VEFAMUN'26
SPECPOL
Study Guide
The Question of Belgian Colonial Legacy in the Congo

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1. Letter from Secretary-General

Most Special Participants of VefaMUN'26,

As the Secretary-General of VefaMUN'26, I'm absolutely thrilled to welcome you to our 6th edition, happening on March 28-29 right here at Vefa High School.

My journey with this club began on day one of my high school career, and it's been a true passion ever since. I started as an Academy Team Member, climbed to Head of Academy, served as the Deputy Secretary-General, and now stand proudly as Secretary-General. Over these years, I've given my all to this club and this family. We've faced endless obstacles together, and turned "an idea that became reality" from our slogan into our living truth. Every challenge we overcame only made us stronger, more united, and ready to deliver something extraordinary.

Our academy and organisation teams have poured relentless effort into this conference. We tackled every hurdle with grit and designed eight dynamic committees to challenge your minds, spark debates, and create unforgettable memories. From crisis simulations to deep policy dives, each one is crafted for maximum engagement and growth.

But here's the heart of it: none of this shines without you, our incredible participants. Your energy, ideas, and passion are what breathe life into VefaMUN. So come join our family, dive into action, and let's make this edition legendary together.

Best Wishes,

Melis Usanır

Secretary-General of VefaMUN'26

2. Letter from Under-Secretary-General

Esteemed delegates of VefaMUN'26 SPECPOL Committee,

I welcome you all to the 7th edition of VefaMUN! I am your Under-Secretary-General, Eda Erdönmez. It is an honour to host you at this year's Modern United Nations conference.

In our committee, SPECPOL, we will be focusing on the impacts of historical conflicts between governments, colonial administrations' repercussions upon imbalanced politics, the United Nations' mission on sustaining the peace regarding colonial polonization, prevention of reoccurrence of damaging historical events, etc. As the delegates of this committee, you will have the opportunity to participate in meaningful debates, problem-solving discussions, and political negotiations in order to address the current major issues.

This study guide contains many useful sources that will be needed throughout the time of thinking about possible solutions, causes, historical background, the role of the United Nations, and the represented countries' side of the view, regarding the conflict between Belgium and Congo.

Keep in mind that regardless of the country that you are representing, you all have equal positions and abilities in solving this matter and participating throughout the sessions. Hence, as much as this study guide will be significantly beneficial for you, I encourage you to expand your studies; don't limit your investigations to your guide.

Do not hesitate to ask me any questions about the conference, committee, or agenda item via e-mail. I wish you all the best in your preparations, and I am looking forward to meeting you all in the committee.

Best wishes,

Eda Erdönmez
Under-Secretary-General (eedaerdonmez@gmail.com)

3. Introduction to the Committee: Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (SPECPOL)

The United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, also called the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee, is one of the six leading committees of the United Nations General Assembly.

At the time of its establishment, the Fourth Committee was exclusively focused on UN trusteeships and decolonisation acts. After all the United Nations trust territories gained independence and the trusteeship system was terminated by the Trusteeship Council, it was integrated with the Special Political Committee. Following the merge the committee's role grew accordingly.

At present, SPECPOL deals with a wide range of political issues such as atomic radiation, conducting peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and decolonisation-related matters.

4. Introduction to the Agenda Item: The Question of Belgian Colonial Legacy in the Congo

Colonialism is an extension of territory that establishes and maintains the control of another territory and the indigenous society living there, usually aiming to benefit from the colonised territory via systematically profiting from the labour force that has been achieved from the indigenous society and the the systemic usage of the wealth resources such as precious mines.

During colonialism, in the colonial zone, the indigenous society's rights to contribute to the managerial movements are taken away; however, colonial authorities contribute and have a part in internal structures as economic decisions, political aspects and social rights, which cause economic dependency, weakened institutional function, etc.

Before World War 2, there was great tension in Europe regarding having many sources of

power. To achieve that goal, many countries attempted to spread their branch among mostly African countries that did not have secure authorities.

The proof of being able to obtain the power and resources was shown with the addition of the resources to objects whose power can compete with other powers. This type of power was shown with authority, but most importantly with weapons.

Today, some politicians claim that what Belgium did in the 1880s was an example of this circumstance, meaning the possible act of possessing the Kingdom of Congo was aiming to gain the precious mines and the labour force that could potentially be beneficial in a future war.

5. Key Terminology

Indigenous society: Groups of people who are the original inhabitants of a particular region, often maintaining distinct cultural practices, languages, and social structures.

Human rights violation: Actions by state or non-state actors abuse, ignore, or deny basic human rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Economic exploitation: The process by which a dominant group or nation takes advantage of the resources, labour, and markets of a subordinate group or nation for its own benefit, often resulting in unequal economic relationships.

Militant group: An organised group of people who use or support aggressive or violent actions to achieve political, religious, or social goals.

Reparation: The action of making amends for a wrong one has done, by providing payment or other assistance to those who have been wronged.

Compensation: Money that you pay to someone because you are responsible for injuring them or damaging something

Accountability: The acceptance of responsibility for honest and ethical conduct toward others.

