed to Somalia between 1992 and 1995 to create the security conditions that would enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the escalation of violence, including attacks against international forces, led to the withdrawal of all UN peacekeeping troops in 1995. It would be more than a decade – with the establishment of the African Union

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4 The United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted Resolution 751 in April 1992, which created the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I). The objective of UNOSOM I was to monitor the ceasefire brokered among the warring factions and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In 1992, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 794, which authorized a United States (U.S.)-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) to “use all necessary means” to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. UNITAF would later transfer authority to another UN-led force (UNOSOM II). In 1994, the Security Council revised the mandate of UNOSOM II, before deciding to end its operations in 1995.

Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007 – before a new international peacekeeping mission would be operational in Somalia.

One of the consequences of the ongoing violence and instability has been the absence of a functioning government. For more than 20 years after President Siad Barre's overthrow in 1991, Somalia lacked a permanent central government. While a Transitional Federal Government was established in 2004, it was dependent on external support for survival, prone to internal strife, and exercised little authority and control over much of the country. In fact, between 2009 and 2011, the militant Islamist group al-Shabaab controlled most of southern Somalia, including the capital city of Mogadishu. The security situation started to improve in 2012 as AMISOM and government forces – assisted by targeted U.S. airstrikes<sup>5</sup> – began to retake territory from al-Shabaab militants.

In September 2012, a permanent Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) was established for the first time since the country's spiral into conflict began in the 1990s. That same year, a provisional constitution was approved, which provided for a federal parliament. The FGS embarked on a process of structural, legislative and institutional reform that included efforts to establish district and regional administrations in areas under its control. The Committee was told that the political situation in Somalia has become more stable with the establishment of the FGS. Somalia held indirect legislative and presidential elections in late 2016 and early 2017, which were its most extensive electoral process in decades.<sup>6</sup>

The presidential elections were won by Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed – also known as Farmajo – who had previously served as the Prime Minister of Somalia between 2010

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5 The U.S. has conducted targeted airstrikes against militants in Somalia for more than a decade. While official U.S. military figures are not publicly available, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) estimates that the U.S. conducted 32–36 drone strikes and 9–13 additional attacks in Somalia between 2001–2016. The number of airstrikes has increased in recent years. According to the BIJ, the U.S. conducted 48 airstrikes in Somalia in 2018, which was 14 more than in 2017. See: BIJ, [Strikes in Somalia](#); BIJ, [Somalia: Reported US Covert Actions 2001-2016](#); and, The Soufan Group, [The United States at War in Somalia](#), 19 December 2018. In addition to targeted airstrikes, the U.S. military is also involved in Somalia in a training and advisory capacity. While exact figures are not available, reports indicate that the U.S. has approximately 500 troops in Somalia, who serve primarily in advisory roles to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army. See: Todd South, ["Report reveals previously secret operations in Africa,"](#) *Army Times*, 6 November 2018.

6 Somalia's 2016/2017 legislative and presidential elections were conducted according to a traditional indirect electoral system. Members of the 275-seat lower house were elected under a system in which 135 clan elders chose 275 electoral colleges, each of which comprised 51 people, and each of which elected one representative. Members of the 54-seat upper house were indirectly elected by state assemblies. Following the legislative elections, the President of Somalia was then elected by a two-thirds vote in a joint sitting of both houses for a four-year term. See, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Somalia: House of the People](#); and IPU, [Upper House](#).



and 2011. Since taking office in 2017, the Somali government has undertaken a number of reforms. Marc-André Fredette, Director General, Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau, Global Affairs Canada, told the Committee that the priorities of Somalia's government include combating corruption, countering the threat of al-Shabaab, delivering essential services, and addressing long-standing grievances and clan dynamics.<sup>7</sup>

The Committee was advised that President Farmajo has prioritized electoral and constitutional reforms. The next legislative and presidential elections in Somalia are scheduled for 2020–2021, and the Honourable Gamal Hassan, Somalia's Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, testified that the government intends to conduct the vote by universal suffrage for the first time in 50 years.<sup>8</sup> He also indicated that a draft constitution would be finalized over the next few months, which would then be presented to parliament for ratification.

Notwithstanding the important reforms underway, Somalia continues to face huge political challenges. These include tensions between the federal government and sub-national states over the sharing of power and resources. Then there is the incidence of corruption. Ken Menkhaus, professor, Political Science, Davidson College, commented that, despite "some wonderful Somalis working in the government," the country continues to be plagued by "some of the worst corruption in the world."<sup>9</sup> A similar sentiment was expressed in a written brief by Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Fellow, Brookings, who indicated that "corruption and clientelism run rampant and affect every sector and level of government, business, and society."<sup>10</sup> Overall, Somalia is ranked 180<sup>th</sup> out of the 180 countries surveyed on Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, which assesses countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.<sup>11</sup>

## The Struggle for Security

Witnesses offered differing impressions of the current security environment within Somalia. One perspective was provided by Minister Hassan, who told the Committee that significant progress has been made in the fight against al-Shabaab. He stated:

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7 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2018.

8 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 December 2018.

9 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 10 December 2018.

10 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Vanda Felbab-Brown, 31 October 2018.

11 Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2018](#).

Compared to a few years ago, you see, by and large, that Somalia is now almost out of the hands of al Shabaab. They don't control any significant city or port, or any major infrastructure. Security is improving with the support of AMISOM and through contributing countries.<sup>12</sup>

Another perspective was offered by Jay Bahadur, Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, UN Security Council, who said that al-Shabaab remains in a position to carry out routine asymmetric attacks and occasional conventional attacks against AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA). He informed the Committee that, while most urban centres are under the control of AMISOM or the SNA, al-Shabaab is still in control of much of the hinterland and the main supply routes, which it uses to generate revenue. According to Mr. Bahadur, al-Shabaab serves as a “shadow government” throughout the country and has built an efficient system of extorting “taxes” from local populations.<sup>13</sup>

Al-Shabaab’s continuing capability to strike security and government targets, and its willingness to inflict mass civilian casualties, was illustrated by the twin truck bombings it launched in October 2017 that killed 587 people and injured at least 300 more. It was the deadliest terror attack in Somalia’s history. Al-Shabaab has continued with a spate of attacks over the past year. Georgette Gagnon, Director, Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), told the Committee that in September 2018 alone, 1,010 civilians were killed or injured in Somalia. Ms. Gagnon said that 55% of these casualties are attributable to al-Shabaab.<sup>14</sup>

According to Ms. Felbab-Brown, persistent clan and political infighting provide al-Shabaab with a “lease on life.” She indicated that land seizures and the systemic marginalization of certain clans are issues that foment conflict in Somalia.<sup>15</sup> Professor Menkhaus echoed this point, noting that al-Shabaab “thrives off of grievances, both real and sometimes exaggerated, on the part of clans and other social groups.” In his view, Somalia “is first and foremost a political problem, not a military problem.” As such, Professor Menkhaus argued that engaging with marginalized groups within Somalia would help to deny oxygen to al-Shabaab’s movement and make the “residual military problem much easier to solve.”<sup>16</sup>

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12 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 December 2018.

13 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 10 December 2018.

14 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

15 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Vanda Felbab-Brown, 31 October 2018.

16 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 10 December 2018.



Al-Shabaab is not the only militant group in Somalia. In her written brief, Vanda Felbab-Brown indicated that more than 60 armed groups, including clan and warlord militias and other terrorist factions, are estimated to be present in the country.<sup>17</sup> Among those groups that have emerged as a threat in Somalia is the Islamic State. Mary Harper, BBC Africa Editor, explained in a written brief that the Islamic State is “growing in strength and breadth of activity in Somalia.”<sup>18</sup> She noted that the group first emerged in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland<sup>19</sup>, but now has a presence and carries out attacks, including targeted assassinations, in other parts of the country, including Mogadishu.<sup>20</sup> Mr. Bahadur expressed concern that the Islamic State “seems to have begun a phase of reorganization and retrenchment whereby they have sought to imitate al Shabaab’s tactics in imposing taxation through extortion and intimidation.”<sup>21</sup>

Overall, Somalia faces multi-dimensional threats that make it, in the words of Professor Menkhaus, “one of the most insecure places in the world.” According to him, while Somalia is not currently experiencing large-scale armed conflict or civil war, it continues “to be plagued by chronic political violence in the form of assassinations, terrorism attacks, communal clashes and criminal violence.” In all, Professor Menkhaus told the Committee that dangerous fault lines exist that have put Somalia at a “heightened risk of backsliding.”<sup>22</sup>

Minister Hassan told the Committee that for Somalia to fully recover, its “own security institutions must be strengthened and empowered to take charge of the country’s security.” This point was made by others who participated in the Committee’s study,

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17 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Vanda Felbab-Brown, 31 October 2018.

18 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Mary Harper, 2 January 2019.

19 Puntland is a region in northeastern Somalia that declared itself to be a semi-autonomous state in 1998, in part to avoid the warfare that was affecting the rest of Somalia. Officially a federal member state of Somalia, Puntland does not seek international recognition as an independent state. Instead, it advocates for a federal Somalia in which it would exist as an autonomous entity. By contrast, neighbouring Somaliland has sought international recognition as an independent state since 1991. While no foreign government recognizes Somaliland’s independence, the region has been self-governing since that time. It has held its own democratic elections since 2003, and has a working political system, including its own government institutions, a police force and its own currency. For more information on Puntland and Somaliland, see: BBC News, [Puntland Profile](#); and Claire Felter, “[Somaliland: The Horn of Africa’s Breakaway State](#),” Council on Foreign Relations, 1 February 2018.

20 Between October 2017 and August 2018, the Islamic State faction in Somalia claimed responsibility for 50 assassinations, primarily of federal government police, intelligence and finance officials. For more information on al-Shabaab and the Islamic State’s presence and operations in Somalia, see: [Report on Somalia of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2018/1002, 9 November 2018.

21 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 10 December 2018.

22 Ibid.

including Mary Harper, who said that the “only way for Somalia to have enduring peace is for Somalis to take responsibility for themselves, and for foreign powers to take a step back, even in terms of security.” Ms. Harper added her belief that “Somalis are perfectly capable of this. They need to be given the opportunity to prove to the world that they can look after themselves and their country.”<sup>23</sup>

A transition process that will see security responsibilities gradually handed from AMISOM to the SNA is underway. AMISOM’s current mandate extends to 31 May 2019 with a maximum authorized force strength of 20,626 troops and 1,040 police personnel.<sup>24</sup> The current transition plan would see AMISOM gradually draw down its forces, with the SNA assuming the lead for security by December 2021.<sup>25</sup> As part of this plan, the SNA would integrate forces from sub-national state forces (e.g. Jubaland) and the state would expand its federal police force. Minister Hassan said that implementing the transition plan and strengthening the capacity of Somali security institutions “are of the utmost importance in achieving lasting peace and security in the country.”<sup>26</sup>

Even so, others expressed concerns about the transition plan. Ms. Felbab-Brown, for instance, wrote in her brief that the “Somali national forces remain notoriously undertrained and underequipped as well as corrupt.” She argued that the SNA consists mostly of “ineffective battalions that are unable to pair up with AMISOM even for joint holding operations, let alone offensive actions against al Shabab.”<sup>27</sup>

For his part, Mr. Bahadur indicated that a precipitous AMISOM withdrawal could create a security vacuum that al-Shabaab and other militants could exploit. Mr. Bahadur concluded his testimony with the following blunt assessment of the security situation in Somalia: “Without international support, without AMISOM, without western financial commitments to AMISOM, al Shabaab would be in control of the country in 24 hours.” While there are significant challenges, as noted above, with the performance of Somalia’s security forces, Mr. Bahadur is of the belief that such a collapse would not be “at all a tenable or acceptable solution for anyone, including for the Canadian government.”<sup>28</sup>

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23 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Mary Harper, 2 January 2019.

