Influences To Mass Killings For It To Impact On Personal Security In The Ituri Region Of Democratic Republic Of Congo (2008–2022).

Mukokoma Kambale Eliphaz[1], Gerald Peter Mutonyi[2]
[1]*(Department of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya)*
[2]*(Department of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya)*

Abstract:

Background: Citizens of any nation, are bestowed some inalienable rights and freedoms. Such include, living in a society that honors freedom in political participation, prevention of government repression, prevention of mass violation of human rights and prevention of threats from militarization. But there are situations which hinder the achievement of such and one is, organized murder of specific people in the community. Therefore, this study sought to assess what influences mass killings for it to impact on personal security in the Ituri region of Democratic Republic of the Congo (2008–2022).

Materials and Methods: The study used the Institutional Anomie theory. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design, and was carried out in Ituri region with the target population of all adult residents. A multistage sampling technique was employed starting with the clustering of the regions in the study area. Purposive sampling was used to obtain the administrative units to be studied. Those who had experiences of the mass killings were identified through snowballing. Questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. While quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, average and mean, and pie charts.

Results: The findings of the study were that, mistrust between the government and local community, political repressions, absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level and was human rights abuses were the major influences to mass killings in Ituri region hence impacting on personal security.

Conclusion: The very visible presence of state security personnel enhances the feeling of insecurity. The systematic nature of the destruction and pillage, and the brutality of the attacks on civilians, strongly suggests that attacks are intended to displace the populations from their villages and settlements. Consequently, there should be favorable mechanisms in DRC which can oversee the continuous curtailing of systematic killings. The favorable mechanisms can only be realized through the consultation of the stakeholders: the government, the militias, the various non-governmental organizations, and the citizens.

Key Word: Mass Killings; Personal Security; Human Security; Genocide; Human Rights; Law and Order

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I.   Introduction

Since its inception by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1994, the concept of human security has progressively gained prominence in security related studies. It was therefore an approach for assisting nations to identify and tackle extensive threats for the existence and dignity of their citizens.[1] Therefore, human security was meant to keep people in the world and citizens in the territorial borders of their nations secure, enjoying their rights and having the ability to fully developing their human potentials. And one of the ways to be able to achieve the objectives of the human security, was through the fulfilment of its personal security component.

Personal security is amongst the seven components of human security introduced by the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 (p32). Political security is therefore defined as, safety from chronic threats such as hunger, diseases, and repressions as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether at homes, jobs or communities.[2] It was therefore intended to ensure achievements and fulfillments of citizens to exercise their rights to participate in the electoral processes, protection of citizens from human rights violations by the state agencies and having free press that informs the public objectively.

Personal security as, the defenses against any forms of on-person oppressions.[3] It therefore concerns itself on people living in a community that respects their fundamental human rights. In that regard, citizens are

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intended to live in a society that honors their basic human rights, without individual or state repression, for instance tortures, disappearances, human rights violations, detentions or imprisonments.

But wars and armed conflicts have repercussions that interfere with the achievement of the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 on Human security. And of those components affected is personal security. Wars and armed conflicts will lead to forced migration, long-term refugee problems, the damage of political, social and economic institutions. They repeatedly kill, and their consequences spread far-off outside the deaths in battles. The consequences of wars and especially armed conflicts on personal security are profound especially when the killings go beyond the battle fields. One such killings are the meditated and mass killings.

Mass killings are simply war by other means.[4] From this perception, noncombatants are not simply bystanders to armed conflicts. But they have a central role they are playing, more often inadvertently, as the backers of the war's assets either financially or human requirements. Occasionally, they also turn out to be the intents of war itself. It was therefore important to assess the influences to mass killings and personal security.

