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**Land Related conflicts and Peacebuilding in Minembwe,
South Kivu, DRC.**

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

- ADEPAEA : Action pour le développement et la paix endogènes.
APDIK : Association Paysanne pour le développement intégré au Sud-Kivu
CICR : Comité international de la Croix-Rouge
CRDC-UEMI : Centre de Recherche et de Développement Communautaire de L'université
Eben-ezer de Minembwe
DDRC: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Community Reintegration
DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO: Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations

HDP: Humanitarian, development and Peace
MDM-Be : Médecin du Monde Belgique
NGOs : Non-Governmental Organizations
PIN: People in Need
SAPD : Solidarité pour les Actions de Paix et de Développement.
SFCG: Search for Common Ground
UGEAFI : Union des Groupes d'Etudes et d'Actions pour le Développement de Fizi et Itombwe
UN: united Nations

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Abstract

For more than two decades, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in particular the Minembwe highlands, have been the scene of violent conflict. The dynamics of conflict in this part of the republic are of concern to a number of actors, including various sections of the local population who are victims, as well as local and international humanitarian agencies.

The aim of this study was to characterize the way in which land-related conflicts arose in Minembwe, to analyze the relationship between humanitarian intervention and land conflicts, and how humanitarians integrate peace-building into their programs; and to determine the scope for better integration of peace-building at local level into humanitarian action.

The results of this study showed that conflicts in Minembwe are more identity-based, but not between farmers and herders (as mediatized), as the population of Minembwe lived in peace with minimal conflicts having local solutions.

It was only after political manipulation, the spread of hate speech and the improvisation of politicized armed groups (local and foreign) that the conflicts became violent.

Our respondents pointed out that humanitarian organizations have made efforts, but these remain insignificant given the intense needs of the population.

With regard to the relationship between conflict and humanitarian intervention in Minembwe, respondents pointed out that there have been shortcomings in terms of humanitarian contributions, but these contributions have done little to resolve the problem of conflict in Minembwe. The lack of social justice constitutes a major problem and perpetuates conflicts in Minembwe.

They then suggested a number of measures to establish lasting peace at local level (Minembwe). Some of measures are: permanent dialogues between all tribes living in Minembwe, the establishment of social cohesion through permanent social actions (truth and reconciliation), opening up Minembwe by rehabilitating roads, creating development projects in Minembwe, creating jobs for young people, women and the whole population in general, organizing cultural and sporting activities for young people.

These actions were recommended to humanitarian organizations to better integrate peace-building into humanitarian action.

The majority of participants in this research suggested that there can never be peace without equitable justice, and recommended a number of actions to be put into practice to strengthen justice in Minembwe such as restoration of state authority and justice, Set up legal clinics in Minembwe for local justice, etc...

Relevance to Development Studies

Very few studies have been conducted to find out the sources and the emergence of land conflicts in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo and more particularly in the high land of Minembwe.

For more than two decades, the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been subject to violent conflicts accompanied by significant loss of human life, which qualifies this part of the Republic as a red zone.

Some sources consider eastern DRC to be the rape capital of the world.

Faced with this situation, public opinion continues to wonder where these conflicts come from, to the point of destroying a whole part of the Republic.

Not only do these conflicts take away human lives, they destroy the wealth of the population as much as possible and misery follows.

Since 2017, the highlands of Minembwe have been the subject of a violent and brutal conflict which has taken away almost all of the wealth of the population and several loss of human life.

To end up with these conflicts, several actors have intervened not only to eradicate them but also to provide humanitarian assistance to the victim population, but this still does not eliminate the conflicts.

According to Hilhorst, society frequently experiences conflict, which is not always a bad thing. Goal incompatibility will always occur, especially in efforts to advance development.

Bottom-up development may make vested interest groups feel threatened. Goal incompatibility must be recognized, understood, and addressed in order for its impacts to be managed as effectively as feasible (Hilhorst et al., 2020, p. 16).

This research consisted of characterizing how land-related conflicts emerged in Minembwe, analyzing the relationship between humanitarian intervention and land conflicts, also analyzing how humanitarians integrate peacebuilding into their programs; and what is the scope for better integrating local-level peacebuilding into humanitarian action.

Keywords

Land Conflict, Land Management, Land Grabbing, Local level peacebuilding, Humanitarian action, Triple nexus, Eastern DRC, Social justice, Minembwe.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Nature of the problem

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast country in the centre of Africa, second in size in Africa, after Algeria. Its wealth both on and under its soil makes it exposed to humanitarian disasters due to constant conflicts.

When we talk about conflicts in the DRC, the idea that comes to mind automatically refers to the east of the country. Even if the rest of the country points the finger at the East, it seems that in the East as well, responsibilities related to conflicts are shared and sometimes even attributed to certain communities. Rightly or wrongly? This is heavy and permanent question.

The conflicts and even the actors involved vary in time and space. Regardless of the variation in the forms of the conflicts, the common point of all these forms is the land.

If A, an actor in the conflict, claims his land as occupied, B claims his exclusion from the right to his land. It is important to note that the issue of land conflicts in the east of the DRC, and more particularly in Minembwe, is considered above all as a conflict between cow breeders and crop farmers, even if this theory seems sometimes used as a shield for certain unknown plans (according to public opinion).

This work will focus on land conflicts, but more deeply on local level peace building

The causes of conflicts and their consequences in eastern Congo in general and in Minembwe in particular are multiple and complex, hence this work will focus on a very local level.

According to the United Nations report published in 2015, the facts that led to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are armed with both distant and immediate origins. It is important to clarify them first before conferring any name on them. All these facts, moreover, have become more complex due to the aggravation of this conflict, which has led to many painful consequences on a human and material level (Kenge Mukinayi & Mişcoiu, 2020.p.2).

Conflicts in Minembwe date back many years and change form overnight, as is the case of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the streets, in public places, in professional circles and even in political language in the DRC, there is ample proof that conflicts in the Congo are very closely linked to the question of identity.

At first glance, it would be tempting to categorize conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as identity wars, resource wars or ruthless power struggles. These elements exist, but there are other factors to take into account (Saibel, 2014.p.40). In the case of Minembwe, it is likely that these forms exist, although the form linked to identity takes precedence over others in the public eye and especially when it comes to conflicts between different communities or conflicts between all communities against the Banyamulenge(Tutsi) community, as is always the case. Power and even employment for certain national or provincial positions is often based on ethnicity.

In his article, Saibel indicates that it is important to understand how collective identity influences and is influenced by territorial claims and, in turn, how these elements relate to current conflicts in the DRC and Africa.

It seems that the Minembwe conflicts of the last 5 years, as we shall show in the following sections, have been provoked by identity manipulation, even if other factors also seem to have played an important role.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have shown the controversies between claimants A and B, in which the Banyamulenge claim exclusion from other communities or tribes, while other tribes who consider themselves as "indigenous" speak of aggression on their lands by Banyamulenge.

When it comes to competing land claims, what varies from context to context is the specific conjuncture of activities, interests, relationships and interpretations that constitute history at a given time and place, as is the case in eastern Congo and among the Banyamulenge; the question of who belongs to what and why has unclenched and exasperated existing conflicts (Saibel, 2014.p.40).

The question of identity intimately linked to land is a preoccupying issue and taken as a motive by anyone who wants to destabilize the Congolese community wherever they come from. Analysis of the land issue will demonstrate that land-related structural factors, which underpin some of the violence in eastern DRC, should be addressed if sustainable peace is to be achieved (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005.p.12).

The tribes of the DRC and especially those in the east of the country consider the Banyamulenge as being foreigners from Rwanda and for this reason they do not have the right to land. Here, land is considered as an identity on its own.

We can therefore question Congolese laws on nationality, which do not clearly guarantee or protect minorities or vulnerable groups. This question is noted in several African societies and deserves particular attention. According to Jackson (2007), Laws concerning nationality and citizenship have become increasingly restrictive in a number of African countries in the last couple of decades, particularly with regard to minority and or immigrant identity groups(Jackson, 2007.p.3).

Following the example of the Banyamulenge in eastern DRC, our review of the literature has sought to pinpoint a few instances in African countries where marginalized groups or individuals similar to the Banyamulenge have been the subject of stigmatization. As an illustration, in the Ivory Coast, the political instrumentalization of a discourse on "Ivoirité" (literally, Ivorianness) resulted in state-sponsored exclusion and widespread violence against

groups deemed immigrants or foreigners, with a corresponding restriction and redefinition of the content of citizenship.

Jackson argues that : “In Zambia, expulsions based on claims of non-Zambian nationality became increasingly frequent after the election of President Frederick Chiluba in 1991, while in Zimbabwe, a citizenship law enacted before the 2002 presidential election threatened to strip citizenship rights from a number of minority groups, including those with non-Zimbabwean surnames. It might be tempting to read this as symptomatic of a mismatch between African and Western notions of political belonging, the former supposedly founded on traditional forms of identity based on kinship and *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by inheritance), the latter on more modern norms of *jus soli* (citizenship by place of birth) concerning territory and residence” (Jackson, 2007.p.3).

1.2. Justification and relevance of this research

This study is crucial because the people of Minembwe are going through a terrible situation marked by violent conflicts. Also, few studies have been carried out to determine the contribution of the various stakeholders to restoring peace at local level in Minembwe.

In Minembwe, several local and international organizations provide significant efforts in the consolidation of peace. However, these efforts remain unknown and access to how to find peace at the local level in Minembwe is almost non-existent in the literature.

This work will therefore not only list the actions of humanitarian organizations in peacebuilding, but also and above all draw up recommendations on how humanitarian organizations can better integrate peacebuilding into humanitarian action in Minembwe. This is also the strong key point of my work.

According to da Costa, there is a significant tendency for peace builders stationed at local levels to bend the rules to implement projects and programmes. In the face of such a restrictive environment, peace builders find strategies to operate and work in the current institutional framework. Bending the rules not only matters, but is crucial if peace builders are to actually support local peace building efforts in the field on the terms defined by the various local actors operating in the peace building arena. Da Costa argues that : “ The UN might have reasonable concerns for the security of its staff, but greater autonomy and flexibility must be granted if tangible results and outcomes are to be achieved” (da Costa, 2012.p.61). It is therefore important to provide clear recommendations on the role of local actors in peace building in Minembwe.

