



# Is Reintegration Still Worth Doing Eight Years After the Ceasefire?

Situational Analysis of Ex-Combatants in  
the Pool Region, Republic of Congo



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Programme transitionnel de démobilisation et réintégration

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the Pool Region, Republic of Congo**

**Based on fieldwork conducted in May 2011**

*Magali Chelapi-den Hamer*



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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

BEPC	Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle du second degré
CFCO	Chemin de Fer Congo Océan
CNR	Conseil National de la Résistance (until 2007)
CNR	Conseil National des Républicains (after 2007)
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
FADR	Forces d'Autodéfense de la Résistance
HCREC	Haut Commissariat à la Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants
IDA	International Development Association
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MCDDI	Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program
MUCODEC	Mutuelle Congolaise d'Épargne et de Crédit
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PCT	Parti Congolais du Travail
PDR	Programme de Démobilisation et Réinsertion
PNDDR	Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion
RCERP	Republic of Congo Emergency Reintegration Program
RN	Route Nationale
RoC	Republic of Congo
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPADS	Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale



# Executive Summary

**A**lthough official warfare in the Republic of Congo stopped more than eight years ago, the Pool region has continued to feel the collateral effects of war until now at a scale largely ignored by the general public. The Pool region is where the Ninjas, a group of local militias, originated during the civil strife and retreated to afterwards. Peace and recovery did not gain traction in the area until 2010/11.

Key findings of this analysis of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process include:

- **The lack of a public security presence:** The Pool region has largely been deprived of public security forces over the past thirteen years (1998-2010), which led to power abuse. Until recently, several Ninja bases remained throughout the Pool region, led by free-riding commanders operating independently of any official Ninja structure. These groups abused the local population in a number of ways, including forced labor, excessive taxation, torture, and unauthorized exploitation of land.
- **The recognition of intra-regional disparity:** Warfare affected localities very differently. While the southern districts have been calm for the past eight years, abuse was regularly reported along the railroad prior to 2011.
- **The recent efforts of the State to restore security in the region:** As of 2010, with Operations KINZOUNOU and KIMIA,<sup>1</sup> the national army finally reentered the Pool region to secure the area and to reinstitute a formal judicial system. In 2009 and 2011, disarmament operations employing “cash for weapons” were also undertaken with governmental funding.
- **The unlikely resumption of war:** The cur-

rent political context has changed since the late 1990s, when many Ninjas felt obliged to rejoin the fight for fear of violent retaliation. There is currently no opposition in country strong enough to challenge the power of the current president; hence, the state has little incentive to hunt down an already weak opposition.

- **The economic situation of ex-combatants:** There have been many self-demobilizations in the past decade, and many ex-combatants have already learned to cope. Notwithstanding a few exceptions, they are generally neither better nor worse off economically than non-combatants.
- **The heterogeneity of ex-combatants:** Ex-combatants do not constitute a homogeneous group. Therefore, their reintegration needs differ. The consulting team developed a typology to help understand the profiles of all ex-combatants.

The main recommendations of this study are:

- **Non-targeted assistance:** The consulting team recommends pairing recent governmental disarmament operations with community-driven reconstruction programming to provide closure to the population affected by the war. The main focus of programming should be to reenergize local economies destroyed by the war, especially medium-scale agriculture and animal husbandry, and to open up the region to development.
- **Support for enhanced State security and**

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<sup>1</sup> *Kinzounou* means peace in Lari, the language of the Lari people in the Pool region, and *kimia* means peace in Lingala, a language spoken along the Congo River between Lisala and Kinshasa.

**judicial efforts:** To ensure effective program implementation, it is strongly recommended that the Republic of Congo be supported in its efforts to restore security and public order in the region. Assistance to the building and rehabilitation of public infrastructure to rein-

stall the gendarmerie and police stations has been absent in most localities of the Pool region since 1998; it is therefore recommended to avoid a gap between the end of Operation KIMIA and the redeployment of public security forces in the Pool region.

Map 1. The Republic of Congo and the Pool Region