Similarly, Gasper and Gomez have argued that mass killing in Mexico, is an undesirable social and economic trend, and not a military trend which would be deterred by using suppression.[5] As both a social and economic manifestation, mass killing develops and nourishes from the regulatory inadequacies by the governments. It increases from environments that experience extreme lack regulatory structures. It therefore means that, the mass killing gets to be undertaken by entities which will be offering most amenities that the government is not able to avail, maybe due to its inadequacies or its absenteeism.[5] And this way, criminal enterprises like the drug-trafficking tend to be the source of livelihood and social identity in a community or even in a country. And they would undertake mass killing either on their rivals or disloyal members. While Gasper and Gomez and Adams examined mass killing in Mexico are as a result of the lack of the implementation of law and order, this research aimed at finding out what influences mass killing for it to impact to on personal security.

In Pakistan, there exists a mass killing by the name of honor killings. And they have been an unrelenting crisis for years regardless of the judicial efforts to halt it. Some of the causes are for example, lacking of education, tribal laws, cultures and poverty.[6] But this does not provide a complete list of influences to these mass killings on women which are conducted in Pakistan.

According to Hongdao, *et al*, the origins of this intentional homicide of women begun from the early desert tribes so as they would be able to preserve their honor, whereas women were regarded to be the treasure cases of her family's honor.[7] Vesvikar and Agarwal defines honor killing as the killing of a member of a family or the community by the other members, on the allegation that the victim created dishonor to the members of the family or to that community.[8] Generally, the woman would be murdered by the father, brothers, uncles or even her own husband. In some cases, the other women in the family would conspire in the offence. Thereafter, those involved in the offence would be often be honored for reinstating the family honor.

Several of women of different age and social groups have fallen victims to these mass killings for various reasons in Pakistani. Among the fatalities of these mass killings are females of all ages ranging from 3-90 years old, rural or urban residents, married or unmarried.[9] Therefore, the tradition of this communally accepted uncontrolled criminality, is a mockery to the rule of law and humanity. Douki et al in their study titled Violence against women in Arab and Islamic countries is cited by Irum stating that, a significant inspiration responsible for the surge of this deplorable crimes, is the liberty the perpetrators enjoy despite committing the killings.[10] Consequently, in this civilization, women are an investment for men for their honor and reputation in the community. In such communities, the liberties and status of an individual, are subsidiary to those of the society unit. In such a community, a person's liberties and status are frequently subordinated to the standing of relative's units. This raises the question as to the influence to mass killings of women on their personal security of Pakistan.

In Africa, the mass killings are in most of the countries including Nigeria and Uganda meted against non-combatants. Some of these violence overlaps the line between deliberate and inadvertent killings, although much non-combatants killings have been as a result of intentional seeking out of civilians. In Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which is a Christian radical group, has been operating since 1987, systematically killing thousands of civilians over the decades. Its leader, Joseph Rao Kony has constantly stated that, the purpose of the rebel group to sanitize the Acholi ethnic group, and also to set up a Ugandan government ruled by God's Ten Commandments.[11] The LRA greatly hunts their fellow Acholi, whom they are allegedly fighting for their liberation. According to Carter and Veale, the LRA utilizes guerilla strategies and conducts tactful vital attacks on army posts. But mostly targeting civilians and abducting children to be new conscripts.[12] This is an example of a non-state armed group intensifying mass killing of civilians.

Although scholars in their works have addressed the reasons for targeting of civilians, less has been researched into the influence of such mass killing on civilians, on the people's personal security in Uganda. Such an understanding of the factors associated with mass killing would inform scholarly work on personal

security and would possibly contribute in attempts to forecast influences to mass killing against civilians by non-state actors on their personal security.

In Congo, the Congo Research Group in their research on mass killings in Beni territory found that, there were cases of mass killing, systematic sexual assaults, systematic pillages, perpetrated by Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) troops, Mai-Mai, March 23 Movement (M23), Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MCL), Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo, and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).[13] However, what influences this type of killing for it to impact on personal security of the people in Ituri region of DRC, remains unclear.