1.3 Background to the Study

This research is inspired by a certain number of aspects which somehow forged my motivation for this study. The context of violent and recurrent conflicts in the east of the country and more particularly in Minembwe during the last 5 years, is the primary motivation for this study.

Saibel claims that since April 2017, attacks accompanied by hate speech have been systematically directed against the Banyamulenge population in the territories of Uvira, Fizi and

Mwenga (South Kivu). These attacks, carried out by various actors, including several local and foreign armed groups, have cost the lives of more or less a thousand people, often killed in the most atrocious circumstances. Many Banyamulenge women were subjected to rape, often gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence, including intimate organ mutilation (Saibel, 2014.p.56).

Now why only the Banyamulenge? Some people ask this question, especially those who don't come from the country, and we've questioned the literature on this issue in order to help them understand the conflicts in Minembwe. According to Shell, The Banyamulenge are a minority ethnic group living in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concentrated on the High Plains of Itombwe in South Kivu Province.

They are pastoral cattle herders, of Tutsi ethnicity, whose nomadic ancestors migrated to Congo many generations ago from present-day Rwanda-Burundi and Tanzania. For this reason, they are considered non-indigenous to the Congo. Due to the Congolese law of nationality by birth being grounded in ethnicity, their Congolese nationality has been and is subject to political manipulation(Shell, n.d. p.1).

According to several sources, the causes of the conflicts in Minembwe and eastern Congo are complex and sometimes amplified by several scenarios even spending the scope of my work. Stearns tries to understand the origin of the conflicts in this sense: What is the nature of violence in the eastern DRC? For him, if we want to know why it has persisted, we should try to understand its causes. For the most part, violence is collective, in that it is perpetrated by members of armed groups. The motivations are multiple – violence can be used to control territory, discipline fellow soldiers, collect revenues, or for individual gain. But, most importantly, in areas with no armed groups, there is a much smaller incidence of violence(Stearns, 2013.p.166).

In this work, we will explore how land is still driving the local conflicts and whether it is still the time to seek local level peace building, in view of the violent and escalated conflict situation. We will also analyze how humanitarian can better integrate peace building in their daily humanitarian action.

1.4. Objectives and Research questions

This research aims to characterize how land related conflict emerged in Minembwe, analyse the relationship between Humanitarian intervention and Land conflict and how humanitarians integrate peace building into their programs; and what the scope is to better integrate local level peace building and justice in humanitarian action.

Main research question:

This study aims to respond to the following main research question.

How do communities and humanitarians perceive the possibilities to work on peace building and conflicts in Minembwe?

Sub questions:

- What are recommendations from humanitarian actors to bring these possibilities in practice?
- What are the causes of land conflicts in Minembwe ?

- What role do humanitarians play in restoration of justice in Minembwe?

1.5. Geographical location of Minembwe

1.5.1. Study location

Our study was carried out in the Minembwe highlands (Fizi and Itombwe territories), South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of Congo. Minembwe is a group of several villages located in the highlands situated at an altitude of about 2,500 meters above sea level, in a hilly and mountainous region covered with forests, which provides fertile land for agriculture. It is approximately 150 kilometers south of Bukavu, the capital city of South Kivu. The region is also home to various streams and rivers that flow into Lake Tanganyika, the second-deepest lake in the world.

Minembwe covers two territories: Fizi and Mwenga. According to history (oral tradition), the first Banyamulenge (who make up the majority of Minembwe's population) climbed the Itombwe highlands (from Rwanda) over two centuries ago. Itombwe is located in the Mwenga territory, one of 8 territories in the province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is subdivided into six communities, namely Itombwe, Wamuzimu, Basile, Lwindi, Luhwinja and Burhinyi (On line, 2015).

Etymologically, according to Roger Bourgeois, Itombwe means: I: adverb, d': at, gutumba: to inflate, tombwe: w: to be (inflated). Itombwe would mean an elevated mountain region. Careful observation of the relief immediately reveals two clearly distinct regions: the coastal plains and the plateaus that form part of Mount Mitumba. The contrasts between the two structures are striking. The altitude rises from 774m (at the level of Lake Tanganyika) to 3,100m (Mount Gafinda) over a distance of less than 10km as the crow flies. Overall, the region is mountainous. The plains represent only a tiny fraction (1/3) of Itombwe's total area. Burnotte, a German soil scientist who spent time on the Itombwe plateaus between July 1 and September 13, 1945, confirms this view: the Itombwe region is a vast prairie and an immense plateau which borders on the eastern crest of Lake Tanganyika at an altitude of 3,000 m and descends slowly westwards to altitudes of 2,000 m until it reaches the source of the Lwiko river. These vast, pasture-rich plateaus are characterized by extensive cattle rearing and subsistence farming (Mutambo. J, 1997.p.20).

1.5.2. Weather

The Minembwe and Itombwe high plateaus have 2 types of weather. The lowland weather is semi-arid, as defined by Koppen (AW4), with monthly rainfall of less than 500mm for the 4 months from June to September. The average temperature is between 22.5 and 25 degrees. Daily maximum temperatures rise towards the end of the dry season: 30.5 to 35.5 degrees (in September), while monthly mean minimum temperatures are lowest in the middle of the dry season (14.5 to 17.5 in July) (Mutambo.J, 1997.p.20).

1.5.3. Soil and vegetation

Climatic and orographic contrasts have a significant influence on soils and vegetation. Desiccation breaks down their physical structure. The vegetation is represented by a degraded

shrub savannah (cactus), where repeated burning is responsible for advanced degradation (although fluvio-lacustrine sediments can be found), reduced by the presence of *Imperata Cylindrica* (Isovu) clumps.

The plateaus, on the other hand, have very different conditions, favorable to the development and conservation of equatorial mountain soils. High and regular rainfall creates a humidity that is maintained by secondary forest vegetation. These include wooded savannahs, gallery forests and bamboo (Mutambo, J, 1997).

1.5.4. Brief presentation of the rural commune of Minembwe

It is bounded to the north: the Kalingi stream and the Minembwe river; to the south: the Sara stream and the Kabanja river; to the east: the Mukoko chain and the Rugomero forest; to the west: the Mateganya river.

Source : extrait du journal officiel de la RDC, kinshasa-20 juin 2013.

1.5.5. Socio-economic situation of Minembwe

The inhabitants of this health zone generally have a low socio-economic level. Their working lives are essentially weak and formed by the following activities:

Livestock rearing, subsistence farming, small-scale self-employment, public and private wage labor, etc.

1.5.5. Ethnic Groups

The Minembwe region is predominantly inhabited by Banyamulenge, Ba-bembe, Bashi, Barega, Bafuliro and Banyindu.

In September 2020, Minembwe was declared a rural commune in the Lulenge sector of the Fizi territory, despite objections from other ethnic groups in the region who claimed that the appropriate legal and administrative procedures had not been followed. The installation of Minembwe as a rural commune and the appointment of Gad Mukiza, a Tutsi, as mayor on September 28, 2020, has provoked much controversy and oppositions from other Congolese tribes who claim ownership of the land. The controversy surrounding Minembwe has been fuelled by the history of conflict between the Banyamulenge and other ethnic groups in the region. Many Congolese see the declaration of Minembwe as a rural commune as a way for the Banyamulenge to better control the region and consolidate their power. Some critics claim that this decision was taken in response to pressure from neighboring countries, in particular Rwanda, which has long been accused of supporting the Banyamulenge.

On October 8, 2020, the process of creating Minembwe as a rural commune was cancelled following a statement by the President of the Republic, Félix Tshisekedi. This decision was taken after protests and violence broke out in the region following the declaration. The decision was taken to ease tensions in the region and prevent further violence. However, Tshisekedi's government cited irregularities in the way the declaration was made and concerns about the legality of the move. It was also alleged that the declaration had been made for the benefit of a particular ethnic group, the Banyamulenge, who are considered outsiders by other ethnic groups in the region. Nevertheless, the annulment was welcomed by many groups, including opposition parties and anti-Banyamulenge civil society organizations.

Félix Tshisekedi stated: "For me, the salvation of the people is the supreme law. I cannot leave my people in danger. I have decided to cancel what has been done so far for Minembwe" Felix Tshisekedi.

The cancellation of the commune was met with mixed reactions from the Banyamulenge community, who saw it as a violation of their rights and a reversal of the gains they had made in their struggle for recognition and self-determination. Some Banyamulenge leaders and activists accused the government of caving in to pressure from other ethnic groups and abandoning its promises to protect their interests and promote their development.

The situation in Minembwe has remained tense, with reports of violence and displacement continuing to emerge. In October 2020, the United Nations reported that at least 15 people had been killed and dozens more injured in clashes between Banyamulenge and other groups in the area. The UN also estimated that over 50,000 people had been displaced by the violence. The situation in Minembwe remains a contentious issue in the DRC.

1.5.6. Background of conflicts in Eastern DRC

Over a distance of 500 km, the Congolese provinces of North and South Kivu stretch along the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo with the republics of Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. These provinces consist of highlands and volcanoes to the East, and lowlands to the West, mirroring the conditions of the crowded and fertile highlands of Rwanda as well as those of the underpopulated Congo basin. For more than a decade now, the Kivu has been a notorious hotbed of problems and conflicts, where rebellious armies and peasant militia hold sway almost unhindered. This kind of turmoil is not new; as early as the 1920s, conflicts regularly erupted. Clearly, the particular location and history of the provinces are pertinent in looking for an explanation.

