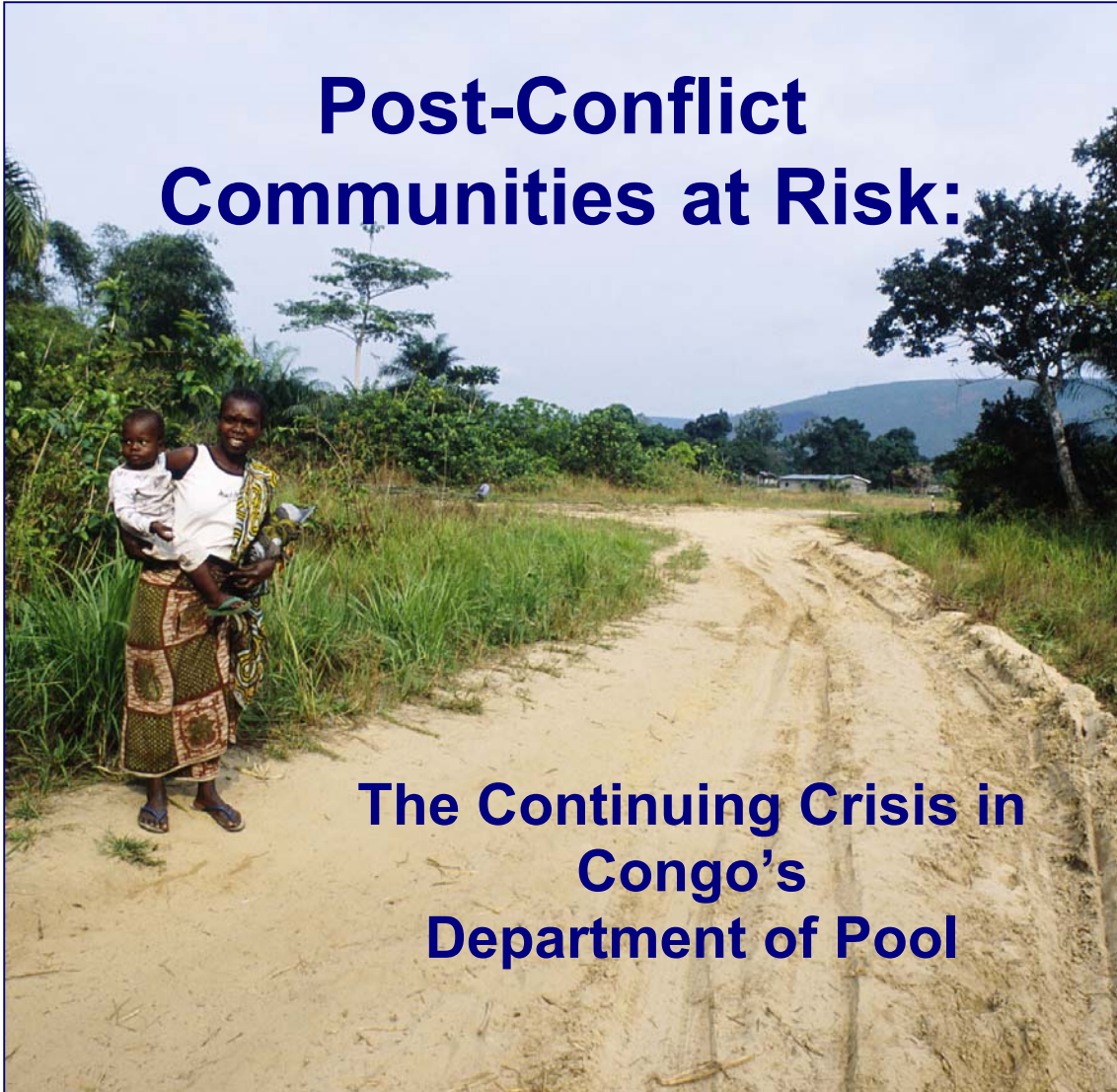


# Post-Conflict Communities at Risk:



## The Continuing Crisis in Congo's Department of Pool

November 2004



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*This report is dedicated to the people living in Pool. It acknowledges and commends their resilience and courage in spite of the continuing crisis. Their testimony is one of triumph for it demonstrates the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.*