The study on expressive violence and the slow genocide of the Banyamulenge of South Kivu, pointed out that, the Banyamulenge civilian who are internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been experiencing what can be described as a slow-moving genocide for some years.[14] Meaning that they have been exposed to, 'mass killing as a result of being witnesses or being participating in violence. This is, the continuation of experiences of residing in unsafe and violent areas'.[15] This is in order to continue to refer to them as Rwandese, and thereby denying discrediting their claims to be recognized as fully Congolese citizens. The study showed that, slow-moving genocide in the country is causing emotional and physical injuries to the citizens, but it falls short in providing a holistic explanation on how slow-moving genocide impacts on personal security. Therefore, the need to understand what influences mass killing to impact on personal security provided the impetus for this study.

Further, Khadiagala in his study on the war and peace in Africa's Great lakes region informed that, 60 per cent of the 810 human rights abuses recorded were allegedly committed by various armed groups while 40 per cent were supposedly perpetrated by the government agencies such as the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the state police.[16] Therefore, an empirical study was necessary to ascertain how these abuses that lead to mass killing effect personal security.

Candland *et al* in their research on the Islamic State in Congo stated that, Mayi-Mayi armed group with allegiance to the Kinshasa government, assaulted Hutu villages, systematically killing civilians.[17] Then the Rally for Congolese Democracy–Goma (RCD) armed group countered with a organized attacks on the Mayi-Mayi stronghold of Nyabyondo, systematically killing the military and civilian people. After the combat ended, RCD-Goma armed groups and Hutu civilians persisted in tracking down the civilians from other ethnic groups who were fleeing, seemingly hunting for the Mayi-Mayi combatants.[17] Although the factors that have led to these mass killings and counter killings are well documented, there is scarcity of studies that have examined mass killings and personal security, and more importantly in Ituri region where the study was undertaken.

II. Literature Review

It is evident that, mass killings are extremely horrendous. Hundreds of people lose their lives simply because a particular group of people have been influenced in a particular way. Many people would attribute it to influences like are mental instability or insanity, but normal people are also able of perpetrating these killings.

Carey, Colaresi and Mitchell in their study titled governments, informal links to militias, and accountability, stated that, leaders would be influenced to killing of journalists by the need to dictate the public description of their domestic performance, and their desire to misrepresent the description of their governance internationally.[18] But the killings would be outsourced to irregular forces in order to avoid accountability.[18] Whenever a government arranges for the killing of a journalist, it would more likely be to cover a story that would be unfavorable for the leadership.

Similarly, Gohdes and Carey, in their study on, what the killings of journalists tell us about future repression, stated that, government security agencies among most countries, would often be influenced to target journalists for killings when they deem their reporting to be offensive or challenging their policies.[19] If a government orders the killing of a journalist, it is willing to use extreme measures to eliminate the threat posed by the uncontrolled flow of information. The conclusion was that, whatever influences the killing of journalists was going to facilitate repression.[19] Despite the studies showing that the key influences of targetted killings of journalist, and the impeding situations, the current study sought to establish the impact of such influences like suppressing of offensive reporting or challenging of state policies on personal security.

Daxecker and Brandon in their study on financing rebellion: using piracy to explain and predict conflict intensity in Africa and Southeast Asia, explained that what has influenced the Niger Delta militants in Nigeria, was the feeling of marginalization despite the oil being drilled from their ancestral land.[20] And the militants have developed wide experience by targeting oil pipelines and platforms. In Nigeria, the first influence of marginalization, has created a second influence of the usage the profits from piracy as an extra revenue source to finance their fight against the Nigerian government.[20] Therefore, this research was finding out, if the influences of marginalization and usage of the profits from piracy of oil has influences on personal security of the people.

