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**MILITARY INTERVENTIONS AND PEACE-MAKING IN NORTH
KIVU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, 2013–2023**

John Loturomoe Akwam and Dr. Caroline Wandiri Mwea, PhD





Military Interventions and Peace-Making in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2013–2023

John Loturomoe Akwam

Researcher, Kenyatta University

Dr. Caroline Wandiri Mwea, PhD

Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Conflict and Strategic Studies, Kenyatta University

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Abstract:

Purpose of the Study: This study examined the relationship between military interventions and peace-making outcomes in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, from 2013 to 2023. It sought to assess the effectiveness of military operations in restoring peace, reducing armed conflict, rebuilding governance structures, and promoting long-term stability within the conflict-affected province.

Methodology: The study employed an exploratory research design guided by Peacebuilding Theory and Just War Theory. Primary and secondary data were collected from 97 respondents, including military personnel, civil society representatives, government officials, academics, security experts, and local residents. Descriptive

statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze the collected data.

Findings: The findings revealed that coordinated tactical operations, civil-military cooperation, and joint MONUSCO–FARDC missions were the major military approaches used in North Kivu. These interventions contributed to improved public trust, restoration of governance structures, and reduction of armed group activities in some regions. However, the effectiveness of the interventions was undermined by logistical limitations, poor coordination, human rights violations, and mistrust among local communities. The study further established that peacebuilding initiatives produced more sustainable outcomes when military efforts were integrated with economic reintegration programs, political dialogue, and community participation.

Conclusion: The study concludes that sustainable peace in North Kivu cannot rely solely on military interventions. Effective peace-making requires integrated strategies combining security operations with political solutions, economic recovery, community engagement, and civilian-led governance. Strengthening coordination among stakeholders is essential for achieving long-term peace and stability in the region.

Keywords: *Military Intervention; Peacebuilding; North Kivu; MONUSCO; FARDC; DDR; Democratic Republic of Congo*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Peace-making constitutes an essential component of international security and conflict management because it facilitates conflict resolution, promotes political stability, safeguards civilian populations, and establishes conditions necessary for sustainable peace and development. Contemporary peace-making approaches have progressively shifted from traditional military-centered responses toward multidimensional strategies integrating diplomatic initiatives, political negotiations, institutional reforms, humanitarian interventions, and community participation. The growing complexity of armed conflicts has demonstrated that achieving sustainable peace requires interventions that address both immediate security concerns and the structural causes of violence. Autesserre (2021) observed that peace initiatives are more effective when local actors and institutions actively participate in peace processes, while Davis and van der Lijn (2021) emphasized that contemporary peace operations increasingly integrate security measures with political and developmental interventions to achieve long-term peace outcomes.

From a global perspective, Afghanistan provides a significant example within Asia regarding the relationship between military intervention and peace-making efforts. Between 2001 and 2021, the country experienced extensive military interventions involving the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and international peace support operations aimed at promoting security and facilitating state-building processes. These interventions sought to establish peace through security stabilization measures, reconstruction initiatives, and institutional strengthening programs. Despite substantial military and financial commitments, sustainable peace outcomes remained difficult to achieve because of persistent insurgencies, political instability, governance weaknesses, and unresolved social tensions. Cruz and van der Lijn (2021) noted that while military interventions contributed to short-term security improvements, sustainable peace remained elusive because underlying drivers of conflict were insufficiently addressed. Similarly, Autesserre (2021) argued that durable peace requires integrating military efforts with local political and social realities.

Within Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina provides another important example of the interaction between military intervention and peace-making. Following the violent ethnic conflicts experienced during the Balkan wars, international peace operations involving NATO and United Nations missions were deployed to restore stability and facilitate peace processes. These interventions contributed significantly toward ending large-scale violence and establishing an environment conducive to peace-building activities such as political reconstruction, institutional reforms, and reconciliation programs. However, the sustainability of peace depended not solely on military stabilization but also on governance reforms and social reintegration efforts. Howard (2021) noted that while military interventions may create



conditions necessary for peace-building, long-term peace outcomes require broader political and institutional transformations.

