

# The DRC Membership of the East African Community

## National Security Concerns and Benefits for Tanzania

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### Abstract

On March 29, 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was admitted to the East African Community as a new member. The country's civil wars and existing terrorist groups in its Eastern parts pose a major national security concern to Tanzania and the region. The paper analyzes the existing quantitative data that describes trade volume between the DRC and the EAC with a focus on Tanzania's benefit and national security concerns of the DRC's membership. It analyzes the existing literature and Armed Conflict Location and Data (ACLED) tool to identify national security threats to Tanzania and the bloc at large. It finds, among others, that DRC's membership is likely to have a positive effect on the EAC trade, as the bloc is expected to be a cheaper source for DRC's imports compared to the rest of the world. In turn, the DRC is likely to export even more primary commodities to the region, but some EAC countries may benefit more than others in this. It also points to security dynamics.

**Keywords:** DRC, East African Community, Trade, Regional Integration, National Security, Terrorism, Conflict, Refugees.

### Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) admission to the East African Community (EAC) is a continued road map and vision for the Pan-Africanism ideology advocated by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (First President of Tanzania and Pioneer of Pan-Africanism). He championed a gradual approach to regional integration as opposed to Kwame Nkrumah's universalist approach to opting for a federation of African states. Mwalimu Nyerere upheld and lobbied for the creation of an East African Federation. This was a functionalist approach of gradual integration based on need and international cooperation in matters relating to the economy (SIHMA, 2017).

Mwalimu Nyerere was to argue that the United States of Africa could not be attained in a single step; that it was too huge a step to take all at once; and that, just as African independence had been a process, so too would African unification be a process. In this perspective, the DRC's membership in the East African Community (EAC) is not only vital for the regional bloc but also

a dream come true for one of its founding fathers, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who aspired to African regional integration. According to the Theory of Economic Integration by Balassa (1961), discusses political and ideological aspects of the integration process. Balassa's five stages of economic integration constituted a free trade area, a customs union, common market, economic union, and total economic integration. Balassa's vision of total economic integration coincides with an ultimate federation or confederation. With respect to the EAC, the bloc has currently surpassed two stages, and in 2010, the bloc launched its common market for goods, labour, and capital within the region, to create a common currency and, subsequently, a full political federation. In 2013, a protocol was signed outlining their plans to launch a monetary union within 10 years. Recently, a committee was established to start the process of drafting a regional constitution.

Regardless of the huge socio-economic potential that comes with DRC membership in the regional bloc, we cannot ignore the political instability concerns and spillover effects that come with it. According to Cambridge dictionary, spill over is defined as the situation to reach or influence a large area or spread. Such spillover effects take into account weak governance systems and poor infrastructure development in the country which has been impacted by decades of civil war that hurdle DRC from maximizing its full economic potential. Spillover effect can be linked with the Buzan and Wæver (2003) theory of Regional Security Complex that refers to the situation in which the security issues of states are inter-connected to each other in a way that is not possible to separate them reasonably. They further argue that the theory seeks to explain why states have more security interaction among neighbours than among states located in different areas (geographical proximity). In other words, adjacency causes threats to travel more easily. Therefore, the internal conflicts in the DRC have had spillover consequences in Tanzania, affecting crime rates in bordering districts as well as the environment in refugee camps in the Kigoma region. This includes impacts such as deforestation; de-vegetation; erosion; destruction, degradation, and pollution of water sources and catchment areas; illegal poaching and fishing; and overgrazing as a result of the refugee influx (Rutinwa and Kamanga, 2003).

According to OCHA (2019), the United Republic of Tanzania has hosted 84,347 refugees and asylum-seekers from the DRC, as of 31 December 2018, representing 25.8 percent of the total refugee population in the country. Congolese from South Kivu have mainly been fleeing to the United Republic of Tanzania, usually transiting through Burundi to escape attacks in their villages (UNHCR,2018). This is due to over 120 armed groups reported to exist in the eastern region of the DRC, which the government has been unable to deal with (Saddam, 2019). Moreover, DRC's public health sector is also overwhelmed by Ebola and Measles outbreaks (Saddam, 2019) which is another national security concern for Tanzania and the bloc at large. Hence, addressing these national security threats that may become even more critical with the free movement of people between the two countries is also paramount.

Consequently, Tanzania is looking forward to benefiting from the new EAC member, however, it should not overlook that DRC is also looking for mutual benefits and is working towards that. DRC's richness in natural resources such as land and minerals, supported by structural reforms undertaken by the current government, demonstrates the fact that the country is also looking for mutual benefits from its EAC partners. Hence, for Tanzania to benefit from DRC's membership, the authorities of the two countries need to work together to ensure a smooth business environment for both Tanzanians and Congolese businesses. In addition, the EAC has to help build the capacity of fragile local and central government systems in DRC to understand the regional bloc as well as influence local law reforms to fast-track regional development without leaving any member behind.