Secession: The act of becoming independent and no longer part of a country, area, organisation, etc.

National Sovereignty: Core principle of international law governing international relations, which affirms States' independence and authority to govern their domestic jurisdiction, subject to their international law obligations by virtue of customary international law and the

treaties they have ratified.

Troop: Soldiers on duty in a large group.

6. Historical Background of the Case

6.1. Overview of the Belgian Colonisation in the Congo

Throughout the 19th century, imperial governments started emerging on the African continent. In order to extend Belgium's influence and reach advanced sources, King Leopold II, who at the time was Belgium's king, started widening his country's borders to central Africa. In 1885, King Leopold II gained a large territory in Central Africa, which was later named the Congo Free State. Unlike most colonies, Congo was not completely colonised or governed by Belgium, but the control of King Leopold II was significant.

The main aim of King Leopold II was to reach the resources as rubber, which had an increased rate of interest in industrial growth among European countries, and this rubber and uranium were mainly in the Kisangani region of Congo, which attracted many attractions from imperialist governments. The communities accommodating the region had been unwillingly working in rubber production for King Leopold II.

In addition, Congo had geographical advantages such as Congo River which allows to create a transportation avenue for Europeans to access central Africa via the coasts of the Atlantic benefiting the economical income maintained from the region while causing a potential unpeaceful environment for the local communities as a part of them had faced being mandatorily used for labor force leading to unstable economy, changes in traditional tribal structure and difficulties for the locals to sustain an income from the river region. Moreover, the administration expanded the tension in the region by using the divide-and-rule policy. These matters caused divisions between locals as the ones cooperating with the administration of King Leopold II and those who defied the administration, which further affected the unstable environment of the pursuit of freedom.

6.2. Transition to Belgian Congo

Around 1908, with the increased rate of global tension, King Leopold II transferred his dominion to his whole governmental system and renamed the region from the Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo. Meantime, extreme violence against Congolese society lessened; however, the unequal distribution of economic income and not sustained peace among locals continued. In this while, mining in the region became more worthwhile for worldwide advancements, causing several mining-rich areas to become globally important.

One of the most important mining resources was located in Katanga. Katanga was rich in mainly uranium and copper, attracting many Belgian companies, where local society was being exploited with low salaries and poor working conditions.

In order to prevent nationalist movements and an intellectual mindset, the education system was limited, which caused an obstacle to leadership in movements.

To emphasise and promote national unionist actions, future leaders, as Lumumba established parties, such as Mouvement National Congolais, which is the prefix party in the search for freedom.

Belgium Congo retained its name from 1908 to 1960, and during these years, the whole world experienced many unfoldings mainly caused by World War II. The most adequate technological advancement was the invention of the atomic bomb, which was created by uranium, which was mainly produced from the Katanga region of Belgium Congo. Meaning that, the uranium mined from Katanga under the rule of Belgium and Belgian companies was transferred to the United States of America to invent an atomic bomb, which was the main factor of World War II, causing many civilians to die in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1959, the signals for Belgian Congo heading towards independence were clear, as seen from the protests of the aggrieved locals.

6.3. Independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo & Congo Crisis

On June 30th, 1960, Congo achieved its independence and was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo. The president was Joseph Kasa-Vubu, and the Prime Minister was Patrice Lumumba. During the ceremony of independence, the prime minister Patrice Lumumba gave a dominant speech emphasising the importance of freedom and unity; however, the independence brought the crisis along.

The army of Belgium was still led by high-ranking Belgian soldiers, preventing any promotions for Congolese soldiers, causing inequality to persist, and increasing the tension among the military forces. Therefore, in July 1960, Congolese soldiers rebelled against the Belgians, causing chaos and violence. Thus, the Belgian government sent armed forces to Congo, claiming they aimed to protect their citizens. The prime minister Patrice Lumumba had started to get indignant, thinking this was an inconvenient interference with Congo's sovereignty.

At the same time, the previously mentioned Katanga region gained its independence as a country under the leadership of Moïse Tshombe. Keep in mind that, Katanga being rich in mines, mainly uranium, got a worldwide interest, especially from the United States of

America, because of the usage of uranium in atomic weapons, and the USA had previously used the uranium gotten from Belgium, extracted from Katanga during World War II, when producing an atomic bomb used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hence, Katanga, now as an independent area, was founded by Belgium and became an economic loss for Congo. Patrice Lumumba had seen the secession of Katanga as a threat to economic sovereignty and a cause for the continuation of colonial influence.

On July 12, 1960, with the military still being led by Belgian soldiers, Belgian troops and secession of Katanga, Prime Minister Lumumba and President Moise Tshombe had urgently approached the United Nations requesting immediate withdrawal of Belgian troops, military assistance to secure the unity in Congo, and reintegrating Katanga into Belgium. The United Nations had established the United Nations Operation in the Congo(UNOC) for this request and agreed to suspend the Belgian troops and sustain stabilisation in the region, but refused to directly intervene in Katanga to finalise the secession. The United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld believed that the United Nations should remain neutral and not interfere in Congo's internal politics. Patrice Lumumba saw this approach of the United Nations as a betrayal, stating that Katanga's secession was not only an internal problem and that Congo's unity was under the threat of foreign forces.