24 United Nations Security Council, [Resolution 2431 \(2018\)](#), S/RES/2431 (2018), 30 July 2018.

25 AMISOM, [AMISOM develops document to guide transition and exit plan](#), 4 November 2018.

26 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 December 2018.

27 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Vanda Felbab-Brown, 31 October 2018.

28 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 10 December 2018.



## Recommendation 1

**The Government of Canada should consider offering greater assistance to Somalia to address attacks by al-Shabaab, including through contributions to the United Nations Security Council-mandated African Union Mission in Somalia, and by providing technical advice and support for improved engagement of marginalized groups.**

## Fostering Inclusion and Reconciliation

Overall, the testimony of witnesses left the Committee with the sense that the political and security environment in Somalia is fragile and uncertain. Even though the political situation remains in a tenuous state, real progress has been achieved in Somalia's state-building process since 2012 when the permanent federal government was established.

The Committee believes that Somalia may be at a critical juncture in its history. Minister Hassan told the Committee that the Somali government is intent on achieving lasting progress in the areas of reconciliation and inclusive governance, while also continuing to pursue constitutional and electoral reforms. At the same time, he acknowledged that Somalia is still in the early stages of its recovery and that "more support is needed to maintain and build on the gains made so far."<sup>29</sup> He further noted that, while Somalia is recovering from a protracted civil war, the country continues to face significant development challenges. For example, Minister Hassan indicated that educational outcomes for women and girls in Somalia are not comparable to those of men.

Building on the strong people-to-people relations that exist between Canada and Somalia may be an entry point to deeper Canadian engagement in the country. Canada is home to one of the largest Somali diasporas in the world. What is more, a number of dual Somali-Canadian nationals have served, or continue to serve, in prominent public positions in Somalia, including in the federal government. Minister Hassan told the Committee that "[t]wo former Somali prime ministers, a number of MPs and eight cabinet ministers in the current government, constituting some 30% of the government, call Canada their home and contribute to the special bond between our two countries."<sup>30</sup>

The Committee was told there may be opportunities to draw more effectively on the experiences and expertise of the diaspora community in support of peace in Somalia. Speaking generally, Susan Stigant, Director, Africa Program, United States Institute of Peace, told the Committee that engaging diaspora communities is a way "to link the domestic to

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29 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 December 2018.

30 Ibid.



the international.”<sup>31</sup> She referred the Committee to a recent initiative by the Australian government to facilitate dialogue among the South Sudanese diaspora. That project provided a space for South Sudanese in Australia to share their experiences and discuss ways to build trust and unity with the view to contributing to peace in South Sudan.<sup>32</sup>

The Committee believes that Canada should support projects that are focused on promoting dialogue, inclusive governance and reconciliation in Somalia. As Ms. Felbab-Brown stated in her written brief, without more inclusive and accountable governance, the reduction of violence and the stabilization of Somalia “will not be sustainably achieved.” Ms. Stigant testified that Canada has expertise in areas such as conflict management, federalism, and the promotion of diversity and pluralism that could be valuable in the Somali context. The Committee agrees and urges Canada to support projects that target these objectives in Somalia.

## **Recommendation 2**

**The Government of Canada should support projects aimed at fostering inclusive governance and reconciliation in Somalia. In so doing, the government should explore mechanisms through which it can engage Somali-Canadians, as well as local stakeholders and organizations in Somalia, who are working to build peace and a better future for the country.**

## **Recommendation 3**

**The Government of Canada should consider an initiative, such as hosting an international conference, to mobilize greater international assistance for humanitarian efforts in Somalia and better donor engagement on the ground. Such a conference should have a dedicated session on engagement of the diaspora communities.**

## **THE SITUATION IN SOUTH SUDAN**

The world’s newest country, South Sudan, has experienced little peace since it seceded from Sudan in July 2011. The South Sudan civil war began in December 2013 when President Salva Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, accused Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer and the country’s former First Vice President, of plotting a coup. Following his dismissal as First Vice President, Riek Machar formed an armed opposition group called the the Sudan

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31 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

32 For more information on this project, see: Diaspora Action Australia, *South Sudan Peacebuilding Dialogue*, November 2017.



People's Liberation Movement/Army-in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO).<sup>33</sup> The two leaders had formerly been members of the same political and military organization, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA), which fought over decades for independence from Sudan.

Soon after it had erupted, the conflict assumed an ethnic character, as armed clashes broke out between Dinka and Nuer soldiers and factions, while members of both ethnic groups carried out targeted killings across the country. In the ensuing years, widespread human rights abuses were committed by both sides, including rape and extrajudicial killings. Homes were destroyed, and humanitarian access was routinely denied. By February 2015, an estimated two million people in South Sudan had been displaced by the conflict.<sup>34</sup>

Various ceasefires and peace agreements have been negotiated and signed, only to be repeatedly violated, since the civil war began. In August 2015, the parties to the conflict signed the *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*. The agreement specified, among other provisions, that fighting would stop immediately, that a transitional government of national unity would be established, and that a truth and reconciliation commission would be formed.<sup>35</sup> It also specified that Riek Machar would re-assume the position of First Vice President.

The agreement was violated almost immediately. During the summer of 2016, tension mounted due to delays in its implementation, triggering skirmishes. On 8 July 2016, violence erupted between forces loyal to President Kiir and those to First Vice President Machar. A ceasefire halted fighting in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, but violence between government and rebel forces continued in other parts of the country. In late July 2016, Riek Machar was removed by President Kiir as First Vice President for a second time and fled into exile.

The United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), which was established following South Sudan's independence in 2011 for an initial period of one year, has had its mandate renewed each year since that time. UNMISS' original mandate was to support the Government of South Sudan in peace consolidation and long-term state-building. However, with the outbreak of intra-state violence in South Sudan in 2013, UNMISS has taken on additional responsibilities, including protecting civilians,

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33 Riek Machar was removed from office by President Kiir in July 2013, following indications that he would run for president in elections scheduled for 2015.

34 Michael Boyce and Mark Yarnell, *South Sudan: A Nation Uprooted*, Refugees International, 12 March 2015.

35 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*, 17 August 2015.

monitoring human rights, and supporting the implementation of ceasefire agreements.<sup>36</sup> Security Council Resolution 2459 (2019) extended the mandate of UNMISS until 15 March 2020 and authorized a maximum force level of 17,000 troops, alongside 2,001 police personnel.<sup>37</sup>

## New Attempts at Peacemaking

New attempts to bring the parties together were made throughout 2017 and 2018 under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).<sup>38</sup> In June 2017, IGAD initiated the “High-Level Revitalization Forum” to support dialogue between the warring parties. The first two phases of the forum took place in December 2017 and May 2018, but failed to resolve issues related to governance, power-sharing and security. In June 2018, the Government of Sudan offered to host talks aimed at breaking the stalemate. Those talks resulted in the *Khartoum Declaration of Agreement between parties of the conflict in South Sudan*, which contained general provisions on a ceasefire, security arrangements, and governance.

Following months of further negotiation, on 12 September 2018, the *Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* (the “Revitalized Agreement”) was concluded. The Revitalized Agreement, which seeks to bring the war to a permanent conclusion, was signed by President Kiir, Riek Machar, the South Sudan Opposition Alliance – a coalition made up of various opposition groups – and other political parties. It was also signed by stakeholders from civil society and by guarantors from IGAD member states, the AU and the UN. Estimates published around the time the Revitalized Agreement was signed indicate that at least 50,000 people died during South Sudan’s civil war. Other estimates indicate that approximately 400,000 people died in South Sudan’s civil war as a result of the fighting and from indirect causes such as disease and hunger.<sup>39</sup>

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36 United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), [UNMISS Mandate](#).

37 The initial authorized strength of the mission in 2011 was 7,000 military personnel and 900 civilian police personnel. UN Security Council, [Resolution 2459 \(2019\)](#), S/RES/2459 (2019), 15 March 2019.

38 IGAD is a regional organization composed of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. It is focused on supporting peace, security, economic opportunity and integration in the IGAD region.

39 The 400,000 figure comes from a report by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; it includes deaths due to circumstances related to the conflict such as malnutrition and reduced access to health care. See, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, [Estimates of crisis-attributable mortality in South Sudan, December 2013-April 2018: A statistical analysis](#), September 2018. The Deputy Chief of Mission at South Sudan’s Embassy in Washington, D.C. told *The Washington Post* that the figure was not accurate and put the death toll at fewer than 20,000. In March 2016, UN officials estimated that “at least 50,000” people had been killed in the civil war up to that point. See: Siobhan O’Grady, [“A new report estimates that more than 380,000 people have died in South Sudan’s civil war,”](#) *The Washington Post*, 26 September 2018.



The Revitalized Agreement consists of eight chapters that provide a road map for political transition and reconciliation. The agreement specifies a pre-transitional period of up to eight months, during which time civilian areas will be demilitarized and medium- and long-range weapons will be collected. On 4 May 2019, the parties decided to extend the pre-transitional period for six months to allow more time to achieve the benchmarks in the Revitalized Agreement.<sup>40</sup> The pre-transitional period is to be followed by a 36-month transitional period of unity government, during which time Salva Kiir will remain as President and Riek Machar will re-assume the position of First Vice President. Additionally, four other vice presidents will be nominated who will hold office during the transitional period.<sup>41</sup> Elections are to be held two months before the end of the transitional period.

The agreement contains a chapter on establishing a joint committee to plan for and then implement the unification of all forces. It also stipulates that a permanent ceasefire “shall be observed meticulously.” As part of the chapter on reconciliation and transitional justice, the agreement provides for the establishment of a commission for truth, reconciliation and healing, which would investigate, document, and report on human rights violations that were perpetrated during the conflict. Subsequent chapters of the Revitalized Agreement deal with humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and the economy, as well as the need to establish a permanent constitution for South Sudan.<sup>42</sup>

The Committee heard that the Revitalized Agreement was the result of a difficult but comprehensive negotiation process. Nuur Mohamud Sheekh, Senior Political Affairs Officer, Peace and Security Division, IGAD, told the Committee that the agreement was not forced upon the parties and its signing showed “an act of compromise and leadership.” He indicated that the high-level process which facilitated negotiations on the 2018 agreement was more inclusive than the 2015 peace negotiations. According to Mr. Sheekh, multiple political parties and non-state actors participated in the 2018 process, including opposition groups, faith-based bodies, South Sudanese refugees, civil society organizations, women and youth. He said that women’s groups were particularly active throughout the high-level process.<sup>43</sup>

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40 United Nations Mission in South Sudan, “[Extension of the pre-transitional period a sign of goodwill between the parties in South Sudan](#),” Press Release, 4 May 2019.