It is against this backdrop that the purpose of this paper looks into the existing quantitative data provided by the International Trade Centre's tool known as Trade Map to examine trade flows between DRC's and other members of the EAC, particularly Tanzania, to describe the possible benefits but also analyze existing literature and the Armed Conflict Location and Data (ACLED) dashboard tool to identify national security challenges to Tanzania and the regional community at large. It illuminates the situation in the DRC to better understand the national security implications and to chart a course for Tanzania and the regional bloc as a whole in terms of trade, economic, and security challenges.

### The Problem

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has recently joined the East African Community (EAC), bringing with it the immense socio-economic possibilities that can increase due to the growth of trade volume and unrestricted movement of people. While DRC's membership in the bloc has expanded the market to reach over 300 million people as well as brought in a huge natural resource base to the community, it also comes with a national security price that can be paid by other partner states, particularly Tanzania in this context. This takes into account political instability and other national security concerns such as terrorism, refugee influx, public health crises, and environmental threats that can come as spillover effects to Tanzania and the bloc at large. Moreover, the Congolese population has been subjected to rampant rape and sexual violence, major human rights violations, and great poverty as a result of poor governance and the presence of various armed groups (Center for Preventive Action, 2022). As a result of the removal of border restrictions as part of the regional economic integration process, all of these difficulties constitute a threat not only to DRC but also to neighbouring Tanzania and the bloc as a whole.

### The Theory of Economic Integration

Balassa (1961) defines economic integration, identifies its stages, discusses political and ideological aspects of the integration process, and specifies what he means by "economic welfare." Balassa's five stages of economic integration constituted a free trade area, a customs union, a common market, an economic union, and total economic integration. Balassa's vision of total economic integration coincides with an ultimate federation or confederation.

The simple meaning of integration refers to bringing parts into a whole, while in economic literature the term "economic" does not have a clear distinctive meaning. Several scholars have included social integration in the concept, others include different forms of international cooperation under this heading, and another advanced argument is that the basic existence of trade relations between independent national economies is a sign of integration. Some scholars have proposed defining economic integration as a process and interaction between states that is designed to eliminate discrimination between economic components belonging to different national states. Concerning the definition given, the theory of economic integration deals with the economic effects of integration in its various patterns and with the setbacks that are associated with disparities in national, fiscal, and other policies.

Balassa explains that the theory of economic integration can be regarded as a part of international economics, but it also enlarges the field of international trade theory by exploring the impact of a fusion of national markets on growth and examining the need for the coordination of economic policies in a union. Finally, the theory of economic integration should incorporate elements of location theory too. The integration of adjacent countries amounts to the removal of artificial barriers that obstruct continuous economic activity through national frontiers, and the ensuing

relocation of production and regional agglomerative and deglomerative tendencies cannot be adequately discussed without making use of the tools of locational analysis.

The East Africa Community is a regional economic community of eight member states, comprising Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Somalia and Uganda, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (Parliament of Kenya, 2023; EAC,2024). EAC is our area of focus and is regarded as one of the most successful economic blocs due to its advancement in the stages of economic integration as elaborated by Balassa. EAC has surpassed two stages, and in 2010, the bloc launched its common market for goods, labor, and capital within the region, to create a common currency and, subsequently, a full political federation. In 2013, a protocol was signed outlining their plans for launching a monetary union within 10 years. Recently, a committee was established to start the process of drafting a regional constitution.

On March 29, 2022, the Democratic Republic of Congo joined the East Africa Community. This will in turn facilitate more trade within the EAC. This also means that DRC will be able to enjoy and access the bloc's Customs Union and Common Market and in the near future, a monetary union and ultimately a political federation.

The following part elaborates on the trade volume and economic advantages between the EAC and DRC.

### **Trade Volume and Economic Advantages Associated with the Democratic Republic of Congo's Membership in the East African Community (EAC)**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has formally joined the East African Community (EAC) after the signing of the Treaty of the Accession of the DRC into the EAC (March 22, 2022) in Nairobi, Kenya. This brings a new chapter to the bloc as well as continued efforts to realize the promise of the EAC that includes free movement of people, goods, and services across the community that has boosted trade and strengthened people-to-people ties thereby enabling East Africans to harness the comparative strength of each member state for the benefit of all and to confront and solve problems together.

“The accession of DRC as a member state of the EAC will, even more, elevate these gains and strengthen our economic muscles and competitiveness in the continent and globally,” said the Chairperson of the Summit (Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya) after DRC formally joined the bloc (EAC, 2022). This means that the DRC will now be part and parcel of the Customs Union and Common Market, which are the signature pillars of the community and the foundation upon which social, political, trade, investment, and economic interests stand.