Covers and all photographs except text boxes: Xavier Schwebel, Secours Catholique

Page iv: Map adapted from Relief Web, <http://www.reliefweb.int>

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	iv
Background .....	5
Methodology .....	9
Livelihood Renewal .....	13
Education .....	21
Health Care .....	26
Security and Conflict Resolution .....	28
Conclusions .....	30
Recommendations .....	31

## Tables & Graphs

Figure 1: Length of Displacement .....	14
Figure 2: Reinstallation of Displaced Households by Month, March 2002-June 2004 .....	14
Figure 3: Where are you living now? (N=864) .....	16
Figure 4: Number Primary Schools, Teachers, Pupils and Classes, 1998-2004 .....	22
Figure 5: Comparison of Primary and Secondary Enrollment, 1998-2004.....	23
Figure 6: Number of Secondary Schools, Teachers, Pupils and Classes, 1998-2004 .....	23
Figure 7: Years in Which Schools were Damaged .....	25
Figure 8: Summary of Health Facilities Closed Before and After the Conflict 2002-2003.....	28

## Annexes

ANNEX A: Map of the Department of Pool with 13 Districts .....	34
ANNEX B: Map of the Department of Pool with 13 Districts .....	35
ANNEX C: Census Data 1996 and Population Estimations 2002,.....	36
ANNEX D: Census Data (1996) and Populations Estimations for 2002, for .....	36
ANNEX E: The Clusters Selected by District with Population.....	37
ANNEX F: List of Organizations and Government Departments Interviewed .....	38
ANNEX G: Additional Information From School Surveys.....	39
ANNEX H: Additional Health Survey Information.....	41
ANNEX I: Bibliography .....	43



## Executive Summary

This report is the first independent study of its kind, revealing the state of humanitarian welfare and the extensive need for aid and assistance that still exists in Pool.

Recent upheaval has chased tens of thousands of Congolese families from their homes. Some of these internally displaced people (IDPs) were trapped in Pool, only able to escape insecurity by seeking refuge in more remote villages and in makeshift shelters near their fields. Others fled hostilities in their villages to gather in larger villages and towns, often occupying homes abandoned by other displaced families. Those able to travel farther made their way west to the Bouenza region or east to Brazzaville where they stayed with host families or in one of the temporary IDP sites. At the time, the United Nations estimated that some 100,000 Pool residents were displaced from March – October 2002. Of these, an estimated 30,000-40,000 fled to Brazzaville.

On March 17, 2003 the Brazzaville government and the Ninja leader, Reverend Frederic Bitsangou, known as Pasteur Ntoumi, signed an accord to end the crisis in Pool. Ntoumi committed to ending hostilities, disarming his soldiers, and facilitating the return of state authority in Pool; the Government guaranteed amnesty to rebels and programs for reintegration of ex-Ninjas into civilian life or the national army. While there has been no large-scale warfare since this time, a year and a half after the signing, real peace and the possibility for rehabilitation and recovery is still a distant prospect for many communities.

These successive conflicts have crippled the Department of Pool. The region — once a breadbasket for the country — is now staggering, barely able to support its own food needs, let alone produce for the rest of the country. The inhabitants have endured long periods of internal displacement. They return to find their communities devastated with widespread destruction of their homes, schools, and health centers, the disappearance of markets, and roads that have become nothing more than paths in the forest due to the years of abandonment and neglect. The conflicts have also critically weakened local mechanisms for conflict resolution. The traditional role of village committees and local chiefs has been compromised by the presence of armed militias and the presence of arms. What civil society existed in the rural areas has largely vanished; teachers, nurses, priests and other religious leaders are still absent from many areas.