The colonial history of the region is one of resettlement: Rwandan and Burundian peasants supplied labour to the large coffee and tea estates and cattle ranches in the Kivu highlands. After Congolese independence in 1960, the nature of the problem changed but not the predicament itself; peasants of neighbouring countries continued to flock to Kivu to escape the crowded conditions of their own homelands. Consequently, the biggest post-independence bone of contention in the Kivu is that of nationality which exploded with particular force in the run-up to the 1994 presidential elections in Zaire. In various political seesaw movements, nationality was granted to these immigrants and then repealed according to political convenience. Underlying this controversy, is the bigger and deeper issue of access to land (van Acker, 2005.p.3)

The events that led to the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have both remote and immediate origins. It is important to clarify them first, before giving them any name. All these facts, incidentally, have become more complex as a result of the worsening of this conflict, which has led to numerous painful consequences in both human and material terms (United Nations, 2015).

Security concerns in Rwanda and Uganda, as well as the nationality problem of populations of Rwandan origin, known as Banyarwanda, explain the deep-rooted origin of the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Following the dark episode of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, thousands of refugees crossed the border from Rwanda into the Kivu regions of Zaire (renamed Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, in 1997). Among them were people of the Hutu ethnic group, many of whom were described as "genocidaires", but also leaders who were said to have orchestrated the genocide.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, they quickly took control of the refugee camps, from where they sought to reconquer Rwanda. Here, we attempt to summarize the conflicts from 1994 to the present day, as they are closely or distantly related to the conflict in Minembwe, which is the focus of our work. We also aim to gain a better understanding of the causes of conflict and its evolution, although we will be concentrating on the local level (Minembwe).

Conflict has not only caused significant falls in development, but underdevelopment is also at the root of violence at local level, as the population, and especially young people, are forced by poverty to take part in mass insurrection movements (armed groups).

This conflict, highly complicated by its very nature, has both structural causes and aggravating factors. The structural causes are manifested in the bankruptcy of the Congolese state. The absence of democracy and the erosion of power, accompanied by indiscriminate violence against civilians, have finally convinced the Democratic Republic of Congo's financial backers and Euro-Mediterranean partners of the agony of Marshal Mobutu's regime. Their refusal to provide financial support to this type of regime was at the root of the bankruptcy of the Congolese state, which could no longer meet its regal responsibilities of providing basic services to its citizens, in such vital areas as health, education, general administration and the army. In fact, the breakdown in financial cooperation only aggravated an economy already in great difficulty due to the effects of the 1973 policies of nationalization of Congolese companies, the withdrawal of foreigners who had been robbed of their property, and the poor management of state affairs by Congolese leaders.

If the causes of the Congolese conflict were limited to state failure, war could be avoided, but aggravating factors such as the effects of the Rwandan genocide have plunged the country into war, while ethnic manipulation, land issues and the illegal exploitation of natural resources have served as fuel for the conflict.

The involvement of neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Uganda, due to porous borders and the instability that reigns in this country, gives it a regional dimension, as the Democratic Republic of Congo has been transformed into a battlefield where local and foreign militias, as well as foreign armies, clash.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has led the country into a spiral of violence, originated mainly in Rwanda, where genocide claimed over 800,000 lives, the majority of them Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The root causes of the war in Rwanda are to be found in the history of this country, long marked by divisions between Hutus and Tutsis who have alternated in power for more than 40 years. The social revolution of 1959 allowed the majority Hutus to gain power to the detriment of the Tutsi minority formerly favored by the Belgian colonizers who divided them in order to rule better. Faced with the rapid advance of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which came to rescue the massacred Tutsis, the genocide maker lost ground and took refuge en masse in neighboring countries, particularly in Zaire, already greatly weakened by the personalized management of power. see by Marshal Mobutu, the economic recession and the disintegration of the army.

¹Thus, the AFDL of Laurent Désiré Kabila, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, will take advantage of this bankruptcy of the Congolese state and the chaos caused by the influx of refugees in eastern Zaire to seize the power on May 17, 1997. It was the birth of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Far from being unanimous among the international com-

¹ *Zofsha Merchant, World Without Genocide, May 2020*

munity and the Congolese political opposition who respectively accused him of having massacred Rwandan refugees and of having entrusted the country to foreigners, Laurent Désiré Kabila decided to separate from his former allies.

Feeling betrayed, Uganda and Rwanda turned against the new Congolese regime by creating respectively the MLC and the RCD, two rebel movements. In response, President Laurent Désiré Kabila will seek support from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. State actors, beyond the support provided to the Democratic Republic of Congo, would have economic interests to defend or would be motivated by the desire to dislodge rebel movements which have chosen Congolese territory as a sanctuary.

In both cases, their involvement confirms the regional dimension of the conflict also called "First African World War". The late signing of the Lusaka and then Sun City peace agreements, officially ending the war, encouraged the proliferation of non-state actors. This made the conflict deadlier and more difficult to resolve.

Indeed, ethnic manipulations (between Hemas and Lendus by the Ugandan army and between populations originating from Rwanda and indigenous by Rwanda) are practiced at the same time as the exploitation of natural resources by both state and non-state actors. This unorthodox exploitation of natural resources, favored by multinational companies which buy these raw materials, makes it possible to finance the war and gives the conflict its full economic dimension. To this, it will be necessary to add the land problems which oppose the Lendus and the Hemas, the indigenous and Banyarwanda.

The intentions to conquer territory that are attributed to Rwanda, which would like to find solutions to the smallness of its territory by annexing the two Kivus, further complicate the resolution of the conflict. Faced with this complexity, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), formed in 1999 of heterogeneous forces without the necessary equipment for the protection of civilians and without a clear mandate, could only be powerless as to the restoration of peace and security, strongly disrupted by supposed enemies of peace (Kenge Mukinayi & Mişcoiu, 2020.p.5)

Map of DRC and Minembwe



Sources: <https://mapcarta.com/N1080896480>

Chapter 2 . Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

This study took place in Minembwe, in the high plateaus of Fizi and Itombwe, in the province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Before data collection, a research design was developed and discussed with the research assistant at the field before its presentation and validation by the supervisors of the same research.

The data were collected between July and August by our research assistant present in the field. To reassure ourselves of the validity of the data collected, we briefly instructed the research assistant and closely followed his work online.

Overall, 43 people were interviewed, 67% of them are men and 33% are women. These people were grouped into the following categories:

- 5 Focus groups discussions made up of: Crop farmers, Breeders, Religious leaders, Women's Association and Youth association.
- 8 Key Informants composed of: Youth leader, local leader, Local peace builder, International peace builder, Local Humanitarian, international humanitarian, civil society member and a Security agent.

2.2. Research methods and Technics

To study the causes of land conflicts and peacebuilding in Minembwe, qualitative data was collected through interviews. According to Hennink et al, (2020, p.29), the qualitative method allows us to collect and analyze data to understand experiences in connection with the social life of the people. For data analysis and processing, we used thematic analysis.

For field data collection, we used a research assistant with whom we were in contact all the time to ensure the progress of data collection. We therefore carried out the research while respecting the instructions and standards of the research. Note that our research assistant is a researcher and humanitarian in the Minembwe highlands, which made our task easier during all field activities and this guided our choice on him as our research manager. Minembwe being an area with no roads or very dilapidated roads, traveling long distances in search of key respondents was a major problem. He considered the categories of people within Minembwe likely to have credible information on this subject. A number of people of considered as “Influencers” in Minembwe community were interviewed either through an individual interview or in a focus group.

We therefore interviewed women, community leaders, young people, local and international humanitarian organizations as well as security services.

The targeting of key informants was based on the social influence of the informant in question in Minembwe as well as his availability to provide information. To avoid the question of identity in our results, our research assistant available in the field brought together people from different tribes within the same focus group but also the key informants were diversified as possible.

In order to bring together all the focus groups as well as the key informants, the research assistant would have to travel great distances on Moto bike to meet the respondents in their different workplaces or residences in order to give him information at his leisure and before each interview, informed consent was done by the research assistant and it is after obtaining permission from the respondent that questions were asked.

The results presented and discussed in this work were based on primary data collected in Minembwe eastern Congo. For a perfect representation of the sample, all key segments of the population likely to have key information on land conflicts and exit mechanisms were interviewed. Data were collected from five focus groups made up of key sections of the community. We also conducted interviews with key informants in the community. As said, 43 people aged between 18-60 years old were interviewed, 67% of them were men and 33% were women. This can be explained by the fact that men make up the majority of those involved in the conflict. The following tables describe in detail the stakeholders in our database.

Table 1: Focus groups discussion

The table below shows the focus group discussions that were the subject of our research. Overall, 5 focus group discussions (FGDs) constituted our research. These are: crop farmers, breeders, religious leaders, women's association and youth association. A total of 35 people formed these FGDs, including 22 men and 13 women.

N°	FGD	Number of participants	Males	Females	Age	
					18-35	35-60
1	Crop farmers	6	0	6	3	3
2	Breeders	8	8	0	4	4
3	Religious leaders	7	7	0	3	5

4	Women's Association	7	0	7	4	3
5	Youth association	7	7	0	6	1
Total		35	22	13		

Table 2: Key informants

The table below shows the key informants who participated in our research, including: a local leader, a youth leader, a local peace builder, an international peace builder, a local Humanitarian, an international Humanitarian, a civil society member and Security agent (The spokesperson for the army general at the Minembwe military base).

N°	Respondent	Occupation	Gender	Age
				30-65
1	R1	Local leader	M	65
2	R2	Youth leader	M	37
3	R3	Local peace builder	M	60
4	R4	International peace builder	F	35
5	R5	Local Humanitarian	M	33
6	R6	International Humanitarian	M	35
7	R7	Civil society member	M	40
8	R8	Security agent	M	45

The African continent, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the dramatics of land conflicts. In fact, 80% of the conflicts submitted to the courts and tribunals relate, directly or indirectly, to land and real estate, a sign that shows that the real estate sector is the object of concerns and problems. Actors working in the mediation of conflicts at the local level confirm that a very important part of the conflicts they are led to resolve is related to land issues. As much as the real estate sector is primordial in the lives of the citizens of the DRC that they think of sociology-economic development for peace, security or stability. ²The land issue in the eastern part of the Congo, in the entity of Minembwe in particular remains relevant. Instead of land being a key factor of development, the more

² Moctar FICOU, *Conflits fonciers en RDC : les puissants dictent leurs lois aux propriétaires*, 2 mai 2019, Vivafrik.com

the days pass, the more it emerges as a source of conflict, violence and the transience of social cohesion.