41 Two of the vice presidents will be nominated by the Transitional Government of National Unity, one by the South Sudan Opposition Alliance, and one (a woman) by a party composed of former detainees.

42 For the full text of the agreement, see: [Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan](#), IGAD, 12 September 2018.

43 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

The Committee was told that the involvement of neighbouring Sudan and Uganda as guarantors of the Revitalized Agreement represented an important departure from the 2015 peace process, which ultimately collapsed. As guarantors, Sudan and Uganda will play a role in ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Revitalized Agreement. As Bill Chambers, Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children Canada, indicated, all the previous peace agreements had “Sudan outside as a wild card, as a destabilizing factor.”<sup>44</sup> Witnesses explained that Sudan and Uganda both have an interest in seeing stability in South Sudan. They are the top-two host countries for South Sudanese refugees. The Committee heard that Sudan is also eager to boost South Sudan’s production of oil; all of South Sudan’s crude oil exports transit via pipeline through Sudan for a fee.<sup>45</sup>

## Supporting the Implementation of the Revitalized Agreement

The Committee heard that the timely implementation of the Revitalized Agreement will be critical to South Sudan’s stability. On this front, there have been some positive early developments. Testifying on 5 November 2018, Nuur Mohamud Sheekh indicated that “implementation of this agreement has begun in earnest,” and that key governance, security and monitoring institutions stipulated by the agreement are being established.<sup>46</sup> He noted that confidence-building measures are being taken, including the release of some political prisoners and detainees. Mr. Sheekh also explained that the ceasefire is holding according to the assessment of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, which has been visiting areas held by the government and by former rebel groups.<sup>47</sup>

That said, at the time it received the testimony, the Committee was also told that some aspects of the peace agreement dealing with women’s representation had not been implemented. For example, under the agreement, 35% of all executive positions in the transitional government are meant to be occupied by women. Testifying on 19 November

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44 Ibid.

45 Sudan lost approximately 75% of its oil reserves when South Sudan seceded in 2011. Sudan, however, continues to control the main pipelines and refineries necessary for the export of South Sudan’s oil. See: Laura M. James, *Fields of Control: Oil and (In)security in Sudan and South Sudan*, Small Arms Survey, November 2015.

46 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

47 The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism was established following the signing of the 2015 peace agreement and is charged with monitoring and verifying compliance of the ceasefire. The group is composed of representatives of local, regional and international organizations, as well as of members of the parties to the conflict. See: Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, *Background*.



2018, Atong Amos Agook Juac, Executive Director, ARUDA South Sudan, said that the target had not been reached. She also indicated that women were under-represented in high-level positions in the army, the police force and other security services.

Atong Amos Agook Juac argued that more advocacy was required to support the inclusion of women in positions of power in South Sudan. She also suggested that local actors should be made to “own” the peace agreement by being empowered to monitor its implementation. She told the Committee, “By owning the agreement, I think the implementation will go well, but if it’s not inclusive I don’t think it will go well.”<sup>48</sup>

While the Revitalized Agreement was described as a positive step overall, some witnesses told the Committee that the people of South Sudan have been in this position before only to see a return of violence. Worryingly, Susan Stigant said that the underlying structure of the agreement is comparable to those that failed in the past. She observed that

... the end of the peace agreement is premised on an electoral transition in a three-year period. I would recall that this civil war started because of the political competition leading into the anticipated 2015 elections. What is our strategy to get things changed so that the game is played differently and that the result will be different this time?<sup>49</sup>

The Committee believes that the Revitalized Agreement is a potentially crucial step toward the achievement of durable peace in South Sudan. Yet, the failure of previous peace agreements necessitate a clear-eyed and pragmatic view of the challenges that lie ahead. With that in mind, the Committee is of the view that Canada should continue to work with its international partners, regional organizations like IGAD, and local stakeholders and civil society organizations in South Sudan, to support and ensure the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. As Kevin Dunbar, Director, Global Programs and Impact, International Operations and Programs, CARE Canada, put it, “Although a ceasefire has been reached, now is not our time to step back from efforts in South Sudan. To the contrary, I believe we need to double our efforts.”<sup>50</sup>

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48 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

49 Ibid.

50 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

#### Recommendation 4

**The Government of Canada should work with its international partners, regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and local organizations and stakeholders in South Sudan, to ensure the full and timely implementation of the *Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*.**

### THE SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a vast country with immense natural resource wealth. It has also spent decades in the grip of violent conflict. Such violence has been especially pronounced in the eastern regions of North and South Kivu. That violence was unleashed in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which triggered the massive outflow of refugees, weapons and armed rebels – many of whom were directly responsible for the genocide – into eastern DRC (then known as Zaire). The crisis in eastern DRC took on a regional dimension, pulling in as many as nine countries in a conflict that was so deadly it became known as the “African World War.”

Although the war was declared over in 2003, recurrent cycles of violence and humanitarian crisis have continued to plague the DRC since that time. Contributing to the instability has been the proliferation of Congolese and foreign armed groups that operate throughout the country. In fact, according to Nicolas Simard, Canada’s Ambassador to the DRC, 100 armed groups may be active in eastern DRC alone.<sup>51</sup> Armed groups have been implicated in systematic human rights abuses, including sexual- and gender-based violence, and have taken advantage of power and security vacuums to illegally exploit the DRC’s natural resource wealth. The presence of armed groups has also limited the ability of humanitarian actors to reach populations in need of critical assistance and to provide life-saving services.

The UN has had a peacekeeping operation in the DRC since 1999. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) has a total authorized strength of more than 18,000 uniformed personnel.<sup>52</sup> MONUSCO’s mandate is focused on the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones and supporting the

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51 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2018.

52 Resolution 2463 (2019) extended the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) until 20 December 2019 and authorized a troop ceiling of 16,215 military personnel, 660 military observers and staff officers, 391 police personnel, and 1,050 personnel comprising formed police units. United Nations Security Council, [Resolution 2463 \(2019\)](#), S/RES/2463 (2019), 29 March 2019. For more information, see: MONUSCO, [About](#).





Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts in the eastern part of the country. MONUSCO has also played a role in supporting the holding of peaceful elections.

Presidential, legislative, and provincial elections scheduled for November 2016 were envisioned as being the DRC's first democratic and peaceful transfer of power since its independence from Belgium in 1960. Joseph Kabila, who became president of the DRC in 2001 following the assassination of his father, Laurent-Désiré Kabila,<sup>53</sup> was constitutionally mandated to step down in December 2016. However, the 2016 elections were delayed after the country's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) indicated that there were problems with the voter roll. Following public protests, the government and opposition parties agreed to the Saint-Sylvestre agreement, which provided that presidential elections would be held in 2017, after which time President Kabila would step down. In November 2017, citing financial, logistical and security difficulties they said were preventing the elections from being held on schedule, CENI postponed the elections once again, this time to 23 December 2018.

## Pre-electoral Unrest and Persistent Corruption

Civil unrest and instability continued in the aftermath of the Saint-Sylvestre agreement, as did the Congolese government's restrictions on civil liberties. Testimony provided to the Committee indicated that the Kabila government routinely banned opposition demonstrations. Moreover, protests which took place despite the ban were violently suppressed. Georgette Gagnon referred the Committee to reporting by OHCHR from September 2018, which found an increased incidence of police and security force violations of human rights in the context of peaceful protests in the lead-up to the electoral campaign.<sup>54</sup> According to Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, Executive Director, East and Central African Association for Indigenous Rights, the intimidation and arrest of civil society activists and opponents of President Kabila took place regularly ahead of the election.<sup>55</sup>

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53 Laurent-Désiré Kabila became president of the DRC in 1997 after leading a rebellion that overthrew the regime of long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who had ruled what was then known as Zaire since 1965. On 16 January 2001, Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated by a bodyguard at his presidential palace. Ten days after his assassination, Joseph Kabila took office as president at the age of 29.

54 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018. See: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human Rights Council discusses the human rights situation in Ukraine and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 25 September 2018. For a detailed overview of the human rights situation in the DRC, see: *Human rights situation and the activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, Human Rights Council, A/HRC/39/42, 13 August 2018.

55 *Written brief* submitted to the Committee by Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, 28 November 2018.

The pre-election environment in the DRC was further destabilized by procedural and logistical concerns that called into question the integrity of the electoral process. As one example, Marc Kapenda drew the Committee's attention to problems with the DRC's voter registry. In May 2018, the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF) conducted an audit of the voter registry which found that it was "inclusive, exhaustive and updated, but required improvements." Of concern, the OIF indicated that about 16.6% of voters had been registered with incomplete information on file.<sup>56</sup> CENI reacted to the audit by saying that it would work to implement the OIF recommendations. Meanwhile, opposition parties argued that CENI should remove from the voter registry individuals for whom no biometric data had been recorded.<sup>57</sup>

The introduction of new voting technology also stirred controversy. In September 2017, CENI announced that it would purchase more than 100,000 electronic voting machines from a South Korean firm. CENI said the use of voting machines would reduce costs and simplify and accelerate the counting of votes. However, critics argued that the use of voting machines could create chaos on election day due to the potential for breakdowns and technical glitches. The unreliability of the power supply in remote parts of the country was cited as a particular concern, as was the lack of training and civic education to support the use of the machines.<sup>58</sup> Some suggested that the machines are more susceptible to vote-rigging than paper ballots and that the technology could be manipulated. On this point, Ambassador Simard told the Committee that many Congolese refer to the voting machines as "cheating machines."<sup>59</sup>

Pre-electoral challenges were compounded by a government which several witnesses characterized as being authoritarian and corrupt. Marc Kapenda told the Committee that "personal enrichment, corruption and predation" prevailed under the government of Joseph Kabila over "ethics and legality."<sup>60</sup> A similar point was made by Fredrick Wangabo

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56 International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF), *Audit du fichier électoral national de la République Démocratique du Congo: Rapport Final*, 6–25 May 2018.

57 The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) introduced a new voter registration process in advance of elections originally scheduled for 2016. As part of the process, CENI procured mobile voter enrolment kits meant to capture biometric data from voters, including photos and fingerprints. The UN Secretary-General explained in a report that, under Congolese law, "the absence of fingerprint registration is not a reason to exclude voters, who can be identified by other means." In May 2018, five major opposition party leaders issued a joint statement that rejected the main conclusions of the OIF audit and called for the replacement of the president of CENI. See: *United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General*, United Nations Security Council, S/2018/655, 2 July 2018.

58 *Written brief* submitted to the Committee by Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, 28 November 2018.

59 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2018.

60 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 November 2018.