Front Line Defenders in their report on Stop the Killings focused on the situation in just six countries of Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and the Philippines. This according to the report was

because, the six countries accounted for 85% of the killings of human rights defenders (HRDs) in 2017.[21] But the governments sought to justify their conducts by the influences on the war on terrorism and the activities by organized crimes for instance the drug traffickers.[21] However, this study focused on the influence such as the war on terrorism and the activities by organized crimes for instance the drug traffickers, on personal security among the citizens.

Mutonyi in his study titled, from old wars, to new wars, examined some old wars, which were influenced for geopolitical concerns and ideologies whereby the leaders transferred their nationalist principles to the citizens, and new wars, in order to illustrate that the new wars are far from matching the depiction of old wars. He gave an example of the Bosnian Serbs (12% of the Croatian populace) who mobilized and assaulted with the assertion that they freeing their fellow Serbian Orthodox Christians, thereby mass killing Bosnian Muslims residing in Bosnia.[22] His conclusion was that, that the new wars are influenced by the need to create markets for new weapons, hence being warpreneurship. However, the current study explored the influence of either geopolitical concerns and ideologies or creation of new markets for weapons, on personal security among residents of Ituri region in DRC.

III. Material And Methods

Study Design: The study adopted a Cross sectional survey design. It is a design that allowed the researcher to get information from different sets off population at the same time.[23] It gives a stronger likelihood for participation. It also helped to gather objective information that was used for generalization to a larger population. The design also fits diverse experiences into predetermined response categories.

Study Location: This The study was conducted in Ituri region of Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ituri has a surface area of 65,658 square kilometers.[23] And Ituri is one of the 26 new provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the northeast of the country created in the 2015 repartitioning. According to 2021 data, the population of the province is 5.7 million people.[24] And the region is the border with Uganda and South Sudan. Ituri is home to many recent surges in armed conflicts and inter-communities' violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The researcher used multistage sampling to get the sample size and identify the respondents. Multistage sampling makes division of large populations into parts and stages to make the process of sampling more practical, and can use simple random sampling and a combination of either cluster sampling or stratified sampling.[25]

Ituri is made up of five administrative territories which are: Aru, Djugu, Irumu, Mahagi and Mambasa. First, three administrative units were purposively sampled. It is recommended 20% of an n compared to the general N.[26] However, the researcher increased to 60%, and it is argued that, statistical power is enhanced by an increase of the sample size.[27] Three administrative units identified for the study were Aru, Djugu, and Mambasa because Aru is at the extreme north, Djugu at the centre and Mambasa in the extreme South. This would seemingly be able to capture the phenomena evenly across board.

Second, the snowball technique for sampling those who have had experiences of the mass killings was used: the research team asked those who have had experiences of the mass killings to identify others in their cluster, and then the research team asked the others to identify the next. For example, local administrators identified their fellow local administrators

Sample size: The study population was clustered into four homogenous groups, and each producing the number of respondents as indicated against it: the local administrators (50 respondents), state security providers (50 respondents), rebels (50), international and local NGOs senior management (50 respondents) and general citizens (200 respondents). Therefore, the total number of respondents was be 400. It is proposed that where a sample has been broken into sub-samples; (male/females, juniors/seniors, local administrators, security providers, international and local NGOs senior management and general citizens, etc., a minimum sample size of 30 for each category is necessary.[28]

Sample size calculation: The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and the population fell under N 100,000 (Appendix 1). So, the sample size was supposed to be 384 but the researcher used 400 respondents, an increase of 4.2%. It is argued that, the statistical power is improved by increasing the sample size.[27]

Research Tools: The study used both quantitative (questionnaires to be completed by the security providers and general citizens), qualitative (one-on-one interviews with the top management members from local administrators, security providers, international and local NGOs). Questionnaires had both 'closed-ended' questions (those having scales of rating or a different list of answers to pick amongst) and 'open-ended' questions (where the respondents had a chance to write what they feel is the correct response). Research questions guided the construction of the questionnaire so that all areas are addressed. The questionnaires were administered with the help of research assistants. Respondents tend to be more truthful while answering to the

questionnaires over controversial issues due to the anonymity of the tool. Participants were allowed to complete the questionnaires themselves.