In the words of Kenya's Permanent Secretary EAC, Kevit Desai, “DRC's membership in the EAC is a game-changer for the bloc's trade performance given its natural resources base and a huge consumer market of nearly 90 million people, almost half the population of the EAC,” (AllAfrica, 2022). According to the International Monetary Fund (2022), DRC's Real GDP in 2022 is projected to be 6.4 percent. In addition, the World Bank (2020) estimated the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be around \$48.72 billion.

In terms of infrastructure, the country has 5 ports (Banana, Moanda, Boma, Matadi, and Ango-Ango) as opposed to the two available for EAC (Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam ports). Relatedly, a recent report by PWC (2018) shows that ports are the gateway for 80% of the volume of the worldwide merchandise trade and 70% of its value because they facilitate a faster and cheaper way of handling cargo both coming and en-route to the region. Hence, with EAC support, these

would be developed to boost the region's trade with the rest of the world while attracting FDI into the region.

Noteworthy, DRC is the world's biggest producer of cobalt, a major component in the manufacture of rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles, and Africa's main copper producer. It is also a major producer of gold, diamonds, uranium, coltan, oil, and other precious metals, making it one of the most resource-rich countries in the world (The East African, 2022). The African Business Magazine (2009) indicated that the total mineral wealth of DRC was estimated at USD 24 trillion equivalent to the GDP of Europe and the United States. These resources, coupled with appropriate transport infrastructure, can boost the EAC's industrialization agenda through reduced transactional costs for labor from lower-to higher-productivity activities (Cilliers, 2018). Hence, this would lead to economic transformation in the East African economies, which is key to achieving economy-wide productivity improvements, job creation, and sustained progress in growth and poverty reduction (WTO, 2018). Moreover, not only does DRC share borders with four of the six countries, but it also shares the EAC's official language, Kiswahili, with about 50% of the population fluent in the language (Kambale, 2004). While Swahili will simplify trade relations between DRC and other EAC partners, it may also facilitate the smooth movement of rebel or terrorist groups operating in the country who take advantage of its instability to smuggle natural resources unnoticed. Considering their similar accents to other tribes in neighboring regions in Western parts of Tanzania it might make it difficult to scrutinize them hence failing to prevent the scourge of illegal resources acquisition and smuggling which can impact DRC's economic prosperity as well as that of its neighbors who share direct trade ties with the country.

Despite the low EAC intra-regional trade accounting for 20 percent of its total trade, the bloc is considered the most successful among all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa; with the highest Regional Integration Index and intra-regional trade (African Union, 2020). Moreover, in the recent African Integration Report(2021), dubbed "Putting Free Movement of Persons at the Centre of Continental Integration," EAC scored above 75% in trade integration, the implementation of free movement of persons scored about 96%, and in monetary integration, while the report shows that the Regional Economic Communities are struggling, SADC and EAC were noted to make remarkable progress (African Union, 2021).

According to the African Development Bank report (2019), the EAC is approaching the highest stage of integration, having ratified the protocol for a monetary union as compared to other RECs such as IGAD, COMESA, and SADC. Additionally, EAC partner states have had relatively good economic growth performance over the last two decades in comparison with the world and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). On average, the EAC region grew by around 5.6 percent between 2000 and 2016 (UNCTAD, 2018). Relatedly, real GDP per capita in the region grew faster (2.6 percent) than the SSA average (2 percent) during the same period. Arguably, these advantages motivate DRC's interest in the EAC trade bloc (UNCTAD, 2018).

### **Exports from the East African Community (EAC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Mugume and Nattabi (2021) pointed out that all EAC member states are net exporters to DRC, with Rwanda and Uganda being the largest trade partners, while Burundi has the lowest export values. Notably, EAC's exports have more than doubled from USD 419 million to USD 855 million between 2010 and 2018. Relatedly, imports from DRC in the same period equally increased albeit by a lesser 28 percent.

According to the Trade Map (2019), Uganda and Tanzania were the top EAC exporters to DRC in 2010, with USD 183 million and USD 156 million, respectively. Rwanda has outperformed

both of them, with trade increasing by 120 percent to USD 337 million in 2018. Mugume and Nattabi (2021) noted that Rwanda's primary export destination is the Democratic Republic of Congo, which accounts for 75 percent of the country's exports. Burundi's export trade to DRC, on the other hand, has been shrinking in comparison to other EAC member nations, owing to an underdeveloped manufacturing sector and the aftermath of civil upheaval in the country in 2015, which could stymie commerce and production. As a result, trends in export data indicate that the DRC's accession will likely result in increased export trade flows to the EAC bloc. To put it another way, Rwanda and Uganda's trade effects and export trade to DRC are expected to be the largest among EAC countries. However, with respect to Rwanda and DRC's diplomatic frictions, if they are not resolved, the trade volume between the two countries could shrink rapidly this year.