2.3. Ethics, Positionality and Limitation

During data collection in the field, ethical considerations were followed as provided for by the ISS ethical guidelines. First and foremost, the research assistant requested informed consent before beginning the interviews, and the safety and security of the participants was guaranteed. In this regard, the participants were formally approached and explained to them the purpose of the study, reassuring them that the data collected would not be used for any other purpose than those pursued by our research. Therefore, the research participants contributed voluntarily.

In addition, the anonymity of the respondents was respected to protect them from possible harm due to their participation in the study.

The research assistant employed is well versed in the types of research interviews for his university and other nearby research establishments where he is consultant in local NGO. Regarding positionality, I am a member of the Banyamulenge community, one of the key communities or tribes in this study, so the ethics and ethics of research characterized me during all activities related to this research. My principle was: "Research first, ethnic affiliation aside". For this purpose, I carried out all research activities with all neutrality and impartiality.

My motivation for this research is due to several parameters; on the one hand as I had just said, I am a member of the Banyamulenge community which has experienced all the episodes of the conflicts in Congo and Minembwe and on the other hand as the founder of Action for Peace and Liberty, a think tank whose mission is to promote peace and freedom for all, this can only be done by first understanding the conflicts that oppose people and knowing how to resolve them.

So after having followed the courses of Agrarian and food politics, Humanitarian actions, political ecology; after having learned different policies around conflicts and violence around the land and the resources it offers, I was curious to understand and analyze in depth the motivation of conflicts in Minembwe at the extremely local level and try to know that it can be the possible resolution.

As an international student who benefits from the Dutch government scholarship via NUFFIC, I have the obligation to implement my knowledge learned in my country, it is in this context that I wanted to communicate my research work to my daily work within Action for Peace and Liberty in order to continue this work at the end of my research.

This research has some limitations, notably: the fact of not having been on the ground personally to see and analyze the body languages of the research participants but also the fact that I was not able to access members of armed groups from different communities in conflicts.

Remember that these members of armed groups declare themselves to be peacemakers and for this reason it is necessary to contact them and understand their motivations.

This is certainly true as according to Xueting, in modern society, almost everyone claims to be peace-loving. But exactly how to define peace remains a challenging question, eluding efforts to arrive at an unequivocal answer(Xueting, n.d.)

This author goes on to say that the absence of armed conflict is a precondition for peace, while armed conflict is a necessary condition for war even though it is not a sufficient one (Xueting, n.d.).

All its limitations were reduced by strategies implemented including the instruction of the research assistant, the taking of photos and audio of the respondents, the research of secondary data on the motivation of armed groups and many others.

Chapter 3 : Conceptual Framework

3.1.Introduction

Our study is about land related conflicts and peacebuilding in the highlands of Minembwe, in this chapter we will try to see with more details the question of land management, the triple nexus of humanitarianism and peacebuilding at local level in Minembwe.

3.2. Land Management

Before talking about the land issue in Minembwe, its management and the conflicts linked to this management, we consulted the literature on the context of the country in general in terms of Land Management in Kivu and in the country.

Known as a “rich country of poor people” (Trefon 2016.p.2), the DRC is a large country with extensive natural resources, including one of the most biodiverse forested areas in the world, valuable minerals, ample water re- springs, and fertile land. However, “poor natural resource management handicaps efforts to rebuild the state, and because the state is weak, it cannot assert authority of sovereignty over its natural capital” (Trefon 2016.p. 2). These resources have not been transformed into opportunities for the majority of the population of 80 million, who struggle to make a living (Huggins, 2021.p.5). Instead of these resources being transformed for the well-being of the population, they have been the source of the attraction of desires and enemies of national turmoil.

In Minembwe for example, although this is the case for the whole country, the Identity of the Banyamulenge is used to illustrate the aggressors of the nation and for this reason the politicians and all other opinion leaders who want to attract the mass, pretend to be anti-Banyamulenge. In the above part of our work, we illustrated the speech of President Felix who said he canceled the commune of Minembwe because he could not let the will of the population pass. This sufficiently indicates the image of identity in the face of political opinion in Congo.

In our review of the literature, we also made use of the land system in Kivu and the DRC, it is clear that land management obviously results from the legislation in place or from the system linked to land management. . A land tenure system consists of a set of institutions that structure the social organization of space (van Acker, 2005.p.3).

In Kivu, as in many other places in Africa, its evolution is characterized by three elements. First, land is held in common by a group circumscribed by the boundaries of ethnicity, clan, or lineage. Second, no property rights can be assigned beyond a simple use right, thereby disabling the alienation of parts of the collective domain, even in cases where a family farmed a plot of land for generations. Third, land relations are the means to realise a system of dependent integration: land relations and social hierarchy mirror each other(van Acker, 2005.p.3).

From near or far, the conflicts in Minembwe are economic. When the identity of the Banyamulenge is exploited to illustrate their non-ownership of Congolese land and that they do not have the right to land, this is obviously linked to the right to property and, in other words, to right to resources.

According to Hos et al (2022), efforts to obtain economic resources usually color social interaction between ethnic groups in transmigration settlements. As with agrarian societies, the primary resource is agricultural land, and ownership rights are one of the causes of conflict.

Land conflicts related to economic resources, intensive in magnitude and frequency, often occur (Hos et al., 2022.p.8).

Referring to the thesis of Hos and compared to the situation of Minembwe, the conflicts of the Banyamulenge and other local communities are based on agriculture and livestock, both do not agree on the way in which the land is exploited, whether in agriculture or in livestock farming.

Is the breeding system among the Banyamulenge a cause of the conflicts? This question continues to raise questions in different meetings or audiences linked to the problem of land conflicts in Minembwe. But above all, let's see the difference or even the cloud between different livestock systems and situate that of the Banyamulenge and its potential impact in land or identity conflicts in the country.

Anthropologist Roger Blench offers the following distinctions: “Nomadism refers to pastoralists who depend entirely on the sale and exchange of their animals for their livelihood, and follow irregular and opportunistic migration routes. Transhumance describes a regular movement of livestock between fixed points, depending on the seasonal availability of pastures (Brabant & Nzweve, 2013.p.19).

Transhumance as illustrated in the above is typically the same as among the Banyamulenge and this is claimed to be a source of problem between the indigenous communities and the Banyamulenge (as indicated in the problem).

What about the “Land-grabbing” theory?

According to Bae, Africa is the continent with the second-highest number of land deals concluded, following Eastern Europe; however, most land-grabbing incidences occurred on the African continent (Bae, 2023.p.4).

Among the fears demonstrated by the population of Minembwe who prove their fear of the so-called “occupation” of their land by the Banyamulenge, there is obviously this famous theory of land-grabbing.

Alerts are being reported in social networks and other platforms that there is a hidden plan in the identity of the Banyamulenge in the DRC.

This sufficiently proves that particular attention is required to the question of land grabbing, which has become not only a national but also a regional problem.

Let us see the land situation in Africa in general: In Africa, there is still observed a land related legal plurality of innovations undertaken since colonial times (Shamamba et al., 2021.p.11).

While land in the DR Congo is still considered to be state property by law, managing rural lands while ignoring customary practices is still a challenge. In actuality, the vast majority of rural lands are protected by customary contracts in addition to the "modern" land administration. In the meantime, these contracts have changed as a result of various sociopolitical problems in the DRC, particularly in its eastern region. (Shamamba et al., 2021.p.11). This has been indicated in introduction that even if communities stuck on ethnic conflict, it's just a consequence of political issue.

And the Banyamulenge are taken as a cover to some politician who use the Banyamulenge issue for their own interest politically related.

During our field work, public opinion (from rural population) was different from what is said in roads and social media. This will be deeply explained in the data analysis part of our work.

The types of land conflicts or resource conflicts or even politically created conflicts are not only of the Congolese type. Chauveau and Richards (2008) gave an overview of this type of conflicts in other parts of Africa. They say it in this words: “While youth militia in Côte

d'Ivoire battled to preserve a social structure based on blood-line, a parallel group of young combatants in Sierra Leone tried to over-throw it. In Sierra Leone, significance is attached to an excluded agrarian underclass, whereas in Côte d'Ivoire, large migratory populations on a forest-est boundary are a significant factor. Not all hostilities in Africa are ethnic conflicts; it has been established that autochthony and class are both factors in one fight” (Chauveau & Richards, 2008.p.515).

According to research carried out by Thea Hilhorst, control of access to arable land in the Sahel is in the hands of the descendants of those who were the first to cultivate the land in the village, represented by the head of this lineage (from male sex). This leader can grant third parties “temporary” access rights to land (secondary rights).

Pastoralists generally have an interlocutor in the community who helps them obtain secondary rights of access to pastures and harvest residues as well as rights of passage (T. Hilhorst et al., n.d.). This practice has been in use for a very long time in the Minembwe highlands.

The Banyamulenge, who would have to travel very long distances to graze their cattle (transhumance), did not find enough problems with regard to access to land. It is only during the last 5 years, starting from 2017, that the changed, instead of accepting donations from the Banyamulenge in exchange for access to indigenous lands, the latter decided to kill, pillage the cattle of Banyamulenge and several herdsmen lost their lives in this barbarity.

In the previous part, we tried to show the causes of conflicts in their diversities. In this part, we will illustrate how land management is done in the context of violent conflicts by referring to the case of the Fulani people in oust Africa and other cases around the world similar to Minembwe.

According to Bayala et al, the relationship between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists is strongly characterised by conflicts over the use of land and natural resources. Causes are the destruction of crops by cattle and the disruption of grazing land and transhumance routes through agricultural and settlement expansion, acerbated by under lying factors such as the adverse effects of climate change, the consequences of land policies, and increasing urbanization and population growth. These conflicts threaten social cohesion and co-existence and undermine cooperative relations between farmers and Fulani herders, who are marginalized and stigmatized.