Section 1 focused on the demography information of the respondent which informed the researcher whether the respondent is meets the criteria for the study.

Section 2 focused on the study question which is mass killings on personal security.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the chosen senior management top management members from local administrators, security providers, international and local NGOs. Interviews are a very reliable data collection instrument because they minimize the problem of the questions not answered and give room for further probing to expound and clarify on any response from the respondent.

Statistical analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, pinpointing, examining and recording patterns. It was then be presented in a report of key findings under each main theme or category, using appropriate verbatim quotes to illustrate those findings.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, average and mean, and pie charts. The researcher fed in information in a statistical analysis tool especially ANOVA, to find out the impact of mass killings on personal security. The data from both qualitative and quantitative analysis, was triangulated to see the impact of mass killings on personal security.

There was the ethical consideration where the researcher informed all participants of their voluntary participation and confidentiality, and relevant authorization from the government agencies.

IV. Result

Studies have shown that there are pivotal combinations of influences playing together to determine the occurrence of mass killings, from autocratic nature of the state to ideology and political upheavals.[29] These influences have been credited to affect the levels of personal security. Therefore, it was important to examine these influences upon mass killings that affect the levels of personal security.

Respondents were asked to state the influences upon mass killings that affect the levels of personal security in the spaces provided. The results are displayed in table 1 below.

Table no 1: Influences Upon Mass Killings That Affect the Levels of Personal Security in the Ituri region of Democratic Republic of the Congo (2008–2022).
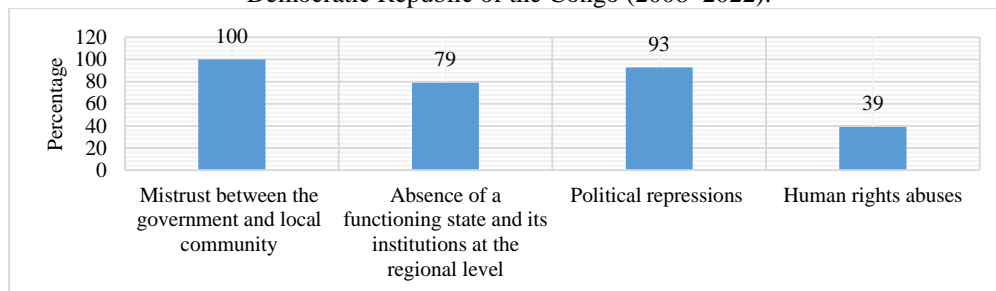
Mistrust between the government and local community was the most mentioned by 374 respondents which was 100%. Political repressions were mentioned by 348 respondents, which is 93% and came in second. Absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level was third with mention by 296 respondents (79.1%). Lastly was Human rights abuses that was identified by 146 (39%) of the respondents. These are discussed in the subsections below.

a. *Mistrust between the government and local community*

Mistrust between the government and local community was the most identified influence upon mass killings for it to impact on personal security with all the 374 (100%) respondents acknowledging it helped encourages or advances killings thereby undermining personal security. This is an indication that, the way mass killings are handled, impacts on personal security. Bad handling leads to problems and affect negatively the political security. A respondent explained...

> *"We have seen security personnel whom we know, coming with strangers and taking away our fellow village mates who are later found killed. Despite giving that information and cooperating with the regional security agencies, nothing happens to the security agents whom we had identified"* (RESP6/2023)

It can be deduced that the visible presence of the state security personnel doe not give a feeling of protection to the citizens. The very visible presence of state security personnel enhances the feeling of insecurity. There are experiences of gender-selective killing and forced migration illustrative of a socially destructive processes to eradicate people in an area. Men are socially constructed as dangerous based on widespread gendered assumptions. This resonates with Fontaine, *et al* who argued that, mistrust and negative perceptions between officers and residents, demonstrates a level of ambivalence that is not conducive to public safety.[30]

In particular, the government forces and militias conduct indiscriminate attacks, including killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement, throughout Ituri region. These acts are conducted on a widespread and systematic basis, and therefore may amount to crimes against humanity. The extensive destruction and displacement have resulted in a loss of livelihood and means of survival for countless women, men and children. In addition to the large-scale attacks, many people have been arrested and detained, and many have been held incommunicado for prolonged periods and tortured.