From an African perspective, the Central African Republic (CAR) presents a relevant case in understanding the relationship between military intervention and peace-making. The country has experienced prolonged political instability, armed insurgencies, communal violence, and humanitarian crises that have significantly undermined peace and security. International and regional actors, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), have undertaken military and peace support interventions aimed at restoring security and facilitating peace processes. Although these interventions have contributed to reducing violence in certain areas and enhancing civilian protection, persistent insecurity has continued to affect peace-making efforts. Ruggeri et al. (2021) asserted that military interventions in conflict-affected environments often generate temporary security improvements but require complementary governance and reconciliation initiatives to establish sustainable peace outcomes.

Within the local context, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced prolonged armed conflicts associated with weak governance structures, political instability, ethnic tensions, and competition over natural resources. Eastern DRC has remained particularly vulnerable because of the presence of numerous local and foreign armed groups operating within the region. Among the provinces affected by persistent conflict, North Kivu has emerged as one of the most unstable areas within the country. Between 2013 and 2023, various peace-making initiatives were undertaken to reduce violence, protect civilians, facilitate disarmament processes, and strengthen social cohesion among affected communities. The defeat of the M23 movement in 2013 initially generated optimism regarding improved security and sustainable peace. However, the re-emergence of M23 activities and increased operations by other armed groups between 2021 and 2023 significantly undermined earlier peace gains and intensified humanitarian challenges within the province.

Military interventions involving the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), and regional military coalitions increasingly became central mechanisms supporting peace-making initiatives within North Kivu. These interventions involved coordinated military operations, civilian protection programs, and stabilization efforts intended to suppress armed group activities and establish conditions favorable for peace-building processes. Nevertheless, reports continued to indicate recurring violence, displacement of populations, and humanitarian crises within the province despite ongoing interventions (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2023; United Nations Security Council, 2023). The continued occurrence of insecurity and instability in North Kivu raises important



questions regarding the effectiveness of military interventions in supporting peace-making processes.

The experiences of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo collectively demonstrate that although military interventions may facilitate security stabilization and support peace-making efforts, sustainable peace outcomes often require broader political, social, and institutional interventions. Consequently, examining military interventions and peace-making in North Kivu between 2013 and 2023 is necessary to determine the extent to which military interventions contributed toward peace-making outcomes within the region.

Statement of the Problem

Peace-making in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, has remained a major challenge despite extensive interventions undertaken by national, regional, and international actors between 2013 and 2023. Effective peace-making is expected to reduce violence, improve civilian protection, facilitate social cohesion, support institutional recovery, and establish long-term peace and stability. However, North Kivu has continued experiencing armed conflict, forced displacement, humanitarian crises, and persistent insecurity despite numerous initiatives intended to restore peace and stability. Reports from the United Nations indicate continued expansion of armed group activities and recurring territorial conflicts within North Kivu, demonstrating that sustainable peace outcomes have remained difficult to achieve (United Nations Security Council, 2023).

Military interventions involving MONUSCO, FARDC, and regional military coalitions were introduced to create conditions necessary for peace-making through civilian protection, suppression of armed groups, and restoration of security. In addition, these interventions incorporated peace-support initiatives such as community dialogue, reconciliation efforts, and reintegration programs aimed at supporting sustainable peace processes (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2023). Despite these interventions, recurring cycles of violence and insecurity continue to affect communities within North Kivu, suggesting that the intended peace-making outcomes have not been fully realized.

Existing studies have predominantly focused on military operations, armed conflicts, and regional security dynamics while placing relatively less emphasis on peace-making as the principal outcome variable. Consequently, there remains inadequate empirical evidence regarding the extent to which military interventions have contributed toward peace-making outcomes in North Kivu between 2013 and 2023. Therefore, this study sought to examine military interventions and peace-making in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, in order to determine whether military interventions significantly influenced peace-making outcomes during the study period.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Military Approaches to Peace-Making in Conflict Zones

Military interventions in conflict zones have evolved from conventional force projection toward multi-dimensional operations that combine combat, civilian protection, and stabilisation functions. Bellamy and Williams (2015) argue that contemporary peacekeeping demands not only military proficiency but also adaptive civil-military cooperation, underscoring the inadequacy of purely kinetic approaches. In the DRC context, Baaz and Verweijen (2013) demonstrated that the flawed integration of rebel factions into the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) particularly the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) perpetuated conflict dynamics by preserving parallel command structures and enabling continued predatory behaviour.

Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes have attracted significant scholarly attention as instruments for translating military gains into durable peace. Robinson (2012) assessed FARDC reconstruction between 2003 and 2009, identifying the challenges of command unification, discipline, and accountability as central to programme failure. These findings resonate with broader evidence from post-conflict settings showing that DDR success depends critically on economic alternatives and community acceptance rather than disarmament alone (Khalfan, 2020). The economic dimensions of conflict are equally salient in North Kivu, where Samset (2002) documented how mineral revenues particularly from the artisanal diamond and coltan trade generate durable incentives for armed group formation and persistence.

Effectiveness of International Peacekeeping in the DRC

Scholarly assessments of MONUSCO's effectiveness reveal a persistent tension between mandate ambition and operational capacity. Clark (2011) characterised MONUSCO's mandate as inherently contradictory, requiring simultaneous support for the Congolese state and protection of civilians from that same state's armed forces. Murphy (2016) found that the mission's civilian protection mandate was repeatedly undermined by mobility constraints, intelligence deficits, and reluctance to engage armed groups proactively. Giray (2022) situated these operational failures within a broader structural problem: the divergent national interests of troop-contributing countries frequently produced a lowest-common-denominator approach that prioritised force protection over mandate implementation.

Comparative peacekeeping scholarship offers instructive benchmarks. Nomikos (2022) presented empirical evidence from Mali that sustained peacekeeping presence positively influenced intergroup cooperation and reduced conflict incidence, but contingent on consistent deployment and active community engagement. Williams et al. (2018), evaluating the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), found that mission effectiveness was maximised when operational planning integrated political processes, local governance actors,



and civilian recovery programmes a model with direct implications for MONUSCO's operating framework in North Kivu.

Challenges to Successful Peace-Making

The challenges confronting military-led peace processes in North Kivu are multi-layered and interconnected. Halabo (2020) identified the geopolitics of the Great Lakes Region — including cross-border ethnic networks, competing Rwandan and Ugandan strategic interests, and the DRC state's institutional fragility as structural barriers to sustainable peacebuilding. Vlassenroot and Verweijen (2017) theorised the phenomenon of 'militarised politics' in the DRC, arguing that armed groups have become embedded in the political economy to such a degree that purely military responses are structurally insufficient to resolve the conflict.

Regional geopolitical entanglement further complicates intervention. Maina (2007) documented how neighbouring states have instrumentalised armed groups in North Kivu to pursue proxy security and economic objectives, while Ngoma (2004) showed that SADC member states brought divergent and sometimes contradictory agendas to their DRC intervention. Sun and Zoubir (2018) and Gounden (2017) highlight the broader challenge of achieving neutral mediation in contexts where international actors carry their own strategic interests, undermining the legitimacy and effectiveness of peace processes.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Peacebuilding Theory and Just War Theory.

Peacebuilding Theory, developed principally by Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach, distinguishes between negative peace the mere cessation of hostilities and positive peace, which requires the resolution of structural violence rooted in socioeconomic injustice, political marginalisation, and institutional weakness (Galtung, 1996). Lederach's (1997) concept of transformational peacebuilding posits that lasting peace demands multi-level engagement encompassing top-level political negotiation, mid-level institutional reform, and grassroots community reconciliation. In North Kivu where conflicts are embedded in ethnic, economic, and governance structures this framework directs attention to whether military interventions have addressed root causes or merely suppressed symptoms. Lederach's insistence on local ownership also provides a lens for evaluating whether international military actors empowered or marginalised indigenous peace processes.

Just War Theory, tracing from Augustine and Aquinas through contemporary formulations by Michael Walzer (2000), establishes normative criteria for the legitimate use of force, including just cause, right intention, proportionality, discrimination between combatants and civilians, and reasonable prospect of success. Applied to North Kivu, this theory provides an ethical framework for assessing whether the force used by MONUSCO, the FIB, and FARDC met these criteria, and whether human rights violations documented during the study period



compromised the moral legitimacy of the interventions. Together, both theories frame the study's central inquiry: under what conditions does military force contribute to rather than undermine durable peace?