Mwenengabo, who argued that Mr. Kabila built a vast “corruption and patronage system” to “enrich himself and others without any commensurate efforts to provide basic services or build the Congolese economy for the citizenry.”<sup>61</sup>

Mr. Mwenengabo also suggested that “large-scale corruption” has prevented the Congolese people from benefiting from the country’s natural resource wealth. The DRC, which Gregory Queyranne, Humanitarian Manager, Oxfam Canada, suggested was “probably the richest country on the continent,” is estimated to hold approximately half of Africa’s forestry and water resources, as well as trillions of dollars in mineral reserves.<sup>62</sup> Yet, Mr. Mwenengabo argued that “very little of the country’s mineral wealth finds its way back to the people.” The enormous mineral wealth in the DRC contrasts with the country’s development indicators that are among the worst in the world. Overall, the DRC ranks 176<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries and territories on the United Nations Development Programme’s 2018 Human Development Index.<sup>63</sup>

## December 2018 Elections

In August 2018, after years of speculation that he would attempt to stand for re-election in defiance of the DRC’s constitution, President Kabila officially announced that he would not run in the presidential election. Instead, he endorsed Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, the Interior Minister and a former Vice-Prime Minister, as his successor. Mr. Shadary is a controversial figure who is under sanctions by the European Union for his role in the 2017 arrests of activists and opposition members.<sup>64</sup> Mr. Shadary’s main rivals in the presidential contest were Martin Fayulu, a former businessman and member of parliament, and Félix Tshisekedi, the leader of the Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social.

On 20 December 2018, three days before the long-delayed presidential, legislative, and provincial elections were to be held, CENI announced that the vote would be pushed back by another week, to 30 December 2018. CENI said the postponement was required after a fire at an electoral commission depot on 13 December 2018 had destroyed 8,000 electronic voting machines, or about 80% of the total required for the capital

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61 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, 28 November 2018.

62 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), [UNEP Study Confirms DR Congo’s Potential as Environmental Powerhouse but Warns of Critical Threats](#), 7 August 2017.

63 The Human Development Index is a composite measure of health, education and income indicators. See: United Nations Development Programme, [Human Development Reports: 2018 Statistical Update](#).

64 [Council Decision 2010/788/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), European Union Law.

city.<sup>65</sup> Corneille Nangaa, the head of the electoral commission, said that millions of paper ballots had to be ordered in light of the fire, which would not have arrived in time for distribution prior to the election. CENI also linked the delay to ethnic violence in the west of the country and an outbreak of Ebola in the east.

Opposition parties criticized CENI for its additional decision to postpone voting, to March 2019, for people living in three conflict-affected areas: Beni and Butembo, which are located in the eastern province of North Kivu, and Yumbi, which is situated in the Bandundu province in western DRC. CENI once again cited concerns about security and the spread of the Ebola virus as its reason for the postponement. The opposition condemned the announcement, calling it an attempt to disenfranchise 1.25 million potential voters.

The presidential and legislative elections went ahead on December 30<sup>th</sup>. A preliminary statement by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had observed the elections, concluded that voting “proceeded relatively smoothly, enabling the majority of the people of the DRC to exercise their right to vote.”<sup>66</sup> This qualified endorsement, however, was countered by reports of widespread logistical problems, including problems with the voting machines and delays in the opening of polling stations.<sup>67</sup>

On 10 January 2019, CENI announced that Félix Tshisekedi had won the presidential election. According to CENI, Mr. Tshisekedi garnered 38.5% of the votes, compared to 34.7% for Mr. Fayulu and 23.8% for Mr. Shadary. Voter turnout was reportedly 48%. The results were immediately disputed by Mr. Fayulu, who filed an appeal with the country’s Constitutional Court. Concerns were raised by Mr. Fayulu and others that some sort of political understanding – i.e., a deal – may have been reached behind-the-scenes between Mr. Kabila and Mr. Tshisekedi. The results were also questioned by the influential Episcopal Council of the Congolese Catholic Church (CENCO), which had deployed thousands of observers to polling stations on election day. CENCO stated that the announced results did not reflect the data that its observers collected.

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65 The electronic voting machines resemble a tablet and are equipped with an internal thermal printer and scanner. After a vote is cast, the machines print a paper ballot which is submitted by the voter for counting by hand; the machines also keep an electronic tally to verify the results. For more information on the electronic voting machines, see: Westminster Foundation for Democracy, [Voting Machine Review: Democratic Republic of Congo](#), August 2018.

66 Southern African Development Community (SADC), [Preliminary Statement by the Honourable Joseph Malanji, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia and Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission \(SEOM\) to the 2018 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#), 2 January 2019.

67 See, for example: Jason Burke, [“DRC election: opposition cries foul over long queues at polling stations,”](#) *The Guardian*, 30 December 2018.



SADC issued a statement on 13 January 2019 that “took note of the strong doubts” cast on the outcome of the vote by CENCO, while also calling for a recount of the vote.<sup>68</sup> SADC further called on all political leaders in the DRC to consider pursuing a negotiated political settlement through the creation of a government of national unity. For his part, UN Secretary-General António Guterres appealed for calm and for stakeholders to channel any electoral disputes through established institutional mechanisms.<sup>69</sup>

On 19 January 2019, the DRC’s Constitutional Court dismissed Mr. Fayulu’s appeal and confirmed Félix Tshisekedi as the winner of the presidential election. Mr. Fayulu responded with a statement that called on the Congolese people and the international community to reject the results and for peaceful demonstrations to take place across the country. The ruling of the Constitutional Court elicited a mixed reaction from regional organizations and other stakeholders in Africa. While SADC congratulated Mr. Tshisekedi and called on “all Congolese to accept the outcome,” the African Union Commission merely took “note” of the decision of the Constitutional Court.<sup>70</sup> The AU Commission further called on all parties to “work for the preservation of peace and stability and the promotion of national harmony in the country.”<sup>71</sup>

## Strengthening Electoral Integrity

On 24 January 2019, Félix Tshisekedi was sworn in as President of the DRC. In his inaugural address, President Tshisekedi called for a peaceful, reconciled country, and pledged to address corruption.<sup>72</sup> President Tshisekedi’s inauguration was welcomed by many countries in the region and others internationally. The leaders of South Africa, Zambia and Angola congratulated him on his victory and the U.S. State Department said that it was “committed to working with the new DRC government.”<sup>73</sup> Ambassador Simard also thanked President Tshisekedi for his inaugural address, which he referred to as progressive and inclusive. He

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68 [“SADC urges all-inclusive government in DRC,”](#) Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa, 13 January 2019.

69 UN News, [“‘Refrain from violence’ UN chief urges, as presidential election result is announced in DR Congo,”](#) 10 January 2019.

70 SADC, [Congratulatory Message by the SADC Chairperson to the President-Elect of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Felix Thisekedi,](#) 20 January 2019.

71 African Union Commission, [Communiqué on the Democratic Republic of the Congo,](#) 20 January 2019.

72 Francesca Paris, [“Felix Tshisekedi is Sworn in as Congo’s President,”](#) *National Public Radio*, 24 January 2019.

73 U.S. Department of State, [“U.S. Response to Constitutional Court Decision in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,”](#) Press Statement, 23 January 2019; Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, [“After Tarnished Election, Opposition Figure Becomes Congo’s President,”](#) *The New York Times*, 24 January 2019.

said that the Government of Canada would work with the government of President Tshisekedi in support of peace and development in the DRC.<sup>74</sup>

While the international community largely accepted the election results, discrepancies between the official and unofficial results cast doubt on the integrity of the country's electoral process. The process by which the election was conducted also raise concerns about the national political context within which international assistance will be provided going forward. Moreover, it is notable that many of the concerns expressed by witnesses about the elections in advance of the voting day now seem prescient in light of the election's aftermath. Testifying on 19 November 2018, Susan Stigant told the Committee that the history of elections in the DRC suggests that the international community needs to be prepared for post-election disputes. She stated:

We know that it's very likely the opposition will reject the results. We know it's very likely that there will be an outcry over disenfranchisement because of violence and armed group action. We know that there will likely be confusion and chaos around tabulation and transmission and counting.

Consistently in DRC we've seen that this has led to people going to the streets to protest and often to heavy-handed response by the government.<sup>75</sup>

The post-election situation in the DRC underlines that the act of voting is not sufficient for an electoral process to be considered democratic and legitimate. Speaking prior to the DRC elections, Ambassador Simard told the Committee, "The issue is not only whether [elections] will take place, but ... whether they will be credible, transparent and fair." According to Ambassador Simard, what matters above all else is ensuring that the people of the DRC have trust and confidence in the process and the results of the elections. He stated that, without such trust, "holding the elections serves no purpose because they will cause conflict thereafter."<sup>76</sup>

Susan Stigant emphasized that elections should be viewed as a process, rather than an event. She explained that, all too often international attention and support are shifted away from countries once an election is over or after an electoral crisis has been resolved. Ms. Stigant highlighted Kenya as an example of a country that "has had some very difficult elections over the last few years, but as soon as things seem to be on the right track, the

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74 ["RDC: L'ambassadeur du Canada félicite le nouveau Président Tshisekedi pour son discours "inclusive" et "progressiste,"](#) Africa 243, 24 January 2019.

75 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

76 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2018.



money gets shifted somewhere else where the situation seems much worse.”<sup>77</sup> She suggested that a lack of predictable and sustained support for governance and electoral processes makes it difficult for fragile states to maintain positive momentum.

The Committee believes that Canada’s efforts to support stronger democratic institutions and better governance in the DRC must extend beyond the electoral period. Supporting local efforts toward democratic development should be a long-term Canadian priority in the DRC. The Committee believes that such support will be particularly vital in the next few years. It will not be long before the DRC must begin preparing for presidential and legislative elections in 2023. Now is the time to support projects aimed at ensuring that those elections will be fair, transparent, and legitimate.

### Recommendation 5

**The Government of Canada, consistent with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, should consider providing new, additional, predictable and sustained development assistance in support of national and grassroots organizations and stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the objective of strengthening the electoral process and democratic institutions, and, in particular, of enhancing the engagement of women and girls.**

## CONTEXTS OF FRAGILITY

There is no one universally accepted definition of “fragile states” or “state fragility.” Some observers define fragile states broadly as countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to most of its people. Others define and measure state fragility by evaluating the conditions in a state against a range of performance indicators. Such indicators may include metrics that assess the strength of a country’s institutions, its ability to guarantee national security, maintain respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, and to provide basic economic opportunities and services for their citizens.<sup>78</sup>

By any measure, Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC are three of the most fragile countries in the world. To use one reference point, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed a framework that assesses state fragility based on an assessment of risks and coping capacities in economic,

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77 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

78 Fragile States and Disaster Response Group, International Labour Organization, *Selected definitions and characteristics of ‘fragile states’ by key international actors*, 2016.



environmental, political, security, and societal dimensions.<sup>79</sup> According to the OECD, Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC were, respectively, the first, second, and fifth most fragile countries in the world in 2018.<sup>80</sup>

The central question of the Committee's study was the following: how can Canada better address the issues of peace and security, gender-based violence, justice, human rights, and economic development in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo? In addressing this question, it is worth noting that Canada is already engaged in many of these areas, including through the provision of development and humanitarian assistance. Indeed, in 2017-2018, Canada provided the following international assistance<sup>81</sup> to Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC:

- \$40.09 million to Somalia, of which \$32.63 million was bilateral humanitarian assistance;
- \$101.48 million to South Sudan, of which \$29.78 million was bilateral humanitarian assistance; and
- \$112.76 million to the DRC, of which \$32.03 million was bilateral humanitarian assistance.<sup>82</sup>

The Committee has noted in other reports that Canada's international assistance budget is not unlimited, a point that bears reiteration here. Canada cannot be everywhere, nor can it address every development or humanitarian challenge. To have the most impact, Canada's engagement must be strategic and evidence-based. With that overarching consideration in mind, the following section will look at some of the main consequences of state fragility in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. It will also discuss witness perspectives and suggestions for how Canada's support in these countries could be more targeted and effective.