Bayala argues that landscape approaches could favorably ameliorate these conflicts, given their potential for negotiated landscape governance. Through platforms for dialogue, consultation and negotiation between the various stakeholders, integrated landscape approaches could enable better conflict management and even prevent conflicts (Bayala et al., 2023.p.22).

In the previous part, I talked about the scenario between actors A clamming land and actor B clamming his exclusion from the land. What is very serious is that the voices keep rising on both sides but so far there are no enough studies that have proven to what extent the Minembwe population could get out of this scenario. The objective of this work being to show to what extent peace can be built at the local level, we will a see what the contribution of the triple nexus in humanitarian action can be in this recurrent scenario in Minembwe.

3.3. Triple nexus in Humanitarianism

The Triple Nexus is the latest attempt, led primarily by leading aid donors, to seek greater coherence between the humanitarian and development sectors (Barakat & Milton, 2020.p.2). This part will focus much more on how the triple nexus is applied in the highlands of Minembwe, a few questions will guide: how humanitarian assistance is provided? Who provide it? Who is then assisted? Is it the main groups against one? Or is one group assisted and the other ones are not assisted? These are questions to look at in the literature review, but the main point is local level peace building. These questions will also be well answered in the last part related to data analysis and discussion where we have collected different point of view from our participants.

In the introduction to this work, we tried to show the problem of conflicts as well as the challenges of peace in Minembwe and in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo in general. One of the reasons why conflicts persist in Minembwe is the underdevelopment and isolation of the environment.

Humanitarian actions are numerous in Minembwe and in the east of the country, peace building actions are also present but conflicts still persist.

Having regard to the above, we will want to analyze what the role of the triple nexus of humanitarian action can be in the resolution of conflicts in a conflict environment and more particularly in Minembwe.

In most cases, humanitarian actions are followed by or intimately linked to violence, and there are several cases in the DRC and Minembwe in particular. The most recent case is the incident involving the World Food Program (WFP), whose vehicle containing food supplies destined for Banyamulenge displaced persons in Bibokoboko was burned by unidentified assailants, resulting in a number of deaths.

According to actualite. cd : "Around 6.00 pm, a Fuso vehicle carrying aid to displaced persons in Bibokoboko was ambushed by unknown assailants at Monge Monge, not far from the Université Espoir du Congo building. In the ambush, 4 crew members, including the driver, were killed, the vehicle burned and one of the motorcyclists who were passing by at the time of the incident was also killed. The thugs also burned three motorcycles. So we have a total of 5 dead, all civilians".

According to sources on the ground, such cases are due to the fact that different communities in Minembwe are not consulted or assisted in a fair manner, and this most often creates envy and hatred between the different assisted communities and even within the local humanitarian organizations implementing the projects.

Given this critical situation, it is more than important to match humanitarian action with peace and development actions in the Minembwe highlands, not only to avoid the recurrence of similar cases, but also and above all to perpetuate humanitarian and development actions in this part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This question had already been addressed by Anderson, in his book "Do No Harm Project, "a number of questions aimed at improving humanitarian action were initiated: "How can the providers of humanitarian and development assistance take seriously the impacts they inevitably have on conflicts without overstepping their assistance-focused mandates and without compromising their commitment to political neutrality and impartiality?" (Anderson, 1999.p.4).

These issues were at the heart of the work known internationally as the "Do No Harm Project", a collaborative effort between numerous UN agencies, donor governments and international and local NGOs, begun in the early 1990s. As part of this project, numerous individuals and institutions involved in international aid have examined and analyzed the interrelationships between international aid provided in conflicts and the dynamics of these conflicts. This work has now covered over forty conflict zones.

Questions such as: is aid delivered in a way that reinforces a local sense of inclusion and equity between groups? Are programs designed to bring people together? Are they designed to benefit all groups, whatever they may be? (Anderson, 1999,p.4). These questions are relevant in the context of Minembwe, where humanitarian actions divide rather than unite the population. And sometimes local organization are shaped according to tribes belonging. The triple nexus, a concept that brings together peace, development and humanitarian action, could effectively help to answer these questions in the context of Minembwe.

According to Howe, there are two broad ways to understand the relationship between these three concepts. The first is to take their "negative" formulations and to view their relationships in causal terms, that is, to understand how conflict, underdevelopment and humanitarian crises interact with each other to produce negative outcomes. The second is to put the emphasis on the more positive formulations of peace, development and humanitarian efforts and to understand them as potentially mutually reinforcing areas of action(Howe, 2019.p.2). In our work, we will focus mainly on the second way; that is to say, understanding the advantages of combined action (peace-development and humanitarian aid) for lasting peace in Minembwe.

The phrase used to describe the connections between the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors is the HDP (Humanitarian, Development, and Peace) triple nexus. Although concerns about the intersection of the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors have existed for a while, the World Humanitarian Summit's (WHS) 2016 agreement that resolving protracted crises necessitates not only meeting people's immediate humanitarian needs but also reducing risk and vulnerability is what gave rise to the HDP nexus as it is currently conceptualized(Nguya & Siddiqui, 2020.p.2).

During our field interview with our research participants, they insisted on the fact that conflicts are due to poverty, underdevelopment and lack of jobs, especially for young people. When young people are inactive, they are obviously attracted to any opportunity, regardless of its form.

There is also a paradox in the DRC, since humanitarian aid has existed in the country, there has been no visible change, the vulnerable continue to be vulnerable and there has apparently been no significant progress.

Even with regard to conflicts, they remain regardless of the number of organizations campaigning for the promotion of peace. It's truly a paradox and remains an eternal question. The United Nations (UN) Security Council and General Assembly that same year further acknowledged that the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars needed to work together in an integrated manner to prioritize prevention, address the causes of conflict,

and support institutions for sustainable peace and development. This was because instability is a significant driver of vulnerability.

One of the objectives of this work is to analyse the relationship between Humanitarian intervention and Land conflict and how humanitarians integrate peace building into their programs; and what the scope is to better integrate local level peace building in humanitarian action. This would therefore be one of the most essential means to put in place for sustainable peace and development.

According to Nguy and Siddiqui (2020), the triple nexus strategy then aims to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace gap, support local and national systems, and foresee crises (Nguya & Siddiqui, 2020.p.2).

3.4. Local level peace building

As mentioned in the introduction, Minembwe has been experiencing conflicts for several years and the solutions envisaged by different peace actors hardly give the expected results (lasting peace). A surprising thing in the context of Minembwe is the fact that conflict between local communities attracts and goes beyond the local and even regional level.

According to Ernstorfer *et al* (2015), the connections between regional and societal processes Studies examining how local conflict affects civil wars have discovered that violence frequently results from interactions between political and social dynamics, or between the two domains of government and the private sector. They make the case that local disputes must be addressed in addition to problems at the federal level (Ernstorfer et al., 2015.p.3).

It is sometimes even difficult to talk about peace at the local level without involving the national authorities in Minembwe. During the literature review, we tried to see the situation in other regions of Africa where peace building at local level has been tried or implemented. After 2011, the government of Ivory Coast and the international community engaged in actions to support peace at the local level. However, these actions appear problematic in a context marked by the absence of reconciliation between national elites (Piccolino, 2017.p.1). Piccolino tries to show the reasons why it is not advisable to separate the local level from the national level. Piccolino argues: “Two mechanisms linking the local and national situations can be identified. On the one hand, political leaders actively exert an often negative influence on communities, particularly during electoral periods. On the other hand, more generally, the fact that peace at the national level is not based on a compromise between the Ouattara and Gbagbo camps, but on the victory of one camp over the other, and the injustices The proven or presumed problems that result from this are a source of discontent among former Gbagbo voters” (Piccolino, 2017.p.15). Here, the author talks about the post-electoral situation in Ivory Coast, a situation comparable to that of the DRC or Minembwe because the history of Minembwe is often manipulated or taken advantage of by position-seeking politicians who seek votes using the Banyamulenge in their electoral campaigns. This often has an impact after the elections because once elected, the politicians who presented their specifications should carry them out, hence the episodes of conflicts continue endlessly.

However, other studies clearly show that local problems should be addressed at the local level because they sometimes escape control at the national level.

According to Autesserre (2014), international peace builders share a culture that sees conflict as the outcome of tensions at the national and international levels. As a result, the top-down, diplomatic, and macro-political peace building apparatus that currently dominated is best suited to deal with the nation-state and international systems but is not designed to address the deep-seated local tensions that fuel conflict.

This was also proven by research carried out in Sierra Leone. According to research on conflict patterns in Sierra Leone, local politics and customary authority are the most important determinants of sub national conflict manifestations, with national-level measures holding little explanatory weight (Raleigh & De Bruijne, 2015). Similar criticisms have been leveled against third-party mediators and their approaches to conflict resolution since they frequently fail to understand the nuances of the local context (Brahimi & Ahmed, 2008; Barakat & Milton, 2020, p. 6).

An instance from northern Uganda serves to highlight the function of local players in fostering peace. Omach claims that through a variety of connected initiatives, civil society players have contributed to peace building at the local level. In order to pressure combat forces to negotiate and the international community to do so, civil society actors have advocated for and lobbied on their behalf (Omach, 2016, p. 92).

The thesis according to which the local context is privileged is therefore also accepted by international authorities. According to Funk and Said (2010), For internationally mobile peace builders from contexts such as North America and Europe, localizing peace means being willing to learn and to be enriched by what “the local” has to offer (Funk & Said, 2010, p.39).

To conclude this part, it is more than important to consider the local contribution in any peace project for an entity. According to research by the International Peace Institute, there are three ways in which good local governance can help sustain peace: “by providing services and promoting sustainable development more effectively and efficiently; by giving voice to the population in a representative and inclusive manner; by cultivating a political will to resolve conflicts and sustain peace. It also shows how local governance actors can weaken peace by not fulfilling these functions effectively (International Peace Institute, 2018, p.2).