### **Trade Volume Between Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Notably, in 2022, Tanzania exported \$329 million to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (OEC,2022). The principal exports from Tanzania to the Democratic Republic of the Congo included Magnesium Carbonate (\$56.2 million), Refined Petroleum (\$50.2 million), and Flavored Water (\$22.6 million) (OEC,2022). Over the past five years, Tanzania's exports to the Democratic Republic of the Congo have risen at an annualized rate of 17.1%, increasing from \$150 million in 2017 to \$329 million in 2022 (OEC,2022). Conversely, in 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo exported \$1.17 billion to Tanzania (OEC,2022). The primary exports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Tanzania included Refined Copper (\$1.17 billion), Documents of title (bonds, etc.) and unused stamps (\$1.16 million), and Interchangeable Tool Parts (\$911,000) (OEC,2022). In the last five years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's exports to Tanzania have risen at an annualized rate of 28.8%, increasing from \$331 million in 2017 to \$1.17 billion in 2022 (OEC,2022). The trade flow between the two neighbors highlights how such exchanges contribute to the economies of both countries. Nonetheless, if peace and security in the DRC are not established, the amount of trade between the two countries may diminish, jeopardizing the economic security of both. This acknowledges the presence of rebel groups that jeopardize the security of the DRC and its neighboring countries, notably Tanzania, alongside terrorist organizations operating within the country at large.

### **The implications of trade liberalization between the EAC and the DRC on trade**

Mugume and Nattabi (2021) highlight that the sum of trade creation, price changes, and diversion impacts is used to calculate the trade consequences of trade liberalization. While the trade creation and trade diversion effects show how free trade affects quantity, the pricing effect shows how increasing world prices enhance export value. Rwanda and Uganda will benefit the most from DRC's membership in the EAC's trade effect, with export trade estimated to expand by USD 81.2 million and USD 60.4 million, respectively. This could be because the two countries have a geographical advantage over Kenya and Tanzania, lowering the cost of doing business with the DRC. Furthermore, unlike other EAC nations, trade between Rwanda and the DRC is enabled by powerful traders' associations that benefit economies of scale, according to Cuts International (2015). On the other hand, Tanzania's exports will increase by \$50.2 million, Kenya's by \$42.5 million, and Burundi's by \$6.2 million (Cuts International, 2015). Accordingly, TanTrade (n.d) indicates that trade between Tanzania and the DRC has favored Tanzania between 2017 and 2021. Tanzania's exports were valued at USD 154.2 million annually, while its imports amount to USD 2.592 million. According to TanTrade (n.d), Tanzania's annual exports were valued at USD 154.2 million, while imports amounted to USD 2.592 million. The principal exports include of construction materials (cement, iron, and steel), tobacco, beverages, fertilizers, glass and glassware, soap, and cereals, while the primary imports include oil seeds and oleaginous fruits,

wood, cotton, printed literature, and pharmaceutical items (TanTrade, n.d.). In terms of trade creation, Rwanda's trade with DRC will expand by USD 42.6 million, representing a 13% share of current export trade, while Uganda's trade creation will equal USD 28.8 million, representing a 14% increase in exports to the DRC (Cuts International, 2015).

It is important to note that the DRC had a limited restriction on the EAC market prior to its membership in the bloc. The above statistics regarding exports from the East African Community (EAC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the implications of trade liberalization between the EAC and the DRC on trade clearly predict that there will be more trade and commerce that will be diverted to the rest of the world economies. It's worth mentioning that EAC will see a positive trade effect of USD 240.7 million, which translates to a 28 percent increase in EAC export trade with DRC. The GDP structure, particular member country trade flows, and the level of pre-FTA trade tariffs between the EAC and DRC all contribute to the extent of trade consequences of trade liberalization. Therefore, the recent addition of DRC to EAC shows bright and positive prospects towards more integration through the enlarged market as well as increased trade and commerce among the member states. In a nutshell, increasing trade flows to the EAC can also translate to an increase in trade flows between Tanzania and the DRC as far as this study is concerned, if all setbacks, including security threats, are addressed.

### Regional Security Complex Theory

This is a theory proposed for the first time by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003), which explains the regional security complex (RSC) as a group of states whose primary national security concerns are so closely intertwined together that they cannot be extracted or addressed independently of each other. The basic idea of the theory is that international security could be clustered in different geographically shaped regions. In practice, evidence shows that security issues, and consequently threats, are more likely to occur within a specific region. In a definite region, the security of every actor is interrelated with the security of other actors. Security interdependence, in general, is stronger within a region and diminishes when distance increases.

With respect to the DRC and its recent membership in the EAC bloc, it implies that the security challenges in the DRC are now part and parcel of the bloc. Therefore, they need to be addressed as a bloc to actualize the EAC dream. The DRC since the attainment of independence has been severely hampered by humanitarian, human rights, and security challenges. Massive abuses by militia groups and the military forces have been occurring frequently. This has in turn rendered millions and created a serious refugee crisis in neighboring countries, such as Tanzania. Tanzania for instance has been actively engaging in the peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) in DRC for a good number of years as well as hosting a number of refugees in the Kigoma region (North-Western Tanzania).