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79 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [\*States of Fragility 2018\*](#).

80 Ibid.

81 International assistance includes both bilateral and humanitarian assistance, as well as multilateral assistance. Multilateral assistance is funding provided to a multilateral institution that "conducts all or part of its activities in favour of development; is an international agency, institution, or organization whose members are governments, or a fund managed autonomously by such an agency; and pools contributions so that they become an integral part of the financial assets." See: Global Affairs Canada, [\*Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2017-2018\*](#).

82 Global Affairs Canada, [\*Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2017-2018\*](#).



## Humanitarian Emergencies

Witnesses referred to the humanitarian situations in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC as three of the most severe and complex in the world. Years of conflict and state fragility have had a pervasive and devastating impact on the people of the three countries, resulting in a multitude of negative development outcomes. The overall number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is evidence of the critical challenges these populations face.<sup>83</sup> According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of 20 January 2019, 4.2 million people in Somalia were in need of humanitarian assistance. As of 31 December 2018, OCHA estimated that 7.1 million people in South Sudan and 12.8 million people in the DRC were in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>84</sup>

Violence and conflict in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC have had a serious and detrimental impact on food security in the three countries. In a written brief, Nyambura Githaiga of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank stated:

DRC, Somalia and South Sudan were among 18 countries in 2017 where conflict and insecurity were primary drivers of acute food insecurity. Conflict forcibly displaces populations, causes destitution, disrupts food production, destroys livelihoods and markets, hinders humanitarian food delivery, thereby compounding hunger and malnutrition.<sup>85</sup>

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), a specialized agency of the United Nations, 5.7 million people are at risk of severe food insecurity in Somalia. WFP

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83 The populations of Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC are estimated to be 12.3 million, 12 million, and 81 million, respectively. Somalia's estimated population of 12.3 million comes from a 2013-2014 survey by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). See: UNFPA, [Population Estimations Survey 2014 for the 18 Pre-War Regions of Somalia](#), October 2014. Population estimates for Somalia vary. International organizations provide population figures for Somalia ranging from 11 million to 15 million. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) notes that population estimates for Somalia are complicated because of the large number of nomads and displaced persons in or moving through the country. Somalia's last official census was conducted in 1975. See: CIA, "[Somalia](#)," The World Factbook.

84 The figures on people in need of humanitarian assistance refer to those that require such assistance, not those that are necessarily receiving it. For example, the number of people who are targeted for assistance under the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) *2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan* is 5.7 million, out of a total of 7.1 million in need. OCHA, [2019 Humanitarian Response Plan: January-December 2019](#), December 2018. For background on the humanitarian needs in each of the three countries, see: OCHA, [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), and the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#).

85 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Nyambura Githaiga, 3 December 2018.

estimates that the number of people at risk of severe food insecurity in South Sudan and the DRC is 6.87 million and 7.7 million, respectively.<sup>86</sup>

Bill Chambers described the extent of the food crisis in South Sudan in unambiguous and concrete terms. Testifying on 5 November 2018, Mr. Chambers stated that 20,000 children were at risk of dying from hunger-related conditions in South Sudan before the end of the year.<sup>87</sup> In the case of the DRC, Nyambura Githaiga explained that violence in the regions of Kasai, North and South Kivu and Tanganyika have compounded hunger by increasing the price of food, thereby weakening the purchasing power of households.<sup>88</sup>

Several witnesses indicated that climate change is negatively affecting food security in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. Kevin Dunbar, for example, said that climate change and drought were driving competition for scarce food resources in South Sudan.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Gregory Queyranne told the Committee that drought is causing many subsistence farmers in Somalia to become displaced and to lose their livelihoods.<sup>90</sup> He indicated that the loss of livelihoods has had a disproportionate effect on women. Referring to a recent Oxfam International study, Mr. Queyranne said that drought in Somalia has caused men to migrate in search of economic opportunities, resulting in a sharp increase in female-headed households.<sup>91</sup> He further noted that the women who are left behind “are vulnerable and overstretched, shouldering many responsibilities and insecurities on their own.”<sup>92</sup>

Reduced access to basic education is another consequence of insecurity. The Committee heard that violence has weakened the already fragile education system in South Sudan. Bill Chambers said that hundreds of schools have been destroyed in recent years, forcing thousands of children out of school. At least 2.2 million school-aged children are estimated to be out of school in South Sudan, a figure that makes it the country with the

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86 Severe or acute food insecurity refers to when a person’s inability to consume adequate food puts their lives or livelihoods in immediate danger. World Food Programme (WFP), “[Food crisis continue to strike, and acute hunger intensifies](#),” 22 March 2018. For background on the food situation in each of the three countries, see: WFP, [South Sudan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#).

87 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

88 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Nyambura Githaiga, 3 December 2018.

89 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

90 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

91 See: Oxfam International, [Drought, Displacement and Livelihoods in Somalia/Somaliland: Time for gender-sensitive and protection-focused approaches](#), June 2018.

92 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.



highest proportion of children out of school in the world.<sup>93</sup> Girls are more likely than boys to be excluded from school in South Sudan. In fact, Bill Chambers told the Committee that, by age 14, a child in South Sudan is more likely to be married than to be in school.<sup>94</sup> The Canadian Council for International Co-operation specified in a written brief that, in some parts of the country, 75% of primary-aged girls are not in school.<sup>95</sup>

## Recommendation 6

**The Government of Canada, consistent with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, should consider increasing its international assistance to Somalia and South Sudan for women-led households and for basic education, in particular for primary school for girls.**

The Committee heard that the response to, and containment of, an Ebola outbreak in eastern DRC has been impeded by instability. The outbreak, which is the second worst in history after the 2014 outbreak in West Africa, is the 10<sup>th</sup> in the DRC's history, but the first time that one is taking place in an active conflict zone.<sup>96</sup> Recent attacks against peacekeepers in eastern DRC highlight the degree of insecurity in Ebola-affected areas. On 14 November 2018, 12 Congolese soldiers, as well as 6 Malawian and 1 Tanzanian peacekeeper serving as part of MONUSCO, were killed near Beni, North Kivu – the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak.<sup>97</sup>

According to Gregory Queyranne, conflict is putting the Ebola response at risk, which he said could result in the epidemic spreading to neighbouring countries. Mr. Queyranne explained that the outbreak has strained the DRC's already weak health system, leaving many people, especially women, without access to crucial services such as maternal,

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93 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC). For more information on out of school children in South Sudan, see: Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, [South Sudan Country Study](#), May 2018.

94 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

95 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by CCIC.

96 As of 11 May 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 1,680 confirmed or probable cases of Ebola in eastern DRC, including 1,117 confirmed or probable deaths. WHO, [Ebola situation reports: Democratic Republic of the Congo](#).

97 The peacekeepers were killed during joint operations carried out by MONUSCO and Congolese forces against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The ADF is an Islamist rebel group that was founded in Uganda, but has been active in eastern DRC since the late 1990s. The ADF is alleged to have committed numerous violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law against women and children, including killing, maiming and sexual violence. According to the Group of Experts on the DRC, the ADF is estimated to number approximately 400–450 armed fighters, which include some women and children. [Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2018/531, 4 June 2018.

sexual and reproductive health care. Women are already disproportionately affected by the epidemic, given their traditional role as caretakers of the sick.<sup>98</sup> As of 6 December 2018, the World Health Organization indicated that women and girls accounted for 62% of overall cases where such data was reported.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the significant needs that exist in the DRC, and the other two countries that are the focus of this report, the Committee was informed that the international humanitarian response plans for Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC were significantly and critically underfunded in 2018.<sup>100</sup> Save the Children Canada indicated in its written brief that, as of 25 October 2018, the humanitarian response plan for Somalia was 41.4% funded out of a total requirement of US\$1.5 billion. For South Sudan, the humanitarian response plan was 53.3% funded out of a total appeal of US\$1.7 billion. The DRC's humanitarian response plan was the least funded of the three. As of 25 October 2018, Save the Children Canada indicated that the plan had received only 40% funding out of a total requirement of US\$1.7 billion.<sup>101</sup>

## Recommendation 7

**The Government of Canada should consider increasing its international assistance to Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in the area of democratic governance.**

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98 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

99 WHO, [Ebola virus disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), Disease outbreak news: Update, 6 December 2018.

100 Humanitarian response plans are strategy documents put together by UN agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders that outline the humanitarian needs of a country and how much funding is required to meet those needs. They are normally produced on an annual basis and have at least a one-year time horizon. Not all UN agencies and organizations that carry out humanitarian activities in a given area participate in and receive funding under a humanitarian response plan framework. For example, according to South Sudan's 2019 humanitarian response plan, more than 150 organizations are operating emergency programs in South Sudan outside of the humanitarian response plan framework. Conversely, 105 local and 67 international NGOs, as well as 11 UN entities submitted projects in the 2019 South Sudan humanitarian response plan. OCHA, [Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan – January-December 2019](#). For more information on humanitarian response plans, see: Financial Tracking Service, [Humanitarian response plans and appeals/What are they?](#)

101 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Save the Children Canada, 26 October 2018. For information on the current funding figures for the humanitarian response plans of each country, see: OCHA, [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), and the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#).



## Population Displacement

Population displacement is one of the most significant consequences of the conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. Massive numbers of people have been displaced internally or forced to seek refuge outside of their country of origin. Recent figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) illustrate the scale of the three displacement crises:

- As of 31 March 2019, more than 800,000 Somalis were living across the Horn of Africa or in Yemen as refugees; and, as of 30 June 2018, approximately 2.6 million people were internally displaced in Somalia.<sup>102</sup>
- As of 28 March 2019, approximately 1.91 million people were internally displaced in South Sudan; and, as of 28 February 2019, 2.28 million people were living in neighbouring countries as refugees.<sup>103</sup>
- As of 31 December 2018, it was estimated that 4.5 million people were internally displaced in the DRC; and, as of 28 February 2019, that more than 826,000 Congolese had sought refuge in neighbouring countries.<sup>104</sup>

The number of people displaced as a result of the persistent crises in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC is staggering on both an absolute and relative basis. Marc-André Fredette told the Committee that the DRC and South Sudan are, respectively, the largest and second largest sources of displacement in Africa.<sup>105</sup> In the case of South Sudan, Mr. Fredette indicated that approximately one-third of the country's population has been forced from their homes, with more than half of those people taking refuge in neighbouring countries.<sup>106</sup> According to Kevin Dunbar, the majority of South Sudanese refugees are women and children.<sup>107</sup>

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102 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [Horn of Africa Somalia Situation](#), Operational Portal.

103 UNHCR, [South Sudan](#), Operational Update, 16–31 March 2019.

104 UNHCR, [Democratic Republic of the Congo situation](#), Regional Update, February 2019.

105 This figure includes both people internally displaced in the DRC and those who have fled the country as refugees. FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2018.

106 The three largest host countries for South Sudanese refugees are Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Approximately 846,000 South Sudanese refugees reside in Sudan; 789,000 in Uganda; and 422,000 in Ethiopia. UNHCR, [South Sudan](#), Operational Portal.