The policy of attacking, killing and forcibly displacing members of some region and tribes would demonstrate a specific intent to annihilate, in whole or in part, a group distinguished on ethnic or regional grounds. Just about, it would seem that those who plan and organize attacks on villages, pursue the intent to drive the victims from their homes, primarily for purposes of counter-insurgency warfare.

Attacks deliberately targeting civilians, murder, and rape constitute war crimes and acts such as murder and rape may also amount to crimes against humanity, both of which are among the most serious crimes under international law. The systematic nature of the destruction and pillage, and the brutality of the attacks on civilians, strongly suggests that attacks are intended to displace the populations from their villages and settlements. After armed men pillaged cattle and burned homes and food stocks, women had little choice but to leave their home areas in order to survive and to feed and shelter their families.

The widespread occurrence of rape and gruesome killings in public, including the fighters pursuing civilians into the areas where they are hiding, also suggests that the forces are trying to spread fear in the communities and push them away from villages. This resonates with Allard *et al.* mistrust represents a strategy, a skill or an art, that is designed to help deal with a risky or uncertain reality from the community.[31] Hence the state security agencies tend seek to minimize risk and danger by anticipating and by searching for information.

b. *Political repressions*

Political repressions, was the second most identified influence upon mass killings for it to impact on personal security, with 348 (93%) respondents. Political repression, would refer to a systematic violation of the civil liberties and human rights of particular groups and/or individuals. And such would be issues like, particular types of expression and respect for people's personal integrity. A respondent had this to say…

> *"Our people are always picked by the secret police and they get tortured for being against the government policies. We are also denied political rights such as participating in political activities like rallies, demonstrations and electing our desired representatives"* (RESP7/2023)

Tortures are any act through which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is deliberately inflicted on a person for the purposes of obtaining from them information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed, intimidating him or other persons, or as a source of pleasure to the torturer. The government forces and militias have used methods of torture such as beatings, especially in sensitive areas of the body; hanging prisoners upside down; threats against the families of prisoners; deprivation of food and sleep for days and singeing with cigarettes. And the villagers have reported instances of death under torture are known. For many victims surviving the torture, they confessed that it was not necessarily a blessing. This is because, they are left physically maimed or psychologically shattered, and they are unable to lead a normal life. And there are informed cases of deafness, loss of speech and brain damage among the injuries that have been sustained. Similarly, Schulz has argued that, the torture, beatings and degrading acts are intended to humiliate a population because it annihilates a person's most essential characteristic: their personality.[32]

In the Ituri region, the majority of the torture victims had no security information about violent opposition groups to give away. They are tortured either to force confessions from them or as an acute message not to oppose the government or the militia. Torture has become a common instrument of groups policy practiced against almost anyone that ruling cliques see as a threat to their authority. The Ituri region is a place where torture is still most systematically practiced by the government forces and militias. Just using torture once, almost invariably leads to its institutionalization and will erode the moral and legal principles that stand against a form of violence that could affect all of society. For the state, torture subverts a basic tenet of just punishment, a prescribed penalty for a proven offence. It destroys any amount of trust between citizens and rulers.

c. *Absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level*

Absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level was third with mention by 296 respondents (79.1%). Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens. They therefore fail organize and channel the interests of their people, in furtherance of national goals and values. They fail champion the local or particular concerns of their citizens, and the dynamism of their own internal economic, political, and social realities. One of the general public participants narrated…