The recent ongoing rising tensions between Rwanda and the DRC clearly demonstrate the need for an immediate response and an end to the internal security issues posed by the militia groups in the DRC. On June 13, 2022, the M23 rebels captured the town of Bunagana, an important town for cross-border trade between the DRC and Uganda. The DRC has long allegedly accused Rwanda of supporting the M23. The accusations have surged again in recent weeks. Many of the M23 rebels are ethnic Tutsis, like Rwanda's President Paul Kagame. Rwanda has also retaliated by claiming that the DRC military forces injured several civilians in cross-border shelling. As a result, the chairman of the EAC, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, has called for the deployment of the recently formed East African Standby Force. "The East African Regional Force shall be deployed to the Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces immediately to stabilize the zone and

enforce peace in support of the DRC security forces and close coordination with MONUSCO (UN peacekeeping force),” said President Kenyatta.

Truth be told, if the ongoing security concerns are not addressed promptly, there is a possibility that the crisis could spread to neighboring countries (spillover effect). A stable DRC is a prerequisite for effective cooperation with the other EAC member states. It also has to be noted that the economic prosperity of the bloc depends highly on a secure and politically stable bloc.

The next part of the paper elaborates on the contemporary DRC issues and their national security implications for neighboring Tanzania.

## **The Democratic Republic of Congo: State of Affairs and National Security Implications for Tanzania**

### **Political climate factor**

According to the World Bank (2022), Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, the son of long-serving opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, was elected president in December 2018. In the first peaceful transfer of power in the DRC’s history, he succeeded Joseph Kabila, who had led the country for 18 years.

The World Bank (2022) further highlights that following President Félix Tshisekedi’s establishment of a new political alliance known as the “Sacred Union,” the former Prime Minister and the head of the Senate stepped down in January and February 2021. On February 15, a week after he was sworn in as Head of the African Union, President Tshisekedi appointed a new Prime Minister, Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, who had served as CEO of Gecamines, the state-owned mining company, since 2019. A new government was put in place last April to support the program of the President of the Republic and prepare for the next general elections scheduled for 2023.

Though the current regime is trying to make a couple of reforms to improve the political climate of the DRC, Human Rights Watch (2018) indicated that the country faces a worsening humanitarian, human rights, and security crisis. Subsequently, Tanzania’s deliberate interventions to leverage its long-standing traditional relationship with DRC to help the country reform its fragile governance systems are paramount. This will prevent itself from being a host to an influx of political refugees that can lead to insecurity within its borders as well as regional instability in the Great Lakes region and the EAC at large.

### **Socio-economic factors**

The DRC is rich in natural resources, including cobalt and copper, as well as hydropower potential, arable land, vast biodiversity, and the world’s second-largest rainforest (World Bank). However, the wealthy of this country continue to benefit the few while millions of others continue to suffer from poverty and unending civil wars. As a result, this paper diagnoses it among those countries suffering from the resource curse where its abundant natural resources yield less economic growth and prosperity for the majority of Congolese citizens.

This fact is cemented by the World Bank (2022), which argues that the DRC has the world’s third-largest population of poor people, which is still prevalent and pervasive and is growing as a result of COVID-19’s effects. The World Bank (2022) further notes that in 2018, it was estimated that 73% of the Congolese population, equaling 60 million people, lived on less than \$1.90 a day (the

international poverty rate). As such, almost 14% — or one out of six people living in extreme poverty in SSA — live in DRC.

Consequently, with half of the population living in abject poverty, free movement of people that is not based on trade and services could put a strain on Tanzania's already-scarce labor market, particularly when illegal migrant labor is involved. As a consequence, those illegal migrants from DRC who might lack employment opportunities in Tanzania are likely to engage in criminal activities and affect the country's security status.

The World Bank (2022) indicates that after a pandemic-induced slow down to 1.7 percent in 2020, economic growth rebounded to 5.7 percent in 2021 on strength in the mining sector and a recovery in the non-mining sectors. The mining sector was a key driver of growth, with copper and cobalt production rising by 12.0 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively. Non-mining sectors (particularly agriculture and services) recovered, growing by 3.9 percent in 2021 despite economic restrictions due to COVID-19. However, the World Bank (2022) notes that the economy of the DRC remains subject to commodity price changes and the growth performance of its major trading partners, which could be disrupted by Russia-Ukraine geopolitical conflicts and a pandemic recurrence. With Tanzania also facing similar challenges resulting from the Russia-Ukraine Crisis as well as the COVID-19 repercussions, food insecurity might pose a threat to both Tanzania and DRC as the deficit might force the country not to sell surplus food crops to its neighbor through its grain storage facility in Lubumbashi.