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an exploratory research design, appropriate for generating nuanced understanding of a complex and under-studied phenomenon (Babbie, 2016). The research locale was North Kivu province, with primary data collected in Goma, the provincial capital, owing to its role as the operational hub for military, humanitarian, and diplomatic actors in the region.

A target population of 100 informants was selected using purposive and snowball sampling, chosen for their relevance and knowledge pertaining to military intervention and peace-making in North Kivu. The sample comprised military personnel ($n = 25$), community leaders ($n = 30$), civilians ($n = 22$), NGO workers ($n = 11$), and government officials ($n = 9$). Of 100 questionnaires distributed, 97 were returned and found suitable for analysis, yielding a response rate of 97%, which exceeds the 70% threshold recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008). Data were also gathered through key informant interviews (KIIs) with 15 specialists including MONUSCO officers, senior FARDC commanders, and civil society leaders.

Research instruments comprised structured questionnaires with five-point Likert-scale items and semi-structured KII guides. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients: military approaches ($\alpha = 0.824$), effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.847$), and challenges ($\alpha = 0.836$), all exceeding the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Content and construct validity were established through expert review by academic supervisors and a pilot study conducted in a comparable conflict-affected locality. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) in SPSS. Qualitative data from KIIs were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis, with emergent themes triangulated against quantitative findings and secondary sources.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Approaches Employed by Military Interventions

The study sought to examine the approaches employed by military intervention in peace-making in North Kivu DRC Between 2013 and 2023. The results are as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Approaches Employed by Military

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Military interventions in North Kivu have consistently applied coordinated tactical operations targeting armed rebel groups over the years.	97	4.13	1.017
Peace negotiations supported by military have integrated local leaders and civilian groups in meaningful dialogue processes.	97	3.73	.860
Civil-military cooperation approaches have included significant community infrastructure support such as schools, clinics, and roads.	97	4.09	1.042
Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs were systematically implemented under military oversight with structured follow-up.	97	3.78	.819
Military-led border security initiatives have effectively curbed illegal arms and rebel movements across international boundaries.	97	3.80	.975
Joint operations between MONUSCO and FARDC were planned with clarity and local coordination to maximize peace impact.	97	3.82	1.000
Early warning systems were established and utilized effectively by military units to prevent outbreaks of new violence.	97	3.77	1.026
Valid N (listwise)	97		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Respondents identified coordinated tactical operations targeting rebel groups as the most prominent approach ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.017$), indicating strong consensus on the centrality of intelligence-driven offensive operations in MONUSCO and FARDC's peace strategy. A senior MONUSCO officer described the evolution from isolated, reactive strikes to comprehensive, intelligence-led campaigns that systematically targeted rebel strongholds while working to minimise civilian harm a progression consistent with the broader shift in UN peacekeeping doctrine following the 2008 Capstone Doctrine and the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (UNSC, 2013).

Civil-military cooperation through community infrastructure development was the second most endorsed approach ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.042$). Civil society respondents cited the reconstruction of the Rutshuru–Goma road in 2019 as a tangible example of how infrastructure projects served simultaneously as humanitarian deliverables and strategic stabilisation tools, corroborating Verweijen's (2020) argument that positive civil-military relations are critical to sustaining operational legitimacy. Joint MONUSCO–FARDC operations ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.000$) were noted as increasingly inclusive of local administration



and community representatives in planning, though regional variation in implementation produced moderate rather than strong consensus.

DDR programmes ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.819$) received positive but qualified endorsement. A DDR coordinator noted that the most effective programmes moved beyond weapons collection to provide vocational training and startup capital, producing notably low recidivism in Masisi territory. Community leaders, however, cautioned that DDR success depended heavily on community acceptance and local ownership — where programmes were externally imposed, stigma and resistance remained high, echoing Robinson's (2012) findings on FARDC reconstruction. Early warning systems ($M = 3.77$) and peace negotiations ($M = 3.73$) received the lowest ratings, reflecting persistent gaps in communication infrastructure and the difficulty of building inclusive, sustained dialogue processes in fragmented political environments.