Lumumba was hopeless to get help from the United States because they negotiated with Belgium over uranium, and from the United Nations, as they did notfulfill all of Lumumba's requests. The world was under the influence of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Lumumba's only chance for external help was the Soviet Union. In August 1960, Lumumba had negotiated with the Soviet Union in order to get military transport planes, technical advisors, and military equipment. Although Lumumba's primary goal was a cooperation for national unity rather than an ideological alignment, Western states saw him as a Soviet ally and a communist.

In September 1960, political tensions had escalated with the dismissal of Patrice Lumumba, attempted by President Joseph Kasa-Vubu, and Lumumba's contesting approach had caused a crisis. After a short time, claiming to neutralise the conflict, Colonel Mobutu Sese Seko had taken control of the government in a coup. Lumumba was under house arrest and was later captured when he tried to leave the capital.

He was transferred to Katanga, and on 17 January 1961, he was executed in the presence of Katangan authorities and Belgian officers. To prevent his death becoming a signal, Lumumba's body was dissolved in acid, leaving nothing but a golden tooth behind. The story of the golden tooth was hidden for decades but after many years after the dissolution of his body, a Belgian officer admitted that they had kept the only piece that had been inherited from him.
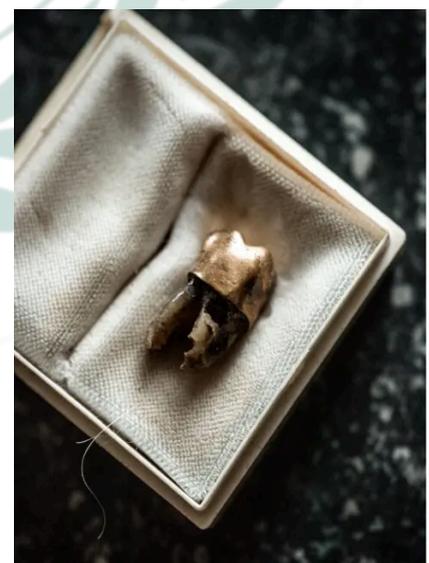
Lumumba's death did not immediately stabilise Congo. Rebellions started emerging in different regions, and the Katanga secession lasted until 1963. The instability lasted until approximately 1965, when Mobutu Sese Seko took control with the second coup. He suspended democratic institutions, established a long-term authoritarian regime until 1997, and he had the support of the West because of his anti-communist remarks.

In 2001, a Belgian parliamentary commission concluded that the Belgian officers had violated moral responsibilities and had given an official expression of regret. In 2022, the tooth of Lumumba was returned to his family, and it still represents recognition of colonial violence.

7.   Major Current Issues & Ongoing Impacts

7.1.   Human Rights Challenges

The human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo are one of the traces Belgian colonial administration left on the region. The Belgian Government, to put it mildly, tormented the indigenous people of Congo by taking advantage of the public's vulnerability and impunity. During the colonial period, unethical treatments such as forced labour, systematic violence, sexual assaults, and deprivation of basic rights occurred.

Leopold and his soldiers, who approved of killing villagers who refused to cooperate, chose amputation as their favourite method of punishment. It has come to the point of rewarding soldiers for each hand they cut off. Since wasting bullets was frowned upon, soldiers were required to present the victims' hands as proof that the bullets had not been wasted when they committed random killings. Another example of this punishment was the amputation of limbs for men who failed to meet their quota. If the person could not be caught, or if he needed both hands to work, the hand of his wife or children would be cut off.

During this period, institutions aimed at the rule of law and the protection of individual rights had not been developed. Hence, a government structure qualified to protect human rights had not been established after independence, and the structural issues created in the colonial period remain serious problems in the present.

At the moment, the human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo centre on the eastern side of the state, where armed groups conduct their acts. Reports by the United

Nations and international human rights organisations show cases of arbitrary killings of civilians, sexual violence, abductions, and forced displacement in the conflict zones. Sexual violence related to conflict remains a significant issue, particularly for women and girls, while the recruitment of child soldiers signifies a violation of international humanitarian law and standards for children's rights. Moreover, the inability to properly investigate a major portion of human rights violations deepens the issue of impunity.

While security crises create serious effects on civilians, human rights violations are not limited to conflict zones. Allegations of excessive force by security forces, arbitrary detentions, and mistreatment have also been reported. Due to security and public order concerns, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the right to peaceful protest are occasionally restricted; journalists and human rights defenders are subjected to pressure and threats.

Furthermore, the widespread displacement crisis in the nation directly affects fundamental economic and social rights. Countless individuals encounter significant difficulties in obtaining secure housing, healthcare, education, and clean drinking water. Despite existing humanitarian mechanisms, the challenging security situation and inadequate infrastructure hinder the sustainable and equitable distribution of aid.