The Ebola virus epidemic, on the other hand, poses a new threat to Tanzania's national interests because of the relationship between public health and national security. Although the Ebola virus epidemic was proclaimed eradicated on November 18, 2020, it continues to pose a threat to Tanzanians residing near the DRC border. In this case, improving public health facilities in the north-western regions to be able to urgently respond to the Ebola crisis is critical for the safety of Tanzanians and national security at large.

### Civil wars and refugees' influx factor

Although the intensity of the armed conflict that has plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the past two decades has gradually decreased, the situation of violence and instability in the east of the country, which began with Laurent Desiré Kabila's 1996 coup d'état against Mobutu Sese Seko and culminated in his surrender of power in 1997, persists (Rufanges and Aspa, 2016). As a result, regardless of the country's being rich in terms of natural resources, instability has prevented it from prospering socially and economically, which presents a major concern to Tanzania and other EAC members hoping to further benefit from DRC's membership.

According to UNHCR (2018), 82,000 refugees and asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) live in the Nyarugusu camp in the Kigoma region. In some cases, some of them have combatant experience, which poses a national security concern in Tanzania's north-western areas.

Even though there are few findings on the impact of refugees on security in Tanzania, one study found that crime rates increased dramatically, particularly for murder, robbery, and the possession of illegal firearms (Lwehabura et al., 1995). Despite officials' claims that refugees were to blame for an increase in crime, Whitaker (2002) discovered that crimes were also committed by Tanzanians and, in some cases, with Tanzanians; "refugees and locals would sometimes cooperate to rob local communities, and armed banditry was a problem before the arrival of the refugees." Rutinwa (2003) investigates the rate of criminal cases involving refugees from 2000

to 2001. He discovered that in Kigoma, the rate of criminal cases involving refugees was much higher. Nonetheless, according to Rutinwa (2003), when the population ratio of refugees to locals is considered, refugees do not commit more crimes than the overall population. However, such a parallel should not deter potential stakeholders in the DRC and Tanzania from taking steps to prevent refugees from becoming involved in criminal activities in their host communities.

In fact, eliminating rebel groups in Eastern DRC and restoring normalcy to allow civilians to participate fully in socioeconomic activities without fear of assault will help to address Tanzania's national security concerns caused by civil wars and refugee influx. As a result, the cooperation between the two countries will be based on economic and trade relations rather than peacebuilding efforts, which consume a lot of financial and human resources.

### Terrorism factor

In recent years, terrorist groups have been expanding their reach to establish more influence in more territories across Africa. In fact, their easy target has been fragile states where governance structures are incapable of creating resilience to the advancement of their objectives. This has also been supported by the United States Institute of Peace (2019), which emphasized that fragile states provide the best conditions for extremist attempts at state-building and hence for showing the soundness of extremist ideological agendas.

Moreover, as indicated by the US National Strategy for Counterterrorism, "these groups stoke and exploit weak governance, conflict, instability, and longstanding political and religious grievances to pursue their goal," (United States Institute of Peace, 2019). In this setting, the DRC, like many other unstable African countries, is becoming a new haven for terrorist groups seeking to expand their reach. As a matter of fact, the DRC is already experiencing a series of terrorist attacks in some of its provinces.

In that regard, ISIS claimed responsibility for its first two strikes in eastern DRC in April and June 2019 (Meyer, 2019). The attacks were carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a long-standing rebel group located within the nation (Meyer, 2019). Despite being founded to combat discrimination against Muslims by the Ugandan government, the ADF has instead exploited the local grievances of civilians in eastern DRC, a region ravaged by constant violence fuelled by competition for natural resources, an Ebola outbreak, and a lack of government provisions (Meyer, 2019).

As indicated by the US State Department (2021), ISIS-DRC, also known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen, among other names, is responsible for many attacks across North Kivu and Ituri Provinces in eastern DRC. Under the leadership of Seka Musa Baluku, ISIS-DRC has been notorious in this region for its brutal violence against Congolese citizens and regional military forces, with attacks killing over 849 civilians in 2020 alone, according to a United Nations report on the ADF.

In addition, the Institute of Security Studies (2016) pointed out that terrorist groups are increasingly becoming part of the criminal networks that grab and smuggle minerals in the DRC. The institute further highlighted that in 2013, civil society groups in North Kivu discovered the existence of al-Shabaab mercenaries in Bunagana, near the Ugandan border. Their presence in this area is a spillover from an al-Qaeda-affiliated group based in southern Somalia.

Therefore, it is against this background that the EAC members particularly Tanzania in this context need to take deliberate measures to first, ensure that the spillover effects of the groups

operating in DRC do not affect the country, secondly, prevent its borders from being a smuggling route for illegal resources that can facilitate terrorism financing in DRC but also in its borders. In this context, the need for immediate and radical actions to enhance natural resource governance in the DRC and the broader region, as advocated by the Institute of Security Studies (2016), is critical going forward.