Chapter 4 : Data Analysis

4.1. FINDINGS

4.1.1. Understanding the land conflict in Minembwe

4.1.1.1.a) Types of conflicts , Causes and Factors that accentuate conflicts

As said in our introduction, the causes of conflicts in the Minembwe highlands and even in eastern DRC in general are complex and sometimes even difficult to identify because they take varied forms every day.

During data collection in the Mnenbwe highlands, we tried to list the different types of conflicts existing in Minembwe, their causes as well as the factors that accelerate these conflicts.

Several types of conflicts have been reported, notably land conflicts between customary chiefs and chiefdoms; family conflicts, conflicts between breeders and farmers; inter-community conflicts, conflicts linked to illicit sale of land and Arable land conflict.

On the other hand, different causes of the conflicts in Minembwe have been identified, these are: identity crisis; customary and chieftaincy conflict; ineffectiveness of laws governing land; ineffectiveness of justice in land matters; incompetence of the cadastral service and poor management of chiefdoms.

In addition to the causes of conflicts, there are factors that accelerate conflicts in Minembwe in particular : False receipts on the history of indigenous, propagation of Holocaust denial and hate speech, Political manipulations, Limited transhumance spaces, Manipulation of diaspora financing, Ignorance of rights linked to private property, Spread of rumors among the population, Absence of state authority, Youth unemployment which pushes young people to become involved in conflicts and Sale of land for the displaced people of Minembwe

Minembwe is a group of several villages originally located in the Fizi territory in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. It became a territory in its own right during the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) rebellion of 1998-2002. After the peace agreements in South Africa signed on April 19, 2002, the different territories created under the rebellion were ratified by successive transitional governments. This resulted in recognition of a number of administrative entities including Minembwe in 2013, established by a ministerial decree from Prime Minister Matata Mponyo. ³Like several entities, Minembwe has not escaped the series of violence experienced in the eastern part of the RDC.

³ BBC News Africa, « Minembwe: pourquoi des congolais ont force Tshisekedi à suspendre l'érection d'une commune » <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-54515096>

In his particularity, the identity crisis overwhelmed him. In its conception, before the discord around the installation of decentralized administrative facilitators, the rural commune of Minembwe is a territory of 10 square km in which several communities live, notably: Banyamulenge, Babembe, Bafuliru, Banyindu and Bashi. The local Mai-Mai self-defense militias consider Minembwe as an occupation of their ancestral lands by the Banyamulenge⁴.

So among the causes of conflicts in Minembwe, there is this complex linked to the history of armed groups supported by a few members of one or the other community. Following this nostalgia for the past, the multiplicity of armed groups has emerged and each armed group guarantees the peace and stability to its tribe.

According to Verweijen and Brabant (2017), the study has demonstrated how conflicts over cattle are impacted by both historical violence and the current activities of armed groups and the national army by analysing the interaction between such conflicts and armed mobilization and violence in the Fizi and Itombwe region of South Kivu. Individual incidents involving transhumance or cattle theft are seen through the prism of more significant intercommunity conflicts because of the mutual mistrust between communities that results from a long history of tensions and sporadic violence as well as from the current activism of politico-military entrepreneurs.

In addition, it is expected that parties to a conflict may solicit protection from armed players to strengthen their positions because of the assumed blurred borders between communities and armed organizations and army factions on the one hand, and on the other. Due to the erosion of the current conflict control institutions, there are now more incentives to ask for armed players to settle conflicts (Verweijen & Brabant, 2017, p. 22).

In South Kivu, the situation has become total disorder and we can no longer distinguish the causes and consequences of conflicts. It is even difficult to distinguish the types of current conflicts because the land has become identity-related (conflict).

Peasant activities in South Kivu today give rise to varied but generally conflicting situations of cohabitation: in certain places, the extensive practice of cattle breeding associated with the presence of fields gives rise to destruction of crops trodden or grazed by animals (this is especially the case in the Ruzizi Plain and in the Lulenge sector), while in other places, such as the Ngandja Plain, the fields are few in number but the presence of armed groups who steal and sometimes kill cows and their guardians gives rise to great tensions (Brabant & Nzweve, 2013.p.26).

Identity is the product of successive socializations. That is to say the continuity between primary socialization which constitutes basic knowledge, and secondary socialization where we find the internalization of institutional worlds. The materialization of identity depends on the historical, cultural and social context in which the individual finds himself. However, it is possible to have an identity for yourself and one for others.

⁴ AFRIKAARABIA, « RDC : Minembwe, une commune de la discorde », <https://afrikarabia.com/wordpress/rdc-minembwe-la-commune-de-la-discorde/>

The individual may refuse to take on the identity assigned to him by other groups or institutions⁵. Around issues linked to Minembwe, misinterpretation of identity was invited into the debates. Identity crises cause a destabilization of benchmarks, names and symbolic systems. In the absence of symbolic reference, identity is reduced to identifications by others. As a result, the rituals necessary for identity recognition can become elements of defense nourishing all dominance strategies.

In a situation of identity crisis, it is personal identity that is mobilized and/or collective identity. This leads to a crisis of otherness, that is to say the disruption of the relationship with others which generates conflicts. In this crisis the Banyamulenge are generally rejected by other communities. They are generally perceived as refugees from Rwanda, occupiers, invaders, facilitators of balkanization, but not as Congolese.

In Minembwe, identity is a social image to the extent that it is a social construction and remains multidimensional because no individual or group can be locked into a one dimensional identity. Between the five communities found in Minembwe, they are identified between two categories, notably the breeder (pastoral people) and the farmers.

Livestock breeding and agriculture form the agricultural economy, without forgetting that both activities require access to land. The struggle for access and control of land and the ineffectiveness of laws governing land in the Democratic Republic of Congo have led communities to wage war against each other. A struggle for conquest is observed. For communities in Minembwe, dislodging others in order to occupy the land they occupied has become an everyday struggle.

According to our respondents, the conqueror in his entrenchment prepared the offensive to recover what had been taken from him by force. These facts reinforce the creation of community armed groups known as self-defense groups, and those that already exist their involvement is noted, but also the involvement of the diaspora and politicians in search of a position were raised by the surveys. The land crisis has become severe at the level where we are already observing the sharing and sale of land of populations who are reluctant to abandon their homes by settling in displaced persons camps (Everything is the result of the armed conflicts which operate in the entity). Identity is developed in a relationship that pits one group against others; it is a mode of categorization used for harmful purposes. Multiculturalism raises the question, fundamentally, of the meaning of citizenship. The exploitation of differences between people systematically leads to inter-ethnic rivalries, which however tend to lead to violence and multifaceted crises.

Our respondents insisted on the fact that apart from community conflicts linked to land, intra-community conflicts are reported in Minembwe. Disagreements between local leaders, current challenges in the management of chiefdoms, family conflicts (small and extended families) are among many other factors which accentuate land conflicts and add to other multifaceted conflicts. Indeed, women and children are reported to be more victims in the conflict. It sometimes happens that the husband is dead, when it comes to deciding on the inheritance left by the deceased, the sisters and brothers of the deceased take over

⁵ S. Sabrina, S. Nadia, A Tegua, *Fabrique de la crise et identité*, dans *Spécificités* 2011 (N^o 4), Pages 35 à 42, Editions champ social

all the land held by the deceased's restricted family. In these types of disputes, the inefficiency of justice is once again highlighted.

The intracommunity land problem takes shape through the disorder around the chiefdom. The chiefs sell the land in disorder. A plot often sold repeatedly to several individuals creates conflicts. In this type of case, two or more people in dispute before the courts may all have a title signed by a customary chief. Example of the Kivumu file by Kabundege and Ndahinda, Mutegetsi... testimony from a local humanitarian.

The reason for land conflict according to research participants emanates from disasters resulting from conflicts. The agglomeration of displaced people in small areas of Minembwe causes the scarcity of plots and this means that traditional leaders are tempted to sell the same plots to many people at the same time, which accentuates the conflicts in an unbelievable way.

Hilhorst, research has shown the intricate relationship between conflicts and disasters, with disasters causing conflict and conflict contributing to the creation of disasters ((Hilhorst et al., 2020.p.22). This is the case of Minembwe obviously or conflicts and violence have created massive displacements causing humanitarian problems, and becoming in themselves the causes of other conflicts such as that linked to the illegal sale of land.

In this type of conflict in Minembwe, according to our key informant, civil society takes over to pacify the parties to the conflict as was the case during conflicts between customary chiefs who illegally distributed land. Divergent interests, opinions, or behaviors between individuals or groups can lead to conflict, which is common in all societies. Development is fundamentally hampered by armed conflict. High aspirations are held for civil society's ability to deescalate or transform conflicts and contribute to lasting peace both during and after conflict (Thania & Spurk, 2006, p.7).

4.1.2. Humanitarian interventions in land conflicts in Minembwe

The following part shows the types of humanitarian interventions existing in Minembwe, the humanitarian organizations which provide this aid and the criterion for selecting beneficiaries.

According to our respondents, the humanitarian organizations working in Minembwe have played a very important role during the conflict periods to the present day. However, there are some cases of ineffectiveness in their actions or a certain disorder regarding concerns their contributions.

If we can relate this to literature; Audet argues that: "It appears impossible to imagine the emergence of a consensus change in professional humanitarian organizations given the complexity of the setting in which the humanitarian system develops and the number of potential various solutions. However, the ongoing discussion suggests that humanitarian organizations concur that their cooperation connections need to be reviewed as a result, in the future, the relationship between multinational organizations and their local partners will need to undergo a fundamental transformation. A quick paradigm change in intervention techniques in the humanitarian partnership relationship is required if the goal of humanitarian organizations is

to lessen human suffering and their fundamental premise is that the first people to arrive on the scene of a disaster is the local community” (Audet, 2011.p.13).

During our field work, we tried to established a list of humanitarian organizations in Minembwe, different types of interventions occurred in the area and also the criteria used to select the beneficiaries.