Effectiveness of Military Interventions

The study sought to assess the effectiveness of military intervention on peacebuilding in North Kivu, DRC Between 2013 and 2023. The results are as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Military Intervention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Military interventions have significantly contributed to restoring law, order, and physical security in volatile communities of North Kivu.	97	3.73	1.150
Civilians living under military-secured zones experienced improved safety and protection from armed group aggression over time.	97	3.67	1.134
Military engagement resulted in measurable reductions in inter-communal conflicts, ethnic clashes, and territorial violence across regions.	97	3.54	1.051
Lasting peace in areas previously occupied by rebel groups is directly linked to persistent military stabilization efforts.	97	3.76	1.008
Military presence has led to improved public trust and cooperation between civilians and government institutions.	97	4.00	.913
Local governance structures have been strengthened due to peace stabilization by military peacekeeping forces.	97	3.88	.949
Peace gains achieved through military actions have shown sustainability beyond the immediate post-conflict intervention period.	97	3.72	.997
Valid N (listwise)	97		

Source: Field Data (2025)



The dimension of effectiveness on which respondents expressed strongest agreement was the improvement of public trust and civil-military cooperation ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.913$). This 'trust dividend' extended beyond security to other state functions, particularly in areas where sustained military presence accompanied governance reconstruction. A local administrator from Walikale described a sequential recovery pattern: the clearing of armed groups by coordinated operations in 2018 was followed by the restoration of tax collection, administrative services, and local governance a pattern consistent with Autesserre's (2021) finding that civilian trust in governance structures improves when military stabilisation is accompanied by visible community engagement.

Governance strengthening ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.949$) and lasting peace in formerly rebel-held areas ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.008$) were also positively assessed, though with variation by territory. Security analysts noted that sustainability was greatest where military operations were coupled with political solutions addressing underlying grievances, and lowest where they merely suppressed violence without structural follow-through. This finding affirms Lederach's (1997) contention that military stabilisation is a necessary but insufficient condition for positive peace. The weakest effectiveness indicator was the reduction of inter-communal conflict, ethnic clashes, and territorial violence ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.051$), highlighting the limits of military force in addressing deeply rooted identity-based conflicts a limitation widely documented in the Great Lakes Region literature (Halabo, 2020; Prunier, 2019).

Challenges of Military Interventions

The study sought to investigate the challenges of military intervention on successful peace-building in North Kivu DRC Between 2013 and 2023. The results are as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Challenges of Military Intervention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Military operations in North Kivu have often been hindered by inadequate logistics, mobility constraints, and supply chain delays.	97	3.90	1.036
Allegations of human rights abuses by troops have weakened local support for military-driven peace efforts in some areas.	97	3.90	.860
Poor coordination between international peacekeeping forces and national army units has undermined effective peace-building interventions.	97	3.89	1.050
Local communities' express mistrust toward foreign troops due to cultural misunderstandings and historical grievances.	97	3.84	.932
Political interference and competing national interests have disrupted neutral and effective military peace enforcement initiatives.	97	3.85	.961

Intelligence gaps and slow response mechanisms have often allowed rebel groups to regroup and counter military advances.	97	3.70	.970
Inadequate financial and human resources have limited the scope, reach, and consistency of military peace-building activities.	97	3.90	.884
Valid N (listwise)	97		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Three challenges scored equally at the top: inadequate logistics and supply chain delays ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.036$), allegations of human rights abuses ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.860$), and inadequate financial and human resources ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.884$). FARDC commanders described units deployed to critical conflict zones operating without sufficient ammunition, communication equipment, or basic supplies vulnerabilities that armed groups actively exploited, particularly during the rainy season when terrain further constrained mobility. These operational deficiencies reflect the systemic gap between peacekeeping mandates and resource allocation that Gorur and Das (2016) identified as a structural weakness of MONUSCO.

Human rights concerns were cited as particularly damaging to community cooperation. Human rights observers noted that each verified or alleged violation whether by FARDC or international forces significantly eroded public confidence and reinforced narratives that military actors were part of the problem rather than the solution. This finding aligns with Berdal's (1994) observation that legitimacy deficits fundamentally undermine peacekeeping effectiveness, and with Murphy's (2016) documentation of civilian protection failures in the DRC. Poor MONUSCO–FARDC coordination ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.050$) was characterised by analysts as an operational disconnect producing missed opportunities, with information-sharing failures allowing armed group leaders to evade neutralisation. Intelligence gaps and slow response ($M = 3.70$) represented the least acute challenge, though still significant in enabling armed group reconstitution following military operations.