### The DRC Membership Discussion

As highlighted in Table 1 below, the data on the Trade Map tool indicates the substantial amount of trade activity from 2010 to 2018, which includes both imports and exports between DRC and the EAC partner states, particularly Tanzania. However, this trade volume was recorded during the time when the DRC was yet to be a member of the EAC. In this context, as a result of stages of economic integration as highlighted by Balassa's Theory of Economic Integration, which include free trade area, customs union, common market, economic union, and total economic integration, will likely accelerate the trade benefits between the DRC and partner states in the bloc. With respect to Tanzania, it was the third exporter to the DRC between 2010 and 2018. This clearly projects that DRC's membership in the bloc will increase trade volume and foster economic growth.

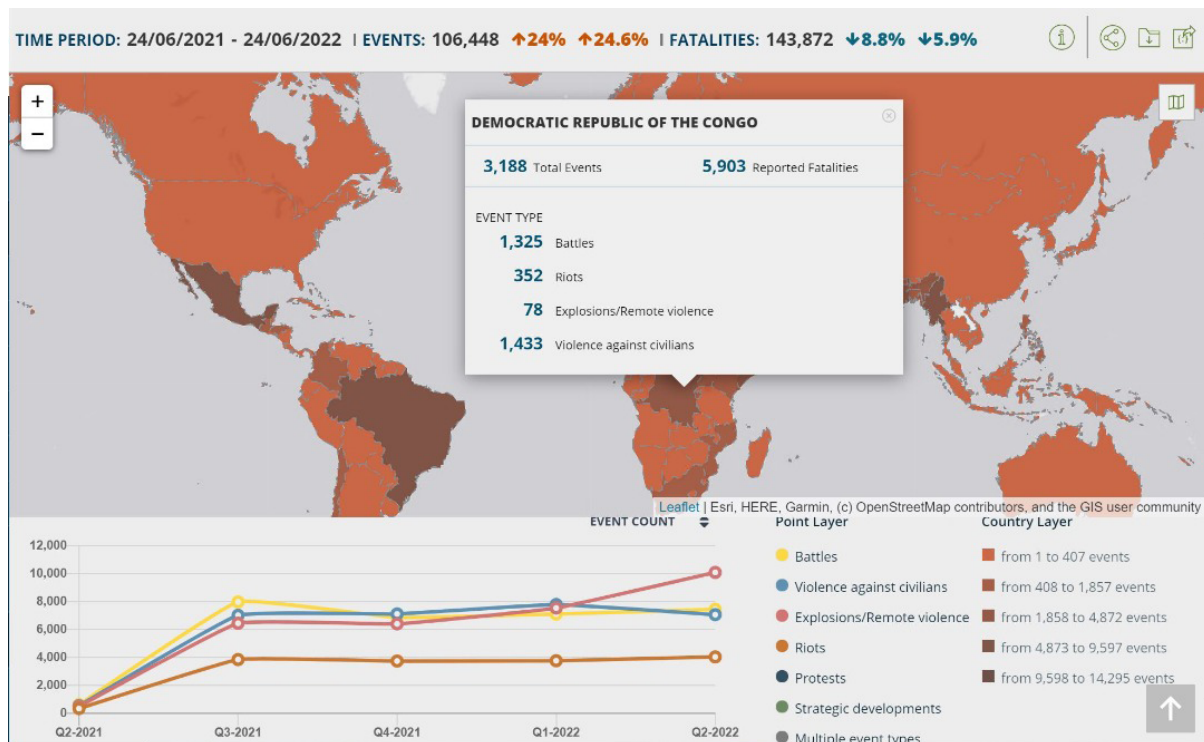
**Figure 1:** Formal trade between EAC and DRC for the period 2010–2018 ('000' USD)

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<i>Panel A: Exports</i>									
Uganda	183,992	182,441	240,881	268,175	181,680	152,561	176,921	189,606	204,309
Kenya	61,352	198,443	218,294	214,063	239,380	211,063	197,480	182,612	149,800
Tanzania	156,081	128,102	187,353	237,559	281,493	198,290	157,428	114,323	144,926
Burundi	269	10,434	141	12,079	28,400	28,272	27,471	26,648	18,904
Rwanda	18,137	44,620	109,300	114,991	153,607	193,631	202,979	280,789	337,443
<b>Total</b>	<b>419,831</b>	<b>564,040</b>	<b>755,969</b>	<b>846,867</b>	<b>884,560</b>	<b>783,817</b>	<b>762,279</b>	<b>793,978</b>	<b>855,382</b>
<i>Panel B: Imports</i>									
Uganda	7,278	6,354	12,223	6,751	5,917	3,641	2,532	4,870	34,492
Kenya	6,770	28,958	10,470	6,521	2,954	1,304	2,053	4,881	12,723
Tanzania	134	403	906	110	825	628	338	967	559
Burundi	5,330	6,342	3,854	3,712	50	3,849	987	3,923	2,785
Rwanda	30,918	16,675	10,414	9,300	10,722	11,010	9,105	12,716	14,290
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,430</b>	<b>58,732</b>	<b>37,867</b>	<b>26,394</b>	<b>20,468</b>	<b>20,432</b>	<b>15,015</b>	<b>27,357</b>	<b>64,849</b>

Source: Trade Map (2019)

Source: Trade Map (2019).