107 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

The displacement crisis in the DRC is compounded by the fact that the country is also a host country for a large refugee population. Gregory Queyanne noted that the DRC hosts over half a million refugees that have fled neighbouring crises.<sup>108</sup> Of this total, about 90% of the refugees are from Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.<sup>109</sup> Years of crisis within the DRC have also led to flows of refugees across the region. The second largest country in Africa by geographic size, the DRC shares a land border with nine countries.<sup>110</sup> Almost all of its neighbours have hosted refugees from the DRC at one point over the last two decades, with the countries along its eastern border assuming most of the burden.<sup>111</sup>

The displacement crisis experienced by Somalia is notable not only for its magnitude but also for its protracted nature. Mohamed Abdi Affey, UNHCR Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, explained that many Somalis have been living as refugees since 1991. In his words: “We’re speaking about the fact that a generation of Somali refugees have been trapped in exile since they first left Somalia. Their character has changed.” As the Special Envoy noted, the birth rate “doesn’t stop for people who have been trapped in camps for the last 27 years. Children continue to be born on a daily basis.” According to Mr. Affey, half of the overall population of Somali refugees is today of school age, between 3 and 17 years old. He indicated that, overall, approximately 30% of the Somali population is currently displaced, either internally or as refugees in the region.<sup>112</sup>

Regional engagement from across the IGAD region on the issue of displaced Somalis has deepened in recent years. IGAD member states held a special summit in Kenya in March 2017 that resulted in the *Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia*. The declaration and accompanying plan of action focused on creating the conditions that could enable the voluntary return of refugees to Somalia, while also promoting the inclusion and self-reliance of refugees in the countries of asylum. The declaration and action plan also called on the international

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108 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

109 UNHCR, *DR Congo*, Fact Sheet, 31 August 2018.

110 The DRC borders South Sudan and the Central African Republic to its north; Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda to its east; the Republic of Congo to its west; and Angola and Zambia to its south.

111 Uganda is currently the largest host country for Congolese refugees, with approximately 332,000 residing there as of 31 March 2019. UNHCR, *DRC Situation*, Operational Portal.

112 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 October 2018. Of the more than 800,000 Somali refugees, about 95% of them are located in either Kenya, Ethiopia, or Yemen. UNHCR, *Horn of African Somalia Situation*, Operational Portal.





community to provide predictable, multi-year financing for refugee hosting countries and to share in the responsibility of refugee resettlement.<sup>113</sup>

The signing of the July 2018 joint declaration of peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea is another development that could generate some momentum toward a durable solution to the Somali displacement crisis.<sup>114</sup> Mohamed Abdi Affey told the Committee that the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was one of the factors that determined the expansion of his role from UNHCR Special Envoy for the Somali refugee situation to UNHCR Special Envoy for the entire Horn of Africa. According to Mr. Affey, the joint declaration of peace, along with other developments in the Horn of Africa, “are increasing the potential for progress toward solutions to one of the region’s most prolonged displacement crises.”

Mr. Affey also told the Committee that the commitment outlined in the Ethiopia–Eritrea joint declaration of peace, coupled with a new Somali government that is undertaking crucial economic and social reforms, has resulted in larger numbers of Somali refugees returning home. He stated:

... unprecedented numbers of Somali refugees are now making the decision to voluntarily return home to rebuild their lives after years of seeking protection abroad, some for more than two decades. Some 121,000 have already made the decision to go back, mainly from Kenya, Yemen and Djibouti, despite the challenges linked to the conditions inside the country.<sup>115</sup>

Despite this increase in the number of returnees, Mr. Affey indicated that Somali refugees continue to worry about the security and economic situation in the country. It is his position that more international support is needed to create the kinds of security and economic conditions in Somalia that would facilitate the return home of greater numbers of refugees.

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113 See: IGAD, [\*Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Refugees in Somalia\*](#); and [\*Nairobi Comprehensive Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees\*](#).

114 Eritrea and Ethiopia fought a war between 1998–2000 that ended with the signing in 2000 of the *Algiers Agreement* and an agreement to resolve border disputes. Although there had not been open conflict between the two countries since 2000, sporadic clashes at the border continued in the years following the *Algiers Agreement* and the two countries had remained in a state of conflict. Under the July 2018 joint declaration of peace, Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to restore full diplomatic relations and to open their borders to the movement of people, goods and services. Note: Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993. UNHCR, [\*Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa\*](#).

115 FAAE, [\*Evidence\*](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 October 2018. Mr. Affey did not provide a timeframe in relation to the figure of 121,000. However, a September 2018 report from UNHCR indicated that close to 120,000 Somali refugees have returned home since December 2013. Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Program, [\*Update of UNHCR’s Operations in Africa\*](#), 14 September 2018.



Witnesses also emphasized the need to support the countries that are hosting refugee populations. This point applies not only in relation to Somali refugees, but also to refugees from South Sudan and the DRC. The Committee heard that the economic, social, and environmental impact of hosting refugees is high. Gregory Queyranne said Canada needs to consider how it can better support the countries that are dealing with the fallout of the crises in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. He noted, for example, that Uganda hosts more than one million refugees combined from the three countries in question. As Mr. Queyranne said of host countries such as Uganda, “it is clear that these countries are doing far more than their fair share.”<sup>116</sup> This point was echoed in a written brief submitted by African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD), a civil society organization working in Uganda. AWYAD suggested that Uganda’s refugee response is “currently overstretched, underfunded and requires more regional and international support.”<sup>117</sup>

According to information provided to the Committee, increasing opportunities for vocational training and skills development could support and empower refugees within host countries. Many refugees, especially those that have been outside their country for a long period of time, lack work experience and the kinds of employment skills that would allow them to succeed economically upon their return home. Speaking about Somali refugees in particular, Mr. Affey suggested that these challenges affect young refugees in particular, many of whom fled their country at a young age or were born in exile. He conveyed that refugees need to be equipped with the necessary skills and vocational training “in the camps, in the subregion, so that when they go back to Somalia they are nationals who go back with skills.”<sup>118</sup>

Governments, local organizations, and regional and international institutions need support to find durable solutions to the displacement crises in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. Such work can be targeted to assist refugees seeking to return home voluntarily, while still providing support to refugee populations in host countries.

## **Recommendation 8**

**The Government of Canada should expand its support to local and international organizations that are providing skills and vocational training opportunities to refugee populations from fragile and conflict-affected states, including from Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

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116 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

117 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by African Women and Youth Action for Development.

118 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 31 October 2018.



## Supporting Local Organizations

In addition to managing humanitarian needs and displacement, witnesses highlighted other thematic areas which they suggested Canada should prioritize as part of its engagement in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. Bill Chambers of Save the Children Canada, for instance, identified child protection as an issue that he said Canada should prioritize in all three countries. Kevin Dunbar of CARE Canada and Julienne Lusenge of the Fund for Congolese Women suggested that Canada should focus on the specific needs of women and girls in South Sudan and the DRC, respectively. For his part, Minister Gamal Hassan specified that Somalia would benefit from Canadian support for girls' education.

The importance of supporting local-level stakeholders operating in conflict-affected communities emerged as a clear consensus among witnesses during the Committee's study. That this idea was a theme of the testimony is not surprising. The very same point was made by many of the witnesses who testified before the Committee during its previous studies on women, peace and security, and on the "country of focus" approach to Canadian development assistance.<sup>119</sup> With both of those studies, the Committee recommended that the Government of Canada prioritize grassroots organizations involved in the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

Witnesses emphasized that local organizations have several advantages in delivering services to communities in need, as compared to international organizations. For example, speaking about South Sudan, Kevin Dunbar told the Committee that "local actors have better access and a better understanding of the local context."<sup>120</sup> The Committee heard that the work of local organizations is particularly important in countries where it could take hours on a charter flight for outside actors to reach a remote community. The work of local actors is also critical in situations where insecurity forces international organizations to suspend the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

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119 See: FAAE, *An Opportunity for Global Leadership: Canada and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, October 2016; and FAAE, *Development Cooperation for a more Stable, Inclusive and Prosperous World: A Collective Ambition*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, November 2016. The "countries of focus" approach refers to a previous Government of Canada policy where development assistance was concentrated on a fixed number of countries. This policy was discontinued in June 2017 with the launch of the government's Feminist International Assistance Policy. According to the Feminist International Assistance Policy, going forward, Canada's bilateral development assistance will be directed to those parts of the world where the incidence and depth of poverty and fragility are most acute. The policy stated that, by 2021–2022, no less than 50% of Canada's bilateral development assistance would be directed to sub-Saharan African countries. See: Government of Canada, *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*.

120 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

In such cases, local stakeholders may be the only avenue through which vulnerable populations can receive assistance.

Investing in local organizations is an important tool in building community resilience and capacity. It is also a way for international organizations to empower local stakeholders to take charge of their future. As Gregory Queyranne explained, the long-term “vision” of organizations like Oxfam is eventually to exit conflict-affected countries. He said: “I think that providing assistance to local humanitarian actors or local development actors provides that exit strategy.” With that objective in mind, Mr. Queyranne told the Committee that Oxfam is mentoring local organizations and partnering with them financially “in order to bring them up to the level acceptable to different international donors so that they can be the ones doing the work themselves.”<sup>121</sup>

The importance of strengthening the capacity of local actors in humanitarian contexts has been recognized by the international community. Mr. Queyranne referred the Committee to a commitment made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to channel 25% of humanitarian financing to national and local responders, as directly as possible, by 2020. Recent data suggests, however, that the international community has a long way to go in reaching that target. According to a report by Development Initiatives, an independent international development organization, funding reported to OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service as being channeled directly to local and national NGOs, or delivered through one intermediary, accounted for only 3.6% of total humanitarian assistance in 2017.<sup>122</sup>

It is clear that greater commitment is required by donor governments, including Canada, to support and empower local organizations involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Committee notes that the Feminist International Assistance Policy, launched by the Government of Canada in June 2017, included a commitment to direct more assistance to local organizations operating in developing countries.<sup>123</sup> The Committee urges the Government of Canada to deepen its efforts toward that end.

### **Recommendation 9**

**The Government of Canada, in providing any humanitarian assistance to Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, should, where possible, prioritize that support as direct support to local organizations, including for capacity building, so that they may better assume leadership roles in this delivery.**

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121 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

122 Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*, 2018, p. 43.

123 See: Government of Canada, *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy*.



## Multi-dimensional and Persistent Insecurity

The conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC “remain among the world’s most violent and entrenched.”<sup>124</sup> Those are the words of Georgette Gagnon of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As Ms. Gagnon and others explained, the conflicts have resulted in heavy casualties, the destruction of communities and livelihoods, and left lasting psychological scars on an untold number of people. In each country, civilians have borne the brunt of the violence.