> *"We do not feel the concern of the government in our area. We have been left to ensure our own security from militias and other criminals. Even the basic amenities like hospitals and schools, are not available for us. Even the roads as you can see, are not there. It is all just earth roads which become impassable when it rains. We are depending on ourselves for our survival, as the government is not existing for us"* (RESP8/2023)

It is acknowledged that, weak states unquestionably do not control their territories and they fail to deliver a full range of high-quality political goods to their citizens. In Ituri region, the state is not be able to undertake prime functions providing political good of security. Consequently, the state is not able to prevent cross-border invasions and infiltrations, and any loss of territory; not able to eliminate domestic threats to nor prevent attacks upon the national order and social structure; not able to prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security; and unable to help citizens to resolve their disputes with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion.

From the verbatim, there are other political goods that would typically be supplied by the state and expected by their citizenries but missing in the Ituri region. Such that are not being provided include medical and health care, schools and educational instruction which are the knowledge good, means of transportation like roads, railways and other physical infrastructures for communications infrastructures and money and banking system, usually controlled over by a central bank.

Together, this bundle of political goods, establishes a set of criteria according to which modern nation-states may be judged strong, weak, or failed. Hence in the Ituri region, it can be concluded that, there is an absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level.

In Ituri region, there is an underlaying ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal tensions that have not yet, or not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent. There are disagreements, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions. According to Matthew absence of a functioning state faces two or more insurgencies, varieties of civil unrest, different degrees of communal discontent, and a plethora of dissent directed at the state and at groups within the state.[33]

In Ituri region due to the absence of a functioning state and its institutions, government troops battle armed revolts led by one or more rivals. Occasionally, the official authorities face two or more insurgencies, varieties of civil unrest, different degrees of communal discontent, and an excess of dissent directed at the state and at groups within the state. These have resulted in civil wars that characterize the region usually stemming from ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal enmity. The fear of the other that drives so much ethnic conflict stimulating and fueling hostilities between regimes and subordinate and less favored groups. Avarice also propels that antagonism, especially when greed is magnified by dreams of loot from discoveries of new, contested, sources of resource wealth, like diamond fields, other minerals, or timber.

d. *Human rights abuses*

Lastly was Human rights abuses that was identified by 146 (39%) of the respondents. Every human being should not be denied full enjoyment of their human rights and that nobody should suffer violations of those rights. The prevention of human rights violations is therefore a key part of a states' effort to protect and promote human rights for all. States should therefore devise ways and means to remove the current obstacles and meet challenges to the full realization of all human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations resulting therefrom throughout the Ituri region. One of the senior managers of a local NGO interviewed explained...

> *"The government officials across the region, have deployed various tactics to silence peaceful dissents. Crackdowns on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly has intensified as authorities used national security or Covid-19 as a pretext to ban, suppress or violently disperse protests. Human rights defenders, activists, journalists and opposition members have faced intimidation and harassment, including arrests, detention, prosecution and killings as the government officials tighten their grip on the rights to freedom of expression and association"* (RESP9/2023)

The right of people to assemble in large numbers and in public places, although one of the most basic of human rights, has frequently and systematically been denied in many parts of Ituri region. Citizens are not

free to hold an opinion, to express it, or to organize to pressure their demands, thereby losing their humanity for example their capacity to make choices and pursue them. In the Ituri region, it was found that security forces systematically used excessive force to disperse demonstrations. Incidents of excessive use of force are also widespread and followed a common pattern. The high incidence of excessive force and the level of harm inflicted on demonstrators instilled fear and deterred people from demonstrating.