At the moment the EAC accounts for around 20 percent of its total intra - regional trade which is believed to be low. Despite the fact that this percentage is deemed to be low, it is the most performing Regional Economic Community in Africa as per the Regional Integration Index and Intra-regional Trade (African Union, 2020). The incorporation of DRC as a new member to the bloc will therefore increase the percentage of the intra-regional trade given its vast endowment of natural resources such as cobalt as well as huge consumer market of an estimated 90 million people. This will in turn lead to the economic transformation in the East African economies, which is key to achieving economy-wide productivity improvements, job creation, and sustained progress in growth and poverty reduction.



**Figure 2:** The Democratic Republic of Congo: Conflict event dataset

Source: ACLED (2022)

As far as national security issues are concerned figure 2 above indicates a series of violence activities that not only pose concerns to DRC but also to other members of the bloc particularly Tanzania which has been a leading host to refugees but also in engaging in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions through MONUSCO. Moreover, the existence of terror groups such as ISIS-DRC, which has conducted a series of terrorist attacks in North Kivu and Ituri provinces in Eastern DRC, is likely to take advantage of the lapse in border security facilitated by the free movement of people to further seek to expand their operations towards Tanzania's territory and other neighboring member states.

On top of that, such security instability in DRC makes it even harder for public health professionals to contain and address the eruption of infectious diseases such as the Ebola virus epidemic, Measles, COVID-19 pandemic, and the like, which can easily spread to neighboring Tanzania and other member states. In this context, the spillover effect of insecurity in the DRC is likely to jeopardize the national security of Tanzania considering the nexus between public health and the effect of conflicts.

It is also worth mentioning the active participation of the Tanzania Peoples Defence Force (TPDF) in the ongoing peacekeeping mission in the DRC. For instance, in 2013, Tanzania Battalion (TANZBATT) participated in the fighting against the M23 rebel group, which was destabilizing peace in the Eastern DRC. As a consequence, the rampant attacks by the M23 rebel group threatened the security of Tanzania and the entire Great Lakes Region, considering the resembling traditional ties between the people of Kigoma (Western Tanzania) and North and South Kivu (Eastern DRC).

Therefore, the above analysis with respect to Regional Security Complex Theory clearly demonstrates that insecurity in one member of the region means insecurity for the others. In this case, DRC's ongoing insecurity is inseparable from Tanzania's national security and the entire EAC bloc.

## Conclusion

Overall, DRC's membership is likely to have a positive effect on the bloc's exports, mainly driven by trade creation, as the EAC is poised to be a cheaper source for DRC's imports compared to the rest of the world. This is due to factors such as distance, time, and the elimination of trade barriers. Nonetheless, these exports are largely dominated by primary goods rather than high-value manufactured products. However, experts have warned that DRC's history of political unrest is a key aspect the EAC should address to yield significant mutual benefits. For the past two decades, the country has been plagued by war, manifesting human rights violations, organized crime, and corruption. It is apparent that over one hundred armed groups operate in the DRC and continue to terrorize some communities and control weakly governed areas. The United Nations estimates of internally displaced persons and refugees stand at 4.5 million and 800,000, respectively. This unending conflict in the DRC could be a turning point if serious measures are taken to improve the security situation in the country. This should include creating strong peace and security institutions that will be capable of forecasting threats (early warning systems) and proposing different ways of curbing security concerns both at the domestic and regional levels. In addition to that, the provision of extensive military and counterterrorism training for the Congolese security apparatus is crucial in minimizing spillover effects to neighboring countries, especially Tanzania. Such measures will be a critical component in building a sustainable security community in the region.

Furthermore, utilizing existing joint forces or a standing army to deal with security issues in the DRC and the EAC at large will complement current efforts by the international community on the peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Lastly, Tanzania and the East African Community as a whole will need to work closely and tirelessly with the DRC to facilitate the process of developing a proper strategy to address terrorism threats and, most importantly, avoid spillover effects to other members of the regional economic community (REC). This should entail strong cooperation on border management and control between Tanzanian and DRC authorities, as well as intelligence exchange on prospective terrorist suspects to prevent strikes on both countries and the EAC at large.

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