Children have been disproportionately affected by armed conflict in the three countries. Bill Chambers explained that Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC are three of the 10 most dangerous countries for children in the world.<sup>125</sup> Among the most serious human rights violations committed against children in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC is the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. Mr. Chambers referred the Committee to a recent report by the UN Secretary-General, which indicated that the recruitment and use of children as soldiers in South Sudan has been persistent and widespread.<sup>126</sup> In the context of Somalia, Save the Children noted in a written brief that abductions of children almost doubled between 2016 and 2017. Using figures obtained from the UN, the brief indicates that 1,634 children were abducted in Somalia in 2017, 98% of them by al-Shabaab.<sup>127</sup> The UN Secretary-General also documented the recruitment and use of 2,087 boys and 40 girls as child soldiers in Somalia in 2017, the majority of them by al-Shabaab.<sup>128</sup>

Sexual and gender-based violence has been used as a weapon of war in all three countries. Atong Amos Agook Juac said that the parties to the conflict in South Sudan have engaged in “widespread, systematic and ethnically targeted attacks on civilians” that have included rape and other forms of sexual violence.<sup>129</sup> The pervasiveness of the sexual violence in South Sudan was underlined by Kevin Dunbar of CARE Canada. He indicated that up to 65% of women and girls in South Sudan have experienced physical

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124 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

125 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018. According to Save the Children’s 2018 *End of Childhood* report, children are more at risk during armed conflict today than at any time in the last 20 years. The report indicates that at least 240 million children are living in countries affected by conflict and fragility. The DRC, Somalia and South Sudan rank 166<sup>th</sup>, 170<sup>th</sup> and 171<sup>st</sup>, respectively, out of 175 countries assessed in the report. Save the Children, [The Many Faces of Exclusion, End of Childhood Report 2018](#).

126 See: [Children and Armed Conflict in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary General](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2018/865, 25 September 2018.

127 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Save the Children Canada, 26 October 2018.

128 [Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General](#), UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, A/72/865-S/2018/465, 16 May 2018.

129 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

or sexual violence. He added: “That’s 65%. Assault, abduction, rape and gang rape occur with impunity, even in broad daylight.”<sup>130</sup> According to Mr. Dunbar, South Sudanese women and girls are forced to make “impossible decisions every day, decisions like whether to stay home in relative safety but hungry or to risk walking to distant markets or into the bush to gather firewood.”<sup>131</sup>

Julienne Lusenge, Director, Congolese Women's Fund, and President and Co-founder, Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral, indicated that sexual violence in the DRC is on the rise. Such crimes have been committed by civilians as well as soldiers with impunity. She referred to the problem of sexual violence in the DRC as “a plague that ravages and destroys the dignity of Congolese women, our dignity, my dignity.”<sup>132</sup>

One witness argued that the purpose of the violence in the DRC is to terrorize civilian populations. Yvette Yende-Ashiri, Research Coordinator, University of Ottawa, said:

People will enter a village, rape the mother, rape the little girl and kill the father. The woman is then left on her own and she often has no moral support. Rape is often seen as something shameful that taints the entire family. As a result, the woman will leave the area and leave the place free. The rebels can then return to pillage the resources. This happens every day, and it has almost become the norm.<sup>133</sup>

According to Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, rates of sexual violence in the DRC have become so extreme that the DRC has gained the “dubious recognition as the world capital of rape.”<sup>134</sup>

Attacks against humanitarian aid workers has been another disturbing trait of the violence in the three countries. Save the Children Canada indicates that Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC are among the most dangerous contexts for humanitarian aid workers in the world, a fact that endangers the provision of life-saving assistance.<sup>135</sup> The danger faced by humanitarian workers in South Sudan is particularly acute. In 2017, for the third year in a row, South Sudan was the most dangerous country in the world to

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130 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018. The figure of 65% comes from a 2017 study by the Global Women’s Institute at George Washington University, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee, CARE International UK, and Forcier Consulting. According to the study, South Sudan has among the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world. See: The Global Women’s Institute, *No Safe Place: A Lifetime of Violence for Conflict-Affected Women and Girls in South Sudan*, Main Results Report 2017.

131 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

132 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 November 2018.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 *Written brief* submitted to the Committee by Save the Children Canada, 26 October 2018.



be an aid worker. In that year, aid workers were the target of 46 attacks in the country, which included shootings, assaults, and kidnappings.<sup>136</sup>

Most humanitarian workers in South Sudan who are victimized by violence are national staff. Witnesses indicated that the violence – and threat of violence – against humanitarian workers has made it difficult to move goods into the areas where people are most in need. Atong Amos Agook Juac explained that security challenges have made the delivery of aid especially difficult in remote rural parts of South Sudan, where the presence of armed groups has been the strongest. She told the Committee that “[s]ome of the humanitarian workers that deliver aid were kidnapped, some were killed, and this discourages the big organizations that deliver to rural and local areas.”<sup>137</sup>

## The Protection of Civilians

It became apparent to the Committee that, alone, the deployment of AMISOM, UNMISS, and MONUSCO in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC, respectively, is not enough to ensure the safety of civilian populations. More needs to be done to develop innovative approaches and solutions to protect civilians, including women, children, and aid workers in the three countries. In this regard, the Committee was pleased to hear about two recent Canadian-led initiatives, which aim to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and to keep civilians safe.

The first is the *Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations* that was launched at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in Vancouver in November 2017. The Elsie initiative is a Canadian-led pilot project that aims to overcome barriers to women’s participation in peacekeeping operations. As part of the initiative, Canada is providing assistance and incentives to troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as to select UN missions, to support the deployment of more uniformed female personnel as part of UN peace operations.<sup>138</sup>

The UN has set a target for women’s participation in international peacekeeping operations at 15% for military positions and 20% for police deployments. However, at present, women occupy less than 4% of the total uniformed strength (police and military) of AMISOM, and approximately 4% of the military contingents of UNMISS and

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136 Humanitarian Outcomes, [Aid Worker Security Report: Figures at a glance 2018](#).

137 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

138 For more information on the Elsie initiative, see: Government of Canada, [Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations](#).

MONUSCO.<sup>139</sup> The representation of women among the police components of UNMISS and MONUSCO is more promising; approximately 30% of the police deployed to UNMISS are women, and about 15% of the police deployed to MONUSCO are women.

Research has shown that the involvement of women in peace operations increases the likelihood of achieving a long-term and sustainable peace. Moreover, as the Committee's 2016 report on women, peace and security pointed out, the deployment of women in international military and police operations can have a positive effect on overall mission conduct and effectiveness. The Committee believes that Canada should continue to build support for the Elsie initiative and for increasing the meaningful participation of women in all peacekeeping operations, and, in particular, in South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC.

A second initiative that the Committee heard about is the *Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers*. Also launched at the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, the principles outline a set of political commitments made by UN member states to actively identify and prevent the recruitment of child soldiers in the context of peacekeeping operations. The principles also recognize the need to address the early warning signs of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, recognizing that such acts "can amount to war crimes and can be a precursor to other war crimes...."<sup>140</sup>

Save the Children Canada said in its written brief that Canada should work to encourage the governments of Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC to endorse the Vancouver principles.<sup>141</sup> As of 16 May 2019, these three countries had not endorsed the principles.<sup>142</sup> The Committee believes that Canada should work to build support for the Vancouver principles and their implementation, including in South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC. In all, the Committee is of the view that the protection of civilians should be a core Canadian priority in the countries in question.

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139 See: United Nations Peacekeeping, *Gender*; and *The Independent Uganda*, "[The Women of AMISOM](#)," 8 March 2018.

140 See: Government of Canada, *The Vancouver Principles*.

141 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Save the Children Canada, 26 October 2018.

142 For the full list of UN member states that have endorsed the Vancouver principles, see: Government of Canada, *The Vancouver Principles*.





### Recommendation 10

**The Government of Canada should work through multilateral channels to build support for innovative approaches such as the *Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations* and the *Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers* that prioritize the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, and for other initiatives that prioritize the protection of women and girls from sexual violence in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

The Committee believes that ensuring humanitarian access in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC is another area where Canada can play a leadership role. The Committee agrees with Gregory Queyranne who suggested that the Canadian government and its diplomatic missions should work with humanitarian actors “to overcome systemic access issues, support on-the-ground access negotiations and continue to promote the safety of humanitarian front-line workers.”<sup>143</sup> The Committee was pleased to hear that Canada has already been engaged on this issue in the context of South Sudan. Kevin Dunbar noted that Canadian diplomats have played an active role in trying to negotiate with the government and with different parties to the conflict to ensure humanitarian access. It is the Committee’s view that this type of engagement should continue.

### Recommendation 11

**The Government of Canada should work with local and international humanitarian organizations, regional organizations, government officials and other stakeholders in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure the safety of women and girls, as well as displaced populations, and to ensure consistent and full humanitarian access to all areas in need, while also working to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers in these contexts.**

## Women, Peace and Security

As noted previously, the meaningful participation of women in peace processes increases the durability of the peace that is achieved. That was a core message during the Committee’s 2016 study on the women, peace and security agenda. While that study underlined the catalytic role that women can play in the pursuit of peace and security, the Committee’s study on the situations in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC found that the inverse is also true. A lack of direct and meaningful participation by women in peace processes undermines the effectiveness of those processes.

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143 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.



The Committee was informed that all too often women have been excluded from peacebuilding in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC, as well as from decisions regarding the design and delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. Women have also historically been under-represented in government, legislative assemblies, the military, and in other influential bodies in the three countries. Julianne Lusenge, for instance, noted that women seeking elected office and other positions of power in the DRC have been subjected to intimidation and targeted violence.<sup>144</sup>

There is a strong body of evidence to suggest that the exclusion and under-representation of women have contributed to instability in the three countries. Speaking in a global sense, Gregory Queyranne told the Committee that “[r]esearch has found that extreme gender inequality is correlated with conflict and fragility.” He suggested that investing in women’s rights in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC is therefore a “powerful tool to promote lasting peace and development.”<sup>145</sup>

The Committee was encouraged to hear about some positive developments with respect to the representation of women in elected office and in peace processes during its study. For example, Somali women secured 25% of the seats in parliament in the last election, a 71% increase from the previous parliament.<sup>146</sup> Women also played an important and influential role in the IGAD-led high-level process that resulted in the Revitalized Agreement in South Sudan. Many South Sudanese women’s organizations benefited from Canadian assistance in that regard. In addition, as Nuur Mohamud Sheekh noted, Canada also provided funding to UN Women for the placement of a gender advisor in the office of the IGAD Special Advisor on South Sudan.<sup>147</sup>

The Committee believes that women must be involved in all aspects of peacebuilding in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. That must include the inclusion of women in the planning, negotiation, and implementation of all peace agreements. It must also include the participation of women in initiatives ranging from the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of armed combatants, to the design and monitoring of reconciliation processes. As part of these initiatives, women should be encouraged and supported to seek high-level decision-making positions within their societies, including political office. It is clear to the Committee that the inclusion of women in all aspects of peacebuilding is

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144 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 November 2018.

145 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

146 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 December 2018.