- Type of interventions in Minembwe: Health, Protection, Education, Food security (distribution of food), Basic care (first aid, evacuation of injured people), Agriculture (on seeds), Peace and reconciliation, Environment, GBV and Land management.
- Organizations : CICR, APDIK, SFCG, UEMI, MDM, EBENEZER, UGEAFI, ACTION AID, SAFECO, SAPED, UGEAFI, AMI, CERDC, MDM, Graine, PIN, New Hope, Caire international, ADEPAE, FAO , OCHA and Mahoro Peace Association.
- Support access criteria: vulnerability, Conflicted survivors and People with specific needs.

These are different interventions collected by our research assistant, however this list is not exhaustive. There would be probably other interventions not reported during our field work.

Socio-political crises are linked to rivalry over access to natural resources; this cannot be considered alone without land. This is why there is a chain of land conflicts and the emergence of insecurities and conflicts: armed conflict, food insecurity and customary conflict. These facts were the basis of the destruction of villages, they caused injuries, deaths and pushed thousands of populations into displaced persons camps. The seriousness of these phenomena has inspired the interest of numerous state and non-state actors and donors to invest, through various approaches, in the search for solutions to the problems posed by conflict in Minembwe.

Specifically SFCG (Search for Common Ground) is involved in conflict prevention and management. Other local, national non-governmental organizations and diaspora associations have come to the rescue of conflict victims, hence the responsibility of the provincial and national governments in the face of this crisis remains to be deplored and its intervention vis-a-vis regarding the suffering of the victims is very insignificant.

Although the local population of Minembwe has demonstrated humanitarian aid particularly in: health, protection, education, food security, agriculture, various training in the notions of peace, reconciliation, the environment and GBV (Gender based violence), etc., all this to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and resolve conflicts definitively. Despite the resources involved in these steps, things do not seem to be changing in the long term as local population told us.

A positive point to underline, access to this humanitarian aid whatever the colors, trends and objectives pursued by donors, only the criterion of vulnerability guided the distributor choices. A factor that stakeholders (local and international NGOs and the diaspora) must

maximize in the construction of social cohesion, the search for peace and the consolidation of the latter.

4.1.3: Peace building mechanisms in Minembwe

This part shows the means proposed by research participants for lasting peace in Minembwe. At the same time, they proposed the actors who could implement these proposals.

- Means: Permanent dialogue between the communities living in Minembwe, Establishment of social cohesion through permanent social actions (truth and reconciliation), Open up Minembwe by rehabilitating roads, Creation of development projects in Minembwe, Creation of jobs among young people, women and the entire population in general and Organization of cultural and sporting activities for young people.

- Actors : Community leaders, The women, The Diaspora, Civil society, Churches/religious denominations, Local and international NGOs and Local youth organizations.

In July 2012, the national workshop on land was held. Devoted to breaking the gap in understanding the factors at the heart of land insecurity between the actors involved in the land arena. Indeed, the actors present, and particularly the NGOs working on land, agreed that the land crisis was based on a combination of at least eight factors:

The conflict between land management texts and practices, that is to say the dualism of the legal regime relating to land and land practices outside the law; the relationship between access to land, identity and community demands; the inadequacy of land tenure to meet economic investment needs; the gap between urban land management and land use planning; lack of coordination and harmonization between ministries involved in land governance; land administration in search of performance; the insufficient link between land governance and environmental policy and; the issue of parity for access to land.

And therefore, dialogue between communities, the establishment of social cohesion, the opening up of Minembwe, development actions in Minembwe, and the creation of jobs among young people, women and the entire population in In general, the organization of cultural and sporting activities for young people is not far from the avenues which will uproot the root causes of land conflicts.

This is not far from the proposals given by researchers including Ntanyoma and Hintjens, who proposed the following: “property, including cattle, should be returned, through legal means. Roads and infrastructure should be constructed to ensure that once the political commitment is found, humanitarian relief can actually reach the Banyamulenge IDPs(Internally displaced persons)” (Ntanyoma & Hintjens, 2022.p.294).

This proposal is not easy to execute but it is also a very important solution in the context of Minembwe, our fear in this regard is that this may risk creating other secondary costs especially the fact that the conflicts in Minembwe have took the purely identity form.

Kappler has challenged the idea that the identity associated with peace building is constant and can be neatly classified into "local" and "international" categories. As the political, social, and economic environment of peace building serves as the canvas on which players position themselves along numerous lines of identification, it has been proposed that identities are not primordial but rather need to be interpreted in this context. This is neither meant to suggest that local actors are in need of assistance, nor is it meant to say that they are dictated by the peace building environment (Kappler, 2015, p. 12).

The complexity of the land conflict requires that it be addressed using even more complex tools, hence the need for profound structural changes. It is for this reason, among others, that non-governmental actors (national and international NGOs, non-profit organizations, churches and religious denominations, women's and youth associations, diaspora associations, community leaders, etc.) are called upon to play a major role in facing the components of the land conflict which adapts to their resources and skills. Faced with the factors of the land conflict which exceed their resources and skills, we call on them to carry out advocacy with the competent authorities. Elected officials and legislators must reform the legal framework governing land in the DRC. This is seen as one of the lasting solutions to the current crisis.

In relation to the actors of pacification, the research participants reiterated the very important role of religious denominations in pacification at the local level in Minembwe. There are similar cases in other parts of Africa; according to Roelofs (2020), interfaith peace building has become an important site of international intervention into northern Nigeria's religious landscape (Roelofs, 2020.p.10). Let us point out that in Minembwe there is a certain sacredness around the region and that even the armed groups, much more the popular mass obey the religious authorities.

After having collected the interventions of the other participants, we carried out an interview with the spokesperson for the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is an important component, responsible for stability and peace in Minembwe. The military gave us a version that was a little different from other respondents.

For the army, the fruits of peace actions are beginning to manifest themselves through inter-community dialogues almost everywhere in Minembwe, meetings between communities, the opening of certain markets which were formerly closed.

They argue that the main drivers of conflicts are mainly the influence of the diaspora in each community, conflicts due to the race for customary power and the right of possession; the agropastoral conflict, the bi-fascism of communities on the one hand with the army and armed groups on the other.

For them, the peacemakers are the regular army and the common people who are victims of conflicts and who have nothing to gain from conflicts.

For the armed forces, it is difficult to say that the conflicts have been resolved because there are still signs of the conflicts.

The military claims that under their initiative, there were the following actions:

- Facilitation of intra- and inter-community dialogue,
- Responsiveness of certain common markets which bring together different communities,

- Free movement of the civilian population in certain sections and roads which had become impassable following the growing insecurity caused by armed groups.

- The rejuvenation of military cohesion which had become hostile

The regular army affirms that among the root causes of conflicts, there is the chameleonism of the population which behaves on the one hand as having become the state and on the other hand in connivance with the armed groups of their community loyalties.

For the regular army, the means to rebuild peace in minembwe are as follows:

The addition of military personnel, raised awareness among indigenous people, putting the DDRC program into practice, establishment of a committee to monitor the return to peace process, made up of members of all communities in conflict at the local level and rehabilitation of the Uvira-Baraka-Fizi-Minembwe road.

The army recommends that the different communities disassociate themselves from the armed groups and leave the task of peace to the regular army.

Note that various research participants do not entirely accept the version of the armed forces, accusing them of being at the root of certain slippages related to peace and especially by exaggerating to positive the security situation in Minembwe.

The situation in Minembwe has become increasingly confusing, to the extent that not all stakeholders have the same understanding of the facts. What is surprising is that in the context of Minembwe, even humanitarian organizations (supposed to be neutral) appreciated in the same way by the beneficiaries. According to Hilhorse and Schmiemann (2002); Changing political and military contexts of conflict and the proliferation of organizations and principles have all contributed to revealing the negotiated nature of principles. Humanitarian principles have lost their universality and their aura as radiant beacons in the storms of humanitarian crises (D. Hilhorst & Schmiemann, 2002.p.4).

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This research consists of characterizing how land related conflicts emerged in Minembwe, analyzing the relationship between humanitarian intervention and land conflicts and how humanitarians integrate peace building into their programs; and know the scope of better integration of peace building at the local level into humanitarian action.

To achieve this, we conducted interviews with key people living or working in Minembwe and having key information on conflicts. These people include farmers, breeders, religious leaders, women's associations and young people; local and international humanitarian organizations, local and international peace builders, security agents based in Minembwe and civil society.

The results of this research demonstrate that the conflicts in Minembwe are above all local and minor (possibly having local solutions) but increased by external factors (politics, diaspora, economic interests, etc.); which makes the context more and more complex and the conflicts which were once perceived as minor between farmers and breeders have now become identity-related and violent.

Our respondents (tribes combined) insisted on the fact that local farmers have no violent and major conflicts between them and that everything can have a local solution because all social strata of Minembwe are peacemakers. However, political manipulations further complicate matters and everything becomes difficult to control and even goes beyond the level of the local population (all finally become victims, not knowing the string pullers).

This research highlights different forms of existing conflicts in Minembwe. According to our respondents, there are two main types of conflicts (intra-community conflicts and inter-community conflicts).

Intracommunity conflicts are those taking place within the same community or tribe, while inter community (identity) conflicts oppose two or more tribes and are sometimes violent.

Generally speaking, the following conflicts exist in Minembwe: land conflicts between customary chiefs and chiefdoms; family conflicts, conflicts between breeders and farmers, Conflicts linked to illicit sale of land and Conflict over arable land.

For all these conflicts, the causes can be either the identity crisis, ineffectiveness of laws governing land, ineffectiveness of justice in land matters, incompetence of the cadastral service or poor management of chiefdoms.

Alongside the causes, there are factors which accentuate the conflicts in Minembwe, these include false receipts on the history of autochthony, negationist propagation and hate speech, political manipulation, limited spaces for transhumance, manipulation of diaspora financing, ignorance of rights linked to private property, the spread of rumors among the

population, the absence of State authority, the unemployment of young people which pushes young people to integrate the conflicts and the sale of plots of displaced people from Minembwe.

Our participants appreciated the humanitarian contribution from the diversity of humanitarian organizations working in Minembwe, even these organizations present some operational challenges because their contribution is insignificant compared to the expectations of the population.