Accounts gathered by the researcher revealed that security forces breached domestic and international standards by using force in a non-progressive manner, and in violation of the principles of necessity and proportionality. Whenever protests begin, security forces resort to disproportionate use of tear gas grenades against demonstrators without previously exhausting other non-violent measures, such as dialogue or the use of barriers to separate crowds. Information gathered by the researcher and publicly available material showed that antiriot armored vehicles used by the DRC security apparatus regularly discharged dozens of tear gas grenades simultaneously. Water cannons were also used, sometimes knocking demonstrators over and hitting them on the head.

Various forms of political oppression have been enacted as well. Individuals who do not share their political views with the government, are arbitrarily imprisoned, and either never brought to trial or subjected to grossly unfair trial procedures. Many groups of people are denied the right to vote or excluded from all forms of political participation. And as such, measures restricting people's freedom of movement have been enforced. These include forcible relocations, mass expulsions, and denials of the right to return to one's home.

Detentions which are the involuntarily confinement of a person to a limited physical space, are being practiced. Citizens have been confined to police and prison cells. The people are mostly detained as a punishment for, or to deny, the exercise of human rights such as expressing political opinions or peacefully demonstrating. The researcher identified a number of demonstrations and the number of deaths and detentions during demonstrations, proving that the existence of human rights abuses was higher. And that more protests had a higher number of detentions and deaths of protestors.

The DRC security forces, including intelligence services, have detained protestors and people identified as political opponents in great numbers. The community considers these detentions arbitrary because of repeated serious due process violations and because they occurred in response to the exercise of human rights, in particular freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. The researcher documented that security forces often arrested people without a court order and would later claim they had been caught *in flagrante delicto* (in the act of wrongdoing). The researcher interviewed people who had been arrested on their way to demonstrations, others that were detained while they were peacefully demonstrating and others that were apprehended hours after they had taken part in a demonstration. A Further, the researcher documented cases of people who had been arrested even though they were not demonstrating, just because they were perceived to support the opposition.

Generally, detainees were not informed of the reasons for their arrest and were only informed of the charges against them at the time of their presentation before the judge. They were charged with common crimes, such as disturbance of public order and assault against security officers, but also terrorism-related crimes and military offences. But Clapham had a different opinion on the value of detentions in armed conflicts. The author suggests that, if we want the government forces and militias to respect the dignity of their captives and the due process rights of those they try, we will have to refrain from calling all detention by armed groups illegal.[34] To hammer the idea home, one can argue that if all detention by armed groups is illegal then there will be no incentive to detain rather than kill their captives.

Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) moderates human rights abuses. The article was established to give the Union the right to intervene in a member state to prevent grave violations of human rights. The article states that, in principle, the AU needs authorization in accordance with article 53 of the Charter of the UN. After further, the article recognizes that, under certain circumstances, the AU could implement such intervention without prior authorization by the Council. Therefore, governments have to ensure that they are not maliciously violating its citizens human rights.

V. Discussion

Mistrust between the government and local community, political repressions, absence of a functioning state and its institutions at the regional level and lastly human rights abuses, were identified as the influences upon mass killings that affect the levels of personal security in the Ituri region of Democratic Republic of Congo (2008–2022).

The systematic killings though motivated by intrigues of motives performs a significant role that decreases citizens capacity in utilizing their personal security as well as contributes to endangerment of citizens. Therefore, the state should be considered the central security provider, and whose stability and legitimacy are the main sources of protection for its citizens, from any kind of threats.

VI. Conclusion

The influences upon mass killings that impact on personal security in the Ituri region of Democratic Republic of the Congo (2008–2022) brings to fore the huge responsibility the state is endowed with. Consequently, there should be favorable mechanisms in DRC which can oversee the continuous curtailing of systematic killings. The favorable mechanisms can only be realized through the consultation of the stakeholders: the government, the militias, the various non-governmental organizations, and the citizens.

There should be a study to evaluate systematic killings on personal security exclusively from the perspective of the foreigners in DRC. These would include the peacekeepers, diplomats and other visitors who have resided longer in DRC. It would be of interest to know what the non-citizens perceive of the situation in their host country.

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