147 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018. For more information on the Canadian project to support women in the South Sudan peace process, see: Government of Canada, [Project profile – Women’s Engagement in South Sudan Peace Process](#).



not only the right thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do to achieve long-term sustainable peace.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The Government of Canada should consider investing in projects aimed at ensuring the meaningful involvement of women in peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

### **Recommendation 13**

**The Government of Canada should consider supporting initiatives focused on building the capacity of women to run for elected political office and assume other leadership positions in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

## **Conflict Minerals**

One final security issue, in specific respect of the DRC, warrants attention. As was noted earlier, the DRC has vast mineral resources, including large amounts of gold, tin, tungsten, and coltan, a mineral used in the batteries of electronic devices such as smartphones. Illicit extraction and trade of these minerals has been at the root of much of the violence in eastern DRC. The Committee heard that competition over the lucrative mineral trade has exacerbated conflict in the country. Revenues generated from the illegal exploitation of minerals has also financed the activities of armed groups, as well as those of foreign military forces. Yvette Yende-Ashiri described the DRC as “a victim of its natural resources, which are a source of envy.”<sup>148</sup>

Ambassador Simard said that work is being done to make the minerals extracted from eastern DRC more traceable. He noted that Canada is engaging with the OECD and other international partners to better ensure that minerals are tracked from their mine of origin to their point of export. He also informed the Committee that the Government of Canada provides funding to Impact, an organization that is working with countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa to address the illicit trade of natural resources and to ensure that minerals are conflict-free.<sup>149</sup> The Committee believes that this is the kind of initiative that merits continued Canadian support.

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148 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 November 2018.

149 For more information on Impact’s work in the DRC, see: [\*Impact in the Democratic Republic of Congo\*](#).

#### **Recommendation 14**

**The Government of Canada should, as a matter of policy to counter the illicit industry of conflict minerals, consider increasing its aid envelope to enable greater support for initiatives aimed at curbing the exploitation of, and trade in, illicit natural resources, including minerals extracted by, or for the benefit of, armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

#### **Recommendation 15**

**The Government of Canada should study ways in which it can help foster the legitimate use of natural resources in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a manner that respects human rights obligations, and contributes to stable, sustainable and self-sufficient economies.**

### **Combatting Impunity**

A final theme of the Committee's study concerned the need to ensure accountability for human rights violations. All too often human rights abuses committed in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC have been met with impunity. The Committee heard about examples where perpetrators of human rights abuses have gone untried and unpunished for their actions, and occasions in which those who have perpetrated crimes have been arbitrarily released from prison and pardoned. The Committee was also informed of instances of journalists, activists, and civil society organizations being threatened, harassed, and intimidated for documenting human rights violations and denouncing impunity.

Witnesses indicated that impunity can exacerbate instability and social tension. Vanda Felbab-Brown said that there is a belief within Somali civil society that the "root cause of Somalia's multifaceted problems is the profound and pervasive impunity of the powerful...." She cited instances of former al-Shabaab combatants obtaining amnesty from prosecution in exchange for defecting to the government. While acknowledging that non-punitive approaches to justice are sometimes required, Ms. Felbab-Brown suggested that "emphasizing accountability in creative ways beyond imprisonment, [as well as attending to] victims' rights and reparations are equally essential for a lasting peace."<sup>150</sup>

A lack of accountability for human rights abuses can also perpetuate the trauma experienced by victims and make post-conflict reconciliation more difficult. Kevin Dunbar spoke of the lasting effects of human rights abuse in the context of South Sudan. He stated:

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150 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Vanda Felbab-Brown, 31 October 2018.



A deep normalization of violence and impunity will leave a lasting impact on every generation, every community and every clan. This type of impact is not undone overnight. The number of people in need of assistance will remain shockingly high for years to come....<sup>151</sup>

Decades of conflict have also taken a toll on mental health. In her written brief, Mary Harper referred the Committee to research by the World Health Organization, which found that one in three Somalis have been affected by some form of psychological illness.<sup>152</sup>

In a positive development, the Committee heard about several recent examples of perpetrators of human rights violations being brought to justice. For example, Renifa Madenga, Humanitarian Affairs Expert, Panel of Experts on South Sudan, UN Security Council, highlighted a case in which 10 South Sudanese soldiers were found guilty of committing violence, including murder and rape, against civilians at a hotel in Juba in July 2016.<sup>153</sup> Georgette Gagnon also highlighted that, between August and October 2018, 43 soldiers and 13 police in the DRC were convicted for human rights crimes, including sexual- and gender-based violence.<sup>154</sup>

Notwithstanding these examples, the Committee was told that institutions and mechanisms for combating and responding to human rights abuses and impunity in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC must be strengthened significantly. Doing so will require investment in several areas. For example, Julienne Lusenge said that targeted support is required to improve access to the judicial system for “ordinary Congolese people, especially women survivors of conflict and sexual violence.”<sup>155</sup> Other witnesses suggested that more investment should be devoted to building the monitoring and evidence-gathering capacity of local organizations and human rights defenders. According to Renifa Madenga, human rights defenders are engaged in work to gather evidence related to human rights violations in South Sudan already, in the hopes that the evidence could one day be brought before a court.<sup>156</sup>

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151 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

152 [Written brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Mary Harper, 2 January 2019. For more information on the World Health Organization [WHO] study, see: WHO, [A Situation Analysis of Mental Health in Somalia](#), October 2010; and WHO, [“Mental Health in Somalia,”](#) Humanitarian Health Action, 2 February 2011.

153 The 10 soldiers were convicted by a military court in September 2018, and given sentences ranging from seven years in jail to life imprisonment. The court also ordered the government to pay damages to the victims. For more information, see: BBC News, [“South Sudan soldiers jailed for rape and murder,”](#) 6 September 2018.

154 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 November 2018.

155 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 November 2018.

156 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 November 2018.

Sanctions are another important tool that the international community can use to hold perpetrators of human rights violations to account. Indeed, in November 2017, Canada imposed sanctions against three public officials in South Sudan for their role in acts of significant corruption, gross violations of human rights, or both.<sup>157</sup> The Committee believes that targeted sanctions should continue to be imposed, as warranted, against individuals and entities responsible for, or complicit in, the violations of human rights in Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. At the same time, the Committee believes that Canada should support the efforts of grassroots organizations and stakeholders who are working on the front lines to combat impunity, expose abuses, and strengthen accountability mechanisms in these three countries.

### Recommendation 16

**The Government of Canada should consider increasing its aid envelope in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enable greater support for the efforts of local civil society organizations and human rights defenders that are working to combat impunity and to strengthen accountability and the rule of law.**

## CONCLUSION

Years and, in some cases, decades, of conflict have had a devastating impact on the people of Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC. The violence has resulted in death, injury, psychological trauma, displacement, underdevelopment, and food insecurity, among a host of other negative outcomes. Children have been disproportionately affected by the cycles of brutal conflict. Sexual- and gender-based violence against women and girls has been pervasive. Widespread impunity, corruption, and inequality are all challenges that have both contributed to, and been exacerbated by, conflict and fragility in these three countries. **Indeed, as the Committee's report has highlighted throughout, Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC are three of the world's most fragile countries.**

Notwithstanding these challenges, recent political developments in each country also provide some reasons for optimism. The 2016/2017 elections in Somalia were the country's most extensive electoral process in decades. Somalia's government has embarked on a process of constitutional, electoral, and economic reforms and is working to address systemic issues such as corruption. In South Sudan, the implementation of

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157 These sanctions were made pursuant to the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act*. See: Government of Canada, [Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Regulations](#), Canada Gazette, 2 November 2017. Canada also maintains sanctions regimes against Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC pursuant to the *Special Economic Measures Act* and the *United Nations Act*. For more information on these regimes, see: Government of Canada, [Canadian sanctions legislation](#).



the Revitalized Agreement, which was signed in September 2018, has begun, however fragile it might be. The fact that neighbouring Sudan and Uganda are, for the first time, guarantors of the agreement can be taken as a positive development. In the case of the DRC, long-delayed presidential elections were held in December 2018. While the electoral process was flawed, and the results were disputed, the elections nonetheless resulted in a peaceful transfer of power for the first time since the country's independence in 1960.

The Committee believes that Canada should encourage and assist the people of Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC to build on this political momentum with the view to fostering the kind of stability that is resilient to the spoilers and stresses that will inevitably arise. In so doing, Canada should seek out strategic partnerships at the regional and international levels. Canada should also support and empower organizations and stakeholders at the local level. Engagement at each of those levels can enhance Canada's effectiveness on the ground in working to address humanitarian crises, combat impunity, safeguard humanitarian access, and ensure that, rather than suffering from constant insecurity and marginalization, women are able to play an active and meaningful role in peace processes, and decision-making more broadly.

While humanitarian assistance will remain a necessity in the three countries for the foreseeable future, the challenges facing Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC cannot be addressed by crisis response alone, nor by peacekeeping missions that continue in perpetuity. To break the cycles of fragility that have beset these three countries, systemic reforms that confront the root causes of the conflicts will be required. With sustainable peace as the end goal, Canada can play an important and constructive role in advocating for such changes and in recognizing the need for such an approach through its own diplomacy and international assistance programs.

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the Committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the Committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</b> Marc-André Fredette, Director General Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau Susan Green, Director South Sudan Development Division Jean-Bernard Parenteau, Director West and Central Africa Division Nicolas Simard, Ambassador Embassy of Canada to the Democratic Republic of Congo	2018/05/31	98
<b>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</b> Mohamed Abdi Affey, Ambassador, Special Envoy Somali Situation Jean-Nicolas Beuze, Representative in Canada	2018/10/31	113
<b>As an individual</b> Renifa Madenga, Humanitarian Affairs Expert Panels of Experts on South Sudan, United Nations Security Council	2018/11/05	114
<b>CARE Canada</b> Kevin Dunbar, Director Global Programs and Impact, International Operations and Programs Gabrielle Tomovcik, Program Manager Humanitarian Assistance, International Operations and Programs	2018/11/05	114

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</b> Nuur Mohamud Sheekh, Senior Political Affairs Officer Peace and Security Division	2018/11/05	114
<b>Save the Children Canada</b> Annie Bodmer-Roy, Head of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns Bill Chambers, Chief Executive Officer	2018/11/05	114
<b>As an individual</b> Susan Stigant, Director, Africa Program United States Institute of Peace	2018/11/19	115
<b>ARUDA South Sudan</b> Atong Amos Agook Juac, Executive Director	2018/11/19	115
<b>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</b> Georgette Gagnon, Director Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division	2018/11/19	115
<b>Oxfam Canada</b> Gregory Queyranne, Humanitarian Manager	2018/11/19	115
<b>As an individual</b> Marc Kapenda, Professor Yvette Yende-Ashiri, Research Coordinator University of Ottawa	2018/11/28	117
<b>East and Central African Association for Indigenous Rights</b> Anthony Njoku, President Board of Directors Fredrick Wangabo Mwenengabo, Executive Director Ambassador to the United Nations of Civil Society Organizations Peace and Human Rights Advocate	2018/11/28	117
<b>Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral</b> Julienne Lusenge, President and Cofounder Director of Congolese Women's Fund	2018/11/28	117



<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Federal Government of Somalia</b>	2018/12/05	119
Hon. Gamal Hassan, Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development		
Abdigani Jama, Senior Advisor Policy and Strategy, Office of the Prime Minister		
<b>As an individual</b>	2018/12/10	120
Ken Menkhaus, Professor Political Science, Davidson College		
<b>United Nations Security Council</b>	2018/12/10	120
Jay Bahadur, Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea		



## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF BRIEFS

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the Committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the Committee's [webpage for this study](#).

**African Women and Youth Action for Development**

**Canadian Council for International Co-operation**

**Canadian Foodgrains Bank**

**East and Central African Association for Indigenous Rights**

**Felbab-Brown, Vanda**

**Harper, Mary**

**Save the Children Canada**



## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 98, 113, 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, 139 and 141](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Levitt  
Chair