Other regions of the country including the capital of Brazzaville, not to mention the rest of the world, are largely unaware of the situation in Pool and the hardships endured by the returning population. Only the occasional report of clashes between government forces and Ninjas or attacks along the train-line may draw attention to this forgotten area. Since the signing of the peace accords in March 2003, hostilities have not actually ceased, and because of this, there has been relatively little international funding pledged to the region. This study reveals that, when comparing key indicators on levels and length of population displacement, and destruction of homes and social infrastructure, the impact of the 2002-2003 conflict was far greater than that of 1998-1999. To date, however, significantly fewer resources have been made available for post-conflict rehabilitation in Pool than after the 1998-1999 conflict.

Limited humanitarian access, minimal official data and the absence of other sources of information have meant that little is known about the realities of life in Pool. While the humanitarian community has expressed concern over the situation in the wake of the conflict, up until now, information about Pool was largely limited to anecdotal accounts.

While the peace accords have officially ended the conflict, the Department of Pool continues to experience sporadic insecurity, hampering people's efforts to restart their

lives. These findings demonstrate the extent of the damage to people's lives and the need to restore a real and lasting peace that will enable families to renew livelihoods lost to multiple conflicts.

- **High Levels of Population Displacement:** Virtually everyone (99.8% of households, CI=95%) was displaced by the conflict of 2002-2003,<sup>1</sup> compared to 94% by the conflict of 1998-1999. In applying 2002 population estimates, approximately 147,000 people in north and west Pool were displaced due to the 2002-2003 conflict, nearly one and a half times the UN's estimate of 100,000 IDPs in the whole Department. This new figure, however, represents IDPs in fewer than half of Pool's districts.
- **Continued Displacement:** According to 41% of respondents, at least one household member had not yet returned home. An average of one in five people who lived in the household before the conflict was still living away from the village due to insecurity, poor access to health-care services, or lack of schools. Furthermore, 16% of households surveyed were themselves still hosting IDPs.
- **Childhood Death:** One quarter of all households reported that one or more children had died as a result of conditions during the conflict.<sup>2</sup>
- **Housing Conditions:** The scale of destruction of private homes was enormous: 46% of families surveyed were living in homes that were partially or severely damaged as a result of the 2002-2003 conflict. Another 21% were not living in their previous home because it was partially or completely destroyed. Despite the gradual resettlement encouraged by the signing of the peace accords, people in Pool still do not have the means to rebuild or rehabilitate their homes.
- **Disappearance of Villages:** Entire villages have been destroyed by the conflict or are too insecure to repopulate. This study identified eight villages and two neighborhoods in larger towns that no longer exist.
- **Agriculture:** Despite the central role of agriculture in Pool, one-third of households had not had a harvest since returning home after the end of hostilities. One in nine households reported that they would not harvest for another year. Seed stocks are also critically low. Only 25% of the households used their own seed stocks to plant during the past year.
- **Water and Sanitation:** Only 8% of households collect water from a tap. A third of households have to walk over a kilometer to their water source, some walking as far as 7km. Though 72% of respondents have access to a latrine, 59% share with 5 or more people, and 18% share with 10 or more people.
- **Education:** Two-thirds of schools have one or no qualified teachers. Schools do not have essential equipment and materials. Only 1 in 15 primary school students and 1 in 18 secondary students owns a textbook. On average, six students share a desk in the primary schools; 15% of primary schools surveyed have no desks at all.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that overall national levels of displacement were higher during the 1998-99 conflict with an estimated 250,000 people from Brazzaville's southern neighborhoods fled mostly into Pool, and across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Among the Pool population itself, however, the survey indicated these slightly higher levels of displacement in 2002-2003 vs. 1998-1999.

<sup>2</sup> This question was followed up in the survey by inquiring what factors contributed to the death. The most common responses were: no access to health-care services, malaria, malnutrition, and unsafe drinking water. These are not child mortality figures, but only an indication from families of childhood death, which they attributed to a variety of adverse conditions experienced during the conflict.