The following sectors are covered by NGOs in Minembwe: Health, Protection, Education, Food security (distribution of food), Basic care (first aid, evacuation of debris), Agriculture (on seeds), Peace and reconciliation, Environment and GBV.

The selection criteria for beneficiaries are vulnerability, conflict survivors and people with specific needs.

The following actions are being carried out in Minembwe to promote peaceful coexistence and peace-building:

- ❖ Raise awareness among the various communities living in Minembwe to promote peace, through churches and radio broadcasts. According to those in charge of humanitarian organizations working in this field, this awareness consists in preaching forgiveness and peaceful cohabitation,
- ❖ Initiation of inter-community cooperatives where people work together: the selection of beneficiaries is based on ethnicity, so ethnic diversity is a very important criterion.
- ❖ Organization of soccer sports between young people from different tribes as a way of finding a framework for preaching peace to young people. Such are the activities carried out by various stakeholders in Minembwe, according to the humanitarians contacted.

However, these actions are not enough to ensure lasting peace in Minembwe. It is therefore vital to step up these activities if the long-awaited peace is to be achieved.

For the consolidation of peace, the following mechanisms must be put into practice:

- Establish permanent dialogue in which the different communities can talk openly (truth and reconciliation),
- Creation of economic actions to keep young people busy and eliminate poverty,
- Involve all stakeholders in joint action, rather than carrying out activities in a scattered manner,
- Behave as responsible humanitarians instead of initiating projects for the benefit of the organizers,
- Permanent pacification frameworks to remind the population and inform young people about the evils of conflict and violence,
- Organize permanent awareness-raising campaigns in schools on living together and loving one another,
- Initiate projects to open up Minembwe by rehabilitating roads,
- Creation of development projects in Minembwe,
- Creation of jobs among young people, women and the entire population in general,

- □ Organization of cultural and sporting activities for young people, these actions will always be accompanied by a message of peace and justice, and
- □ Emphasis on social justice in Minembwe.

The actors who can be involved in the peace processes as suggested by our respondents are community leaders, women, the diaspora, civil society, churches (religious denominations), local and international organizations based in Minembwe and local youth organizations.

The majority of respondents insisted on the fact that the causes of conflicts in Minembwe are complex, sometimes even difficult to specify and that in order to find the solution at the local level it will be necessary to tackle the problems of local instability in the primary sectors. Such as agriculture and entrepreneurship.

The study by van Leeuwen et al. (2022) shows how framing land disputes in conflict-affected areas as a problem of instability may jeopardize understanding the roots of land conflicts in longer-term processes of agricultural transformation and injustice. Stabilization remained their primary focus despite the fact that many groups working on peace building and development in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo acknowledged the more fundamental difficulties in agricultural transformation that underpin land conflicts. This is why they put a lot of emphasis on regional dispute-resolution options, such as mediation. A number of interveners also pointed to the failure to enforce existing laws as a significant factor in land disputes (van Leeuwen et al., 2022, p. 20).

The local solution for peacebuilding in Minembwe cannot therefore succeed without the participation of the local population, grouped within local civil society.

Regarding the role of civil society in peacebuilding, Thania and Spurk (2006) reveal the following: “Civil society has important roles to play in peacebuilding. Based on an analysis of civil society functions, civil society can make important contributions to peacebuilding in the short, medium and long-run.

Democracy research shows that civil society has played a crucial role in democratic transitions in Eastern Europe. Other civil society roles are also important for peacebuilding, especially human rights monitoring which contributes to the protection of civil society, and through joint activities that can build bridging ties across divided societies” (Thania & Spurk, 2006.p.40).

In all peace efforts in Minembwe, the local level should not be put aside. Indeed, academics and decision-makers have emphasized the significance of the local level over the past ten years. Some have even gone so far as to claim that the local is the real secret to forging peace. Local peace, however, is closely related to peace at the national level. Lack of national leader reconciliation, unsuccessful democracy, and biased transitional justice have an impact on local peace in nations where the conflict ended with one of the warring groups winning rather than by a compromise, causing tensions across communities. This propensity is made worse by ethnic patronage systems that maintain relationships between local communities and the “big men” at the national level (Piccolino 2019, page 20).

There is no one alternative to the goal of outside interveners, according to interviews with local peace committees and NGOs in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Instead, there are a variety of opposing viewpoints on the type of justice that should be supported locally and the degree to which customary authority and state institutions ought to serve as the foundation for institutional change and cooperation. This necessitates that those who intervene understand how their actions influence the “politics of the local” (Van Leeuwen et al., 2020.p.21).

It will therefore be necessary to bring all parties in conflict to a common peace pact for a common peace. Between the tasks of seeking to prevent conflict and keeping the peace lies the responsibility to try to bring hostile parties to agreement by peaceful means ((Boutros-ghali, 1992.p.7).

Peace is a priority in Minembwe. However, according to our respondents, it is very difficult to achieve peace in Minembwe without justice. According to Gallez, É., & Rubbers, B. (2015), in the Democratic Republic of Congo, justice reform is part of the strategic framework established by international donors in the wake of the 1998-2003 war to establish the rule of law and promote good governance. The question we must ask ourselves is how this reform will be put into practice.

According to different correspondents consulted during our data collection in Minembwe, to establish fair justice in Minembwe, the following actions and awareness-raising should be carried out:

- □ The Restoration of state authority and justice: humanitarian organizations and think tanks should address the issue of justice awareness and remind governments of the role of justice for peace and development.
- Justice is a key point for a conflict or post-conflict area like Minembwe, because without justice, revenge and the cycle of violence will follow.
- Think tanks should deal with the legal issue by reminding the state to create local legal bodies (Legal Clinics) to judge wrongdoers. In Minembwe, people are killing each other but in the absence of justice, the cycle of violence continues because there is no prosecution. People's property is destroyed without conviction, which increases the violence in and around Minembwe.
- What the current organizations are doing in Minembwe is to calm the situation, but the internal strife persists due to the lack of justice. Justice is therefore needed in Inembwe to stabilize the peace.
- Even within the same community, there are always cases that require fair justice, without which all humanitarian actions in Minembwe will be meaningless.
- Raise the government's awareness of the need to strengthen social justice in educational circles, and even within society as a whole, as the population of Minembwe often has no notion of justice (rights and duties).
- Strengthen human rights actions and/or projects in Minembwe and the surrounding area.
- Set up legal clinics in Minembwe for local justice.

In a focus group made up of religious leaders from the Banyamulenge community, the Bafuliru and some Bashi religious leaders (in charge of embulant traders operating in the Minembwe highlands), most of the participants insisted on the fact that : “the lasting solution to our disputes is economic and social dependence on each other”. If the different tribes of Minembwe had common income-generating activities, it would be very difficult to destroy them because they depend on each other.

This question of social and economic interdependence between different Minembwe tribes as a path to lasting peace was also reiterated by a community leader from the Banyamulenge tribe, who asked for the announcement.

According to the research conducted by Londoni, 100% of Banyamulenge agreed that their relationships with the Bavira and Bafuliru(Bavibafuliru) would likely improve if they were dependent on one another. Additionally, 70% of the Bavibafuliru agreed that interdependence may improve their relationship with the Banyamulenge.

This indicates that 85% of participants thought that the relationships between the groups members could be improved if they were dependent on one another. Participants stated that interdependence can motivate individuals to look for shared interests, collaborate, strengthen mutual respect, conduct business transactions, keep ongoing contact, and develop friendships (Londoni, n.d.p. 363).

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Annexes:

A. Interview guide

Bonjour, je suis Ndabunguye Freddy, enseignant à l'UEMI et je vous demande un peu de votre temps pour vous parler. Puis-je vous parler?

Comme je l'ai dit, je suis enseignant à l'UEMI, mais je fais des interviews pour M.Albert Mutware Gikundiro, qui est étudiant en master à Institut international des etudes sociales (ISS- Erasmus University) au Pays-Bas en sciences sociales et développement.

Dans le cadre de sa thèse de recherche, Albert souhaite comprendre la dynamique du conflit à Minembwe et les voies possibles pour bâtir la paix au niveau locale.

Son sujet est le suivant: "Land related conflict and peace building in Minembwe/Conflit foncier et consolidation de la paix à Minembwe ».

J'aimerais donc avoir un peu de votre temps pour discuter de ce sujet, tout en vous rassurant le plus d'anonymement possible quant aux réponses que vous allez me donner.

Cette recherche respecte l'éthique de la recherche scientifique et ne sera en aucun cas l'objet de votre insécurité. N'hésitez pas donc à répondre uniquement aux questions que vous souhaitez.

Je vous remercie d'avance pour le temps que vous allez m'accorder.

Maintenant on peut commencer ?

A.1. Identification du répondant :

- Date de l'entretien :
- Nom du répondant :
- Tribu :
- Position dans la communauté :

I. Combien de conflits liés à la terre rencontrez-vous à Minembwe ?

II. Comment ce conflit est-il apparu ?

III. Combien de ces conflits ont été résolus et quel a été votre rôle ?

IV. Quels sont les principaux facteurs ou moteurs des conflits que vous avez rencontrés au cours des 12 derniers mois ?

V. Quel type d'intervention humanitaire avez-vous rencontré au cours des six derniers mois ?

VI. Qui l'a mis en œuvre ?

VII. Qui en a été le bénéficiaire ?

VIII. Quels ont été les critères de sélection des bénéficiaires ?

IX. Ces interventions humanitaires ont-elles réduit ou aggravé les conflits ?

X. Qui sont les principaux artisans de la paix à Minembwe ?

XI. Quels sont les moyens possibles pour construire la paix à Minembwe ?

XII. Quelles sont vos recommandations pour la construction de la paix à Minembwe ?

Merci beaucoup de votre temps accordé

B. Figures



Fig 1: Women focus group discussion Minembwe



Fig 2: Farmer's focus group discussion in Kalingi/Minembwe



Fig 3: Religious leaders in Madegu/Minembwe.



Fig 4: Local leader of Minembwe