Peacebuilding Outcomes

The study sought to identify the challenges facing peacebuilding in North Kivu between 2013 and 2023. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Peacebuilding Outcomes in North Kivu (2013–2023)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Armed group activities have significantly decreased, and community members report fewer incidents of conflict and insecurity.	97	3.79	.957
Peacebuilding initiatives have fostered reconciliation among communities previously divided by ethnic or political violence.	97	3.67	.997



Local communities have demonstrated increased resilience and capacity to manage conflicts through dialogue and mediation.	97	3.46	.990
Community members have actively participated in peace forums and decision-making processes related to post-conflict recovery.	97	3.68	1.169
Reintegration of former combatants has been successful in promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing recurrence of violence.	97	3.85	1.064
Public institutions such as schools, health centers, and local governance offices have regained stability and functionality.	97	3.99	.984
The overall peace situation in North Kivu has remained stable for an extended period without major relapse into violence.	97	4.05	.972
Valid N (listwise)	97		

Source: Field Data (2025)

The most strongly endorsed outcome was overall peace stability in North Kivu over an extended period without major relapse into large-scale violence ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.972$), followed by the recovery of public institutions schools, health centres, and local governance offices ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.984$). Education coordinators reported a 150% increase in school enrolment in previously conflict-affected zones since 2015, with particular gains in territories like Masisi and Walikale. These institutional recovery indicators align with what governance specialists described as a critical transition from military-administered order to civilian-led governance a milestone affirmed by Khalfan's (2020) comparative study of post-conflict stabilisation in Liberia, Mozambique, and Rwanda.

Ex-combatant reintegration outcomes were positively assessed ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.064$), especially where programmes extended beyond the standard 12-month disarmament phase to provide sustained vocational training, small business support, and community leadership pathways. Youth leaders in Goma emphasised that young people who had previously regarded armed groups as their only viable livelihood now participated in legitimate economic life, demonstrating the transformative potential of comprehensive reintegration. Community reconciliation ($M = 3.67$) and local conflict resolution capacity ($M = 3.46$) received the lowest scores, indicating that while formal violence has declined, the social and institutional infrastructure for community-level peace remains underdeveloped a finding consistent with Galtung's (1996) distinction between negative and positive peace, and highlighting the continuing centrality of the 'liberal peace' critique articulated by Turner (2012).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to examine how military interventions in North Kivu between 2013 and 2023 shaped peace-making outcomes, and what factors enabled or constrained their



effectiveness. The evidence points to a nuanced conclusion: military interventions have achieved measurable gains in reducing armed group activity, restoring public institutions, and rebuilding civilian trust, but their impact has been significantly limited by resource deficits, coordination failures, human rights concerns, and fundamentally the absence of integrated political and social strategies to address the root causes of conflict.

The evolution toward intelligence-driven tactical operations and civil-military cooperation represents genuine doctrinal progress, and the improved trust between civilians and government institutions in stabilised zones demonstrates the positive peace dividend of sustained, well-coordinated military presence. Yet the persistently low scores on community reconciliation and local conflict resolution capacity reveal a structural gap: military interventions have produced negative peace in many areas without generating the positive peace that demands socioeconomic equity, inclusive governance, and transitional justice. As Lederach (1997) and Galtung (1996) argue, and as the North Kivu evidence confirms, lasting stability requires transformational peacebuilding that empowers local actors rather than substituting for them.

For policy and practice, the study recommends a unified joint command structure for MONUSCO–FARDC operations with standardised information-sharing protocols; a dedicated logistics fund to address operational resource gaps; expanded DDR programmes with a minimum 36-month reintegration phase including economic opportunity and community mediation support; and explicit linkage between military stabilisation and political processes addressing land tenure, ethnic reconciliation, and resource governance. Ultimately, the transition from military-led to civilian-led peace architecture is not merely desirable but essential for North Kivu's long-term stability.

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