- **School Infrastructure:** School infrastructure is in a critical state. According to the Ministry of Education, 85% of the school buildings in Pool are in ‘very poor’ condition. The field assessment of 37 schools revealed that 69% of buildings were totally or partially destroyed, 72% of which were damaged during the 2002-2003 conflict.
- **Health Care:** One third of health facilities in Pool are closed – either since the 1998-1999 or the 2002-2003 conflict. International NGOs play a substantial role in supporting health centers that are open. As emergency funding runs out, there is no clear strategy for transitioning the centers to community control; government resources are limited, and returned families lack financial means to sustain them.
- **Continued Insecurity and Violence:** One in five households had suffered an act of violence during or since the 2002-2003 conflict. Most reported crimes were committed against men and included 72 cases of murder. One in five households do not feel safe in their villages. The greater presence of armed militia in an area corresponded to a greater sense of insecurity.

<b>Selected Statistics</b> (CI = 95%, ME=2.5%)	
Families displaced in 2002-2003	99.8%
Families currently living in partially or destroyed homes	58%
Families reporting their house was destroyed in the 2002-2003 conflict	46%
Families with members still not returned	41%
Families reporting the death of a child during the conflict 2002-2003	25%
Families presently hosting other displaced persons	16%
Families with children who abandoned school because of the conflict	29%
Households who have not harvested since their return to their village	33%
Households reporting all or part of last harvest stolen	14%
Household members reducing number of meals because of food shortages	88%
Household members not eating for one or more days per week due to shortages	55%
Families who report feeling unsafe in their villages	20%
Female-headed households	24%



## Abbreviations

ACTED	L'Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement
ASU	Action de Secours d'Urgence
BEPC	Certificate of First Cycle Studies ( <i>Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle</i> )
BET	Certificate of Technical Studies ( <i>Brevet d'Etudes Techniques</i> )
CAM	Comité d'Aide Médicale
CEG	Collège d'éducation générale
CEPE	Certificate of Elementary Studies ( <i>Certificat d'Etudes Élémentaires</i> )
CHU	University Hospital Center ( <i>Centre Hospitalier Universitaire</i> )
CNR	Conseil National de Réinsertion
CI	Confidence interval
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAC	Congolese Armed Forces ( <i>Forces Armées Congolais</i> )
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HCRFF	High Commission for the Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (Haut Commissariat pour le Démobilisation et Réinsertion des ex-Combattants)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ME	Margin of error
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCT	Congolese Labor Party
ROC	Republic of Congo
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

## BACKGROUND

Since embarking on the transition to democracy in 1991, the Republic of Congo (or Congo/Brazzaville) has been racked by no less than four periods of civil upheaval.<sup>3</sup> The 1999 Cessation of Hostilities Accord and 2001 National Reconciliation Dialogue after the 1998-1999 conflict heralded new optimism for sustainable peace. Renewed fighting, however, erupted in late March 2002 following democratic elections that secured the presidency of Denis Sassou-Nguesso. As government forces sought to rout the last pockets of Ninja rebel militias from their remote bases in the Department of Pool<sup>4</sup> west of Brazzaville, hopes for nationwide peace once again disintegrated.

Although fighting and looting reduced thousands of homes to rubble in Brazzaville's southern neighborhoods during the 1998-1999 conflict, most of the combat took place in Pool and *Grand Niari* region (Niari, Bouenza, and Lekoumou Departments) farther west. During this conflict, an estimated 350,000 - 400,000 people were displaced throughout the southern part of the country.

Unresolved issues from 1998-1999 contributed to the 2002-2003 conflict. While the December 1999 accords and subsequent DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) programs effectively dismantled the 'Cocoyes' rebel movement operating in the *Grand Niari*, results among Pool's Ninja fighters were far less encouraging. Ninja participation in demobilization programs led by the UN and other government structures between 2001-2002 was timid. Following the breakdown of negotiations for the disarmament in March 2002, the Ninjas once again took up arms and re-asserted control over key towns in Pool's western districts.

After nearly a year of conflict, both sides reaffirmed their commitments to the 1999 Peace Accords on March 17, 2003. Despite the end to open hostilities, true peace has yet to return. The current landscape is characterized both by pockets of sporadic unrest and insecurity and pockets of calm and stability. The presence of armed ex-combatants and the nature of