7.2.   Economic Inequality

During Congo's colonial period under Belgium, the Belgian Government directed the economic activities towards the extraction and export of raw materials, in line with the interests of foreign actors. Local people's welfare had been ignored; instead, they had been kept in the lower levels of the system as a low-paid workforce.

Throughout this period, local development could not be achieved, and local communities were not able to take part in economical decision mechanisms. When production and income distribution were structured in favour of particular districts and groups, income inequality and structural poverty became permanent in the country after independence. This economic system substantially continued for years.

The economic potential of the country's resource-rich regions is not being utilised because the people living in these regions lack access to fundamental services and, therefore, employment opportunities. In addition to that, people who live in rural areas, where access to governmental and public services is even more limited, are facing chronic poverty, lack of infrastructure, and economic exclusion. The said economic exclusion caused the social tension between the two different regions to escalate. Armed groups have taken advantage of this situation, contributing to the weakening of state authority.

Economic inequality leads to imbalances in basic needs such as education, health, security, and employment, and prevents the distribution of social welfare to bigger segments of the population. Therefore, humanitarian crises deepen, and security problems continue. Economic inequality makes long-term development difficult and demonstrates that imbalances created during the colonial period have not yet been fully solved.

7.3. Political Instability

Instability refers to the fact of a situation being likely to change, in a way that is worrying, or the changes that happen. In the political sense, it means it's likely for significant changes in the political structure of a country to happen. Political instability can lead to many complications, such as forced migration, effects on population dynamics, and altered consequences of population distribution.

The ongoing political instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo can be tied to the colonial period under Belgium. During their colonial period, Belgium prevented the development of Congolese political elites and established a centrist and externally dependent governance. When Congo gained its independence in 1960, the state lacked stable institutions, an experienced civilian bureaucracy, or an inclusive political system. This was mostly because the Belgian Government conducted the independence process offhandedly. These shortcomings opened the door to political crises and military intervention from the Belgian Government. Over the years, flaws in the governance system became permanent, preventing the government from establishing authority nationwide.

In the present, the political instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo continues due to the weakness of governmental authority and conflict conditions. Especially with rebel paramilitary group M23's revival in 2021 and the heightened clashes around Goma in 2025, the tension between militant groups and the Congolese Government began to rise again. As a result of conflicts, political instability, and disintegration accelerated between the districts controlled by national security forces and regions where militant groups are active.

The politically unstable environment has also caused public disquiet alongside civilian protests. An example of this is the 2025 Kinshasa riots. The Kinshasa riots were a series of violent protests that took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital. During the demonstrations, multiple diplomatic facilities were targeted. Protesters engaged in acts of vandalism and arson, burned tyres on the streets, and directly confronted security forces. Thanks to incidents similar to the Kinshasa riots, we can see how political instability affects government-public relations.

Political instability not only affects safety conditions and public order but also fuels structural problems like corruption, lack of governance capacity, and inter-institutional clashes, contributing to large-scale humanitarian and economic crises.

8. Previous United Nations Actions and International Frameworks

8.1. Previous United Nations Actions

8.1.1. Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC)

The Republic of Congo gained independence on 30 June 1960 after spending almost 52 years as a Belgian colony. Right after independence, disorder within the country, such as the Force Publique mutiny, where Congolese soldiers rebelled due to wage injustice and army ranks, and political crises like mutual dismissals between Lumumba and Kasa-Vubu began to show. Seeing the chaos, the Belgian government claimed it wanted to restore law and order and ensure the safety of Belgian nationals. For that purpose, Belgium sent its troops to Congo without negotiating with the Congolese government.

On 12 July 1960, the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo requested military assistance from the United Nations. The main reason for this request was that the Congolese government saw the troops of Belgium as a threat to their independence and an attempt to take Congo under their colonisation again. Two days later, the Security Council passed Resolution 143 with 8 votes in favour, none against, and three abstentions. In the resolution, Belgium was called to withdraw its troops from the Congo and authorised military assistance as might be necessary until, through the efforts of the Government with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces might be able, in the Government's opinion, to meet their tasks fully.

ONUC's main task was to help the Congolese government improve and maintain the political independence and territorial integrity of the Congo; to help it maintain law and order throughout the country; and to put into effect a wide and long-range programme of training and technical assistance.

The United Nations formed a large team for this purpose. In 1961, after Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was assassinated in the state of Katanga, the Security Council's demands for this Force increased. The Force was expected to protect the Congo from outside interference and prevent clashes and civil strife by force if necessary, as a last resort.

After Katanga rejoined the territory of the Congo in February 1963, the Congolese government requested the force's termination. However, the General Assembly decided to keep a reduced number of troops until the complete withdrawal of the force on 30 June 1964.

8.1.2. United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

A stable political structure could not be achieved after independence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The state continuously faced crises due to colonial legacy, weak institutions, regional divisions, and interventions from outside. After the Second Congo War, which resulted in the loss of many civilian lives and almost caused the authority of the government to collapse, the UN decided it was almost impossible for a stable peace to happen in the state.

In 1999, the UN formed a peacekeeping mission named MONUC (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). MONUC's mission was to make sure the ceasefire went according to plan and to help with the transition process. As time passed, it became clear that the problems in the state ran deeper than basic issues caused by conflicts.

For that reason, on 1 July 2010, the Security Council eliminated MONUC and formed a new mission called MONUSCO with Resolution 1925. The new addition to the name, "Stabilisation Mission," meant the UN was not going to just observe the situation in the state but decided to intervene in the process of the Congolese Government's revival.

MONUSCO's prime role is to ensure the safety of citizens. For this purpose, the mission is allowed to use force as a final resort in case of endangerment to civilians. In addition, MONUSCO supports the Congolese government in security sector reform, the establishment of public order, and the reinforcement of state authority, while also having duties such as monitoring and reporting on human rights violations.

At the beginning, MONUSCO was meant to temporarily keep a peaceful and safe environment in places where the government fell short. However, the UN emphasised the importance of keeping the mission active and stated that the main goal of the mission is to make sure the government of Congo is able to maintain state security.

8.2. International Frameworks

8.2.1. United Nations Charter

The United Nations Charter is the founding treaty of the United Nations. It was signed on the 26th of June 1945 and effective from the 24th of October 1945. It established the framework

for modern international relations, promoting peace, security, human rights, and cooperation among nations.

Members pledge to resolve conflicts through non-violent methods, avoiding the use of force, and support the United Nations in enforcement actions. The Charter emphasises the importance of human rights and the self-determination of nations.

The principle of self-determination of nations mentioned in the Charter legislated the demand for independence of the peoples under colonial rule and provided a legal and political base for the independence movements in Africa.

The Charter does not directly include a retroactive liability framework for colonialism, but it can be argued that Belgium's colonial actions violate international law norms that the United Nations Charter prioritises.

8.2.2.   UNGA Resolution 1514

The UNGA Resolution 1514, adopted on December 14, 1960, is considered one of the most important milestones in the decolonisation process. The declaration on colonisation, firstly proposed by the Soviet Union, was passed with 89 votes in favour, none against, and 9 abstentions.

In the declaration, the subjection of peoples to alien subjection, domination, and exploitation was declared to be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and constituted a denial of human rights. The ruling called for the immediate and unconditional end of colonial rule and stressed that political, economic, social, or educational deficiencies could not be used as justifications for postponing independence.

The General Assembly's decisions are not legally binding. However, 1514 has contributed to the formation of international customary law and provided a strong precedent for the decolonisation process.

8.2.3.   UNGA Resolution 60/147

UNGA Resolution 60/147 is a UN Resolution about the rights of victims of humanitarian law violations. It clarifies that victims are entitled to justice and reparation. The purpose of the resolution is to help improve assistance to victims and their representatives, and to guide and encourage States in the implementation of public policies related to reparations. The resolution was adopted in 2005 and is not legally binding. However, it created widely accepted standards in international humanitarian law.

Practices such as forced labour, economic exploitation, and general human rights abuses had

been documented in the colonial period of Congo. Resolution 60/147 establishes a normative framework that allows for the examination of these historical injustices, specifically regarding restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and assurances of non-repetition.

In this context, the resolution claims historical injustices are not only political or moral issues; instead, they could be put in wider principles of accountability and victims' rights recognised by the international community. Furthermore, it reinforces current debates on reparations, recognition, and systemic changes associated with colonial histories.

8.2.4.   Resolution of A/HRC/RES/21/15

The Resolution of A/HRC/RES/21/15 was passed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2012. The Resolution aims to strengthen principles such as truth, justice, reparations, and the guarantee of non-recurrence after serious human rights violations.

The ruling highlights the importance of transitional justice mechanisms. In addition, it reminds governments of their responsibility to recognise the rights of victims, investigate past violations, and take accountability. Especially, the need for institutional reform and victim-centred approaches is emphasised.

8.2.5.   UNGA Resolution 70/1

Resolution 70/1 was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25th of September 2015. With the said resolution, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have been officially recognised.

The resolution treats development not solely as economic growth but also in terms of reducing inequalities, building strong institutions, upholding the rule of law, and adopting an inclusive management strategy. Furthermore, it promotes a global sense of accountability for all states.

The foreign-dependent, raw material-oriented economic model and weak institutional structure established during the colonial period are associated with the structural inequalities and development problems seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo today. In particular, the resolution's goals of no poverty (SDG 1), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16) constitute a basis for phasing out the long-term effects of this historical heritage.

9. The Roles of the International Community and Regional Organisations

The international community takes a multidimensional role in the conversation of the historical legacy of colonialism. Especially the United Nations system – General Assembly, human rights mechanisms, peacekeeping organisations, etc. – has been actively working on not only security, but also building institutional capacity, protecting human rights, and governance reforms. With peacekeeping operations, it had been aimed to protect civilians, limit the dangers caused by armed groups, and establish government authority in the nations. Moreover, technical support was provided for electoral processes, advice was given on protecting the constitutional order, and programs supporting public administration reforms were implemented. These interventions can be seen as an effort to address the long-term institutional gaps created by the deliberately limited local administrative capacity and political elite formation during the colonial period.

In the regional aspect, organisations such as the African Union and the Southern African Development Community take roles within the outline of diplomatic mediation, crisis prevention mechanisms, and regional security cooperation. During election periods and times of heightened local political tension, these organisations have called for open dialogue and encouraged negotiation channels between the parties. The involvement of regional actors lends local legitimacy to interventions and strengthens the "African-led solutions to African problems" approach. This helps to counterbalance criticisms of excessive reliance on external actors in the post-colonial era.

In the extent of economics and structure, international finance establishments such as the European Union and World Bank provide support through infrastructure investments, public finance reforms, anti-corruption programs, and sustainable development projects. However, the real problem lies within the traces the old economic structure built during the colonial period has left. This structure has led to limited value-added production within the country and a deepening of income inequality.

In the broader context, Mouvement National Congolais, established in 1958, advocated for a unified and centralised Congolese state. Ethnic fragmentation and administrative divisions that had been reinforced under colonial rule were rejected by the party. The party leader, Patrice Lumumba, was not afraid to criticise the economic exploitation and institutional weaknesses caused by the Belgian government. Despite the stance and the actions of the party, the immediate post-independence crisis showed how much colonial rule patterns continued to shape the state.

10.   Major Parties Involved

10.1.   Belgium

Belgium is the former colonial power in the Congo and therefore has a direct historical responsibility for the colonial legacy. From the late 19th century to 1960, Congo was controlled by Belgium, first under King Leopold II's personal rule and later as a formal Belgian colony. During this time, resource extraction, labour control, and building infrastructure around export rather than local development were the main focus of the colonial administration. Many of the administrative structures and economic patterns created around this time period were designed to benefit the colonial state, not the Congolese people.

In recent decades, Belgium has acknowledged the harm caused during the colonial period and expressed regret for certain abuses. However, Belgium has mostly avoided taking full legal accountability or broad reparations, instead focusing on cooperating with the DRC on development projects, education, and cultural exchange.

10.2.   Burundi

As the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi shares a direct historical link with the Congo through the legacy of Belgian rule because both territories were administered under Belgian control in Central Africa. This shared experience shapes Burundi's sensitivity towards discussions of structural underdevelopment, ethnic fragmentation, and institutional weakness linked to colonial governance models. Despite not having an involvement in the Congo Crisis, Burundi's security and political balance have been impacted by regional instability in the Great Lakes area.
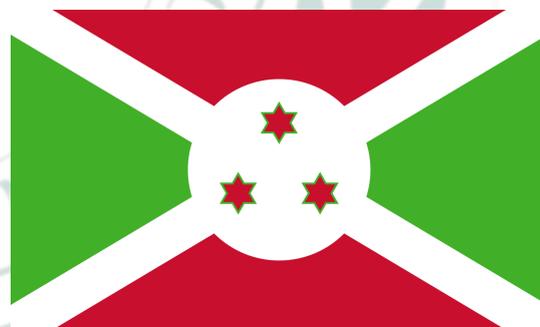
Regarding the agenda, Burundi's position would be in favour of acknowledging colonial harm and stressing how externally imposed administrative and ethnic divisions created long-term regional fragility.

10.3. China

As a state that frequently emphasises anti-colonial solidarity, China approaches the topic primarily with support for sovereignty and development. China has always been opposed to foreign intervention and country-specific pressure mechanisms. It has also been stated that economic capacity building, rather than political conditionality, should be used to address historical injustices. China developed historical ties with the Congo during the Cold War. In the 1960s, during the Sino-Soviet split, China expressed support for certain leftist and anti-Western factions in the Congo Crisis. Additionally, China expanded its economic presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, primarily in mining and infrastructure, presenting these partnerships as mutually beneficial and different from extractive colonial models.

As a result, China will likely recognise the structural damage Belgian rule has caused, therefore frame the issue in a way that supports state sovereignty, avoids external control, and aligns with its broader Africa engagement strategy.

10.4. Cuba

Particularly after the 1959 Revolution, Cuba's foreign policy was grounded in anti-imperialist and anti-colonial ideology. The revolutionary government defined colonialism and Western economic dominance as central sources of global inequality. Cuba supported liberation movements and leftist governments across the continent of Africa. Furthermore, Cuba frequently criticises the colonial exploitation and structural economic dependency that former colonial powers created.

Regarding the agenda, Cuba would likely favour more recognition of past injustices and stress how extractive colonial institutions produced long-lasting institutional and economic distortions. Its position would be based on Global South solidarity and ideological consistency.

10.5.   Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo was personally controlled by Leopold II as the Congo Free State from 1885 to 1908, a period remembered for forced labour, violence, and severe population loss. After becoming Belgian Congo in 1908, the economic system remained focused on extracting raw materials for export. Congolese people's participation in education and politics was very limited, which resulted in the country having very few trained administrators and weak institutions when independence came in 1960.
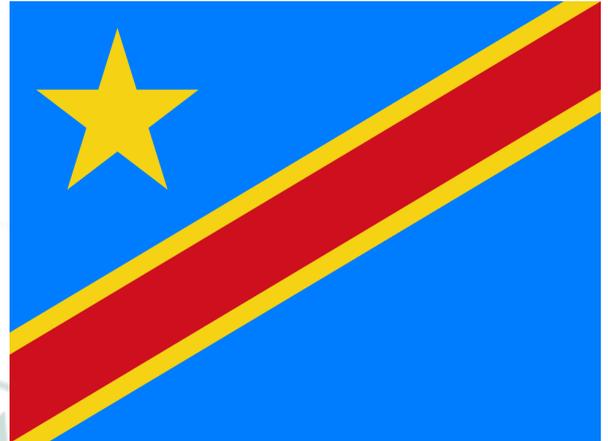
After independence, the Congo quickly entered a political crisis. The instability in the state deepened with the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the involvement of foreign powers. Many Congolese leaders argue that the colonial system created the long-term structural problems the Congo still faces to this day.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo would likely emphasise historical responsibility, recognition of harm, and the structural impact of colonial rule. In addition to advocating for economic partnerships, debt relief, and reforms in the international trade systems, Congo may support stronger language in accountability and moral responsibility. For the DRC, this issue is not just about the past, but also about how historical exploitation still affects political instability and economic inequality today.

10.6.   Germany

Germany is not directly tied to the Belgian colonial administration of the Congo, yet it cannot approach the issue as a neutral outsider. Germany has its own history with colonialism in Africa -most notably with Namibia- and has engaged in formal acknowledgement and compensation negotiations regarding its past. This history makes it hard for Germany to dismiss conversations about accountability without going against its own diplomatic policies. At the same time, Germany would be cautious about excluding Belgium or supporting extensive legal responsibility frameworks that would impact other European states due to its leading member status in the European Union.

10.7.   India

As a former colony of the United Kingdom, India shapes its foreign policy through anti-colonial solidarity and support for self-determination. During the Cold War, India was active in the Non-Aligned Movement and encouraged newly independent African states through actions such as sending troops to ONUC during the early Congo crisis. Also, India backed Congo's territorial integrity at a time when secessionist movements and external interventions threatened stability.

India would likely acknowledge the structural economic and institutional damage left by colonial rule, emphasising sovereignty, South-South cooperation, and development-led solutions.

10.8.   Iran

Historically, Iran emphasises national sovereignty and hostility to Western intervention in its African policy, which is shaped by anti-imperialist and anti-colonial rhetoric. Iranian authorities have openly praised Africa's resistance to colonialism and argued that the continent's structural underdevelopment is the result of previous colonial periods. Iran has attempted to expand diplomatic and economic connections across Africa, and portrayed its involvement as solidarity and mutually beneficial.
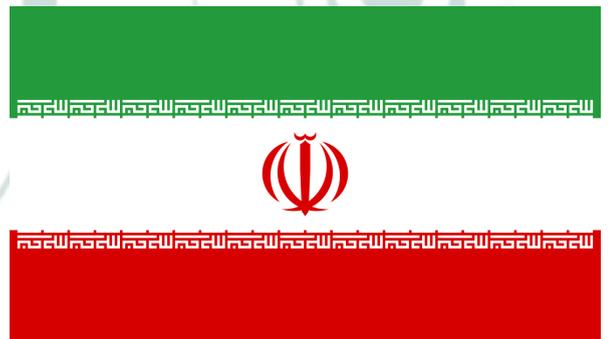
Iran would likely criticise past exploitation while prioritising sovereignty, non-interference, and development collaborations.

10.9.   Russian Federation

The Belgian colonial legacy in the Congo is viewed by the Russian Federation from both a strategic and a historical perspective. As the successor state of the Soviet Union, Russia carries on the Cold War tradition of supporting anti - colonial movements and aligning itself with leaders like Patrice Lumumba during the Congo Crisis, framing Western intervention as neo-colonial interference. Russia's rhetoric at the UN,

where it frequently criticises Western nations for destabilising operations and selective accountability standards, is still affected by this historical standing.

In the context of the agenda, the Russian Federation would likely draw attention to how colonial exploitation led to structural dependency and long-term instability, while also using the issue to question Western moral authority in discussions of global governance. At the same time, the Russian Federation would champion sovereignty-centred narratives and strategic engagement in Africa through security cooperation and resource partnerships.

10.10.   Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia positions itself as an influential Global South and OIC actor, so naturally, Saudi Arabia emphasises sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in UN discussions. Today, its Africa policy is driven by investment diversification, energy diplomacy, and political influence building within the Global South.

Saudi Arabia would likely frame colonial legacy as a factor contributing to structural underdevelopment, while contending that initiatives like infrastructure funding, sovereign economic development, and long-term stability are also productive.

10.11.   South Africa

South Africa approaches the agenda through the lens of its own history of institutionalised racial domination under apartheid, which formally ended in 1994. This experience makes South Africa particularly sensitive to arguments about how externally imposed systems can build structural inequality for decades. During the post-Cold War era, South Africa participated in peace and stabilisation efforts in the DRC, contributing troops through the African Union framework and UN missions.

South Africa would likely be in support of acknowledging colonial harm and structural economic distortion due to its similar experience of historical injustice, while also favouring African-led conflict resolution, regional institutional strengthening, and sustainable development.

10.12.   South Korea

South Korea: Unlike major Cold War parties, South Korea was not an active actor in Congo's internal political struggles. However, as a country that experienced colonisation first-hand but managed to rapidly develop its economic state, South Korea often frames its foreign policy around development cooperation, capacity-building, and economic partnership. In recent years, it has expanded diplomatic and development ties with African states through actions such as participating in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa.

In the context of the Belgian colonial legacy in the Congo, South Korea would likely prioritise sustainable development, institutional strengthening, and economic cooperation. Despite its history with colonialism, South Korea wouldn't put accountability debates first since its foreign policies are based on positioning itself as a development partner in Africa.

10.13.   United Kingdom

Although the United Kingdom did not colonise the Congo, it was still involved in the conflict that followed the Congo's independence in 1960. During the Congo Crisis, the United Kingdom stood by the United States and Belgium within the Western bloc. It was primarily concerned with limiting Soviet influence in Central Africa. British policy reflected broader Cold War concerns such as preventing instability that could shift the regional balance of power and protecting Western economic and strategic interests. The direct British operational responsibility in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba is still being debated among historians; however, the United Kingdom was part of the diplomatic alliance that opposed Lumumba's proximity to the Soviet Union.

Despite opposing extensive reparations or legal accountability mechanisms, the UK would likely recognise that colonial administrative and economic systems caused the long-term instability in the Congo. Instead, the UK would prioritise rule-of-law frameworks, development cooperation, and institutional reform, balancing historical acknowledgement while still being cautious not to draw parallels that serve as precedents for its own colonial past.

10.14.   United States of America

The United States of America played a central role during the Congo Crisis that took place in 1960 after independence. At the time, the United States' perception of Central Africa was mostly shaped by the Cold War. U.S. leaders who wanted to keep Soviet influence away from Africa feared that the Congo might become closer to the Soviet Union under Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Due to their concerns, the United States advocated UN intervention to stop Soviet control in the area while backing political figures who were seen as pro-Western. The U.S. government's involvement in the attempts to remove Lumumba from power was later revealed by declassified papers.
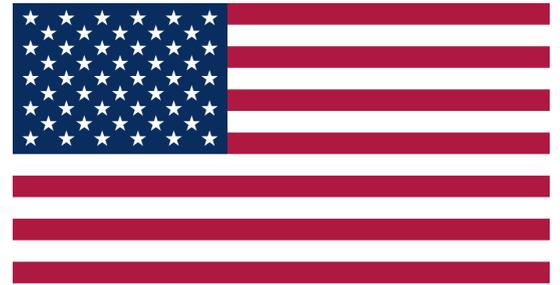
The U.S. would likely accept that colonial exploitation created long-term economic and political problems in the Congo. However, it would avoid strong discussions about legal accountability or reparations. Instead, it usually focuses on topics such as democracy, human rights, security cooperation, and economic development.

11.   Possible Solutions Regarding the Matter

The question of the legacy of Belgian colonisation in Congo continues to rise regarding governance, sovereignty, resource allocation and usage, international organisations' responsibilities, and human rights violence. This study guide encourages the delegates to consider the following solutions to resolve the matter while keeping the represented countries' perspective in mind.

In order to prevent a repetition of human rights violence that can occur from armed forces, the ways of integrating human rights and constitutional loyalty guidance into military training, improving the United Nations long-term peacekeeping authorisation to unconstitutional changes of governmental forces, and establishing constitutional frameworks that aim to prioritise civilian supremacy can be considered.

To sustain long-term stability, delegates can consider managing resource wealth by increasing transparency in agreements with foreign countries and establishing mechanisms to reasonably distribute interests between regional governments.

Toward answering the question of accountability towards violence, establishing two-sided historical commissions, increasing public awareness regarding colonial history, and strengthening legal protections for politicians in states under crisis can be studied.

To prevent external geopolitical competition from destabilising fragile states, guidance on external forces' intervention in newly independent states, balancing the protection of territorial integrity, and the United Nations role in secession crises should be reviewed.

12.   Questions to be Addressed

1. How can post-colonial states frame institutions that function independently from the political aspects of leaders?
2. How can international frameworks prioritise long-term administrative infrastructure for post-crisis?
3. What role can regional or international organisations play in mediating secessionist disputes?
4. How can structural reforms ensure civilian supremacy over the military?
5. What governance reforms are necessary to prevent resource wealth from fueling political fragmentation?
6. How can international law better regulate foreign troop deployments in newly independent states?
7. How can colonial-era abuses be formally recognised within modern human rights frameworks?

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