

DRC Peace Agreements and Post-electoral Developments 2006 – 2010: Success or Failure of the Founding Acts ?

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The case of the DRC presents both aspects of a successful peace agreement (end of the 1998 – 2003 war) and a failure. The authoritarian tendencies and constant reference to the former regimes lead the country on a path of exclusion that threatens to reignite conflict. To what extent the post-electoral evolution 2006 – 2010 was determined by the nature of the 1999 and 2002 peace agreements?

At first sight, these agreements are part of a relatively successful tradition in Congolese political compromise making. However, the disintegration of the state during the two wars also led to the implosion of its elite structure. It triggered an overflow of claims for participation in political power by a myriad of political and military actors all referring to very different types of alleged legitimacy. The involvement from external actors (states or international organizations) perpetuated this situation and did not permit an internal national dynamic to develop. While the 2006 elections were supposed to reinstate legitimacy after long years of war, the fundamental problem of the nature of representation and legitimacy of political leadership was not resolved. In the recent evolution, the failure to resolve this problem seems to become again a source of conflict for the near future.

The paper tries to give elements to answer two questions: to what extent the post-electoral evolution in the DRC is determined by the 1999 and 2002 peace agreements? To what extent the 2006 elections failed to resolve the long term problem of representation and legitimacy in the DRC and can this result be traced back to the peace agreements? It seems the problem was not so much a lack of inclusiveness of the political order but a too high inclusiveness and lack of internal structure and legitimacy. This questions the efficiency of the introduction of a liberal democratic peace under UN auspices.

The paper focuses on evolutions on the national level but adds an analysis of the situation in Oriental Province where the author has been working during the last two years as political affairs officer for the UN mission in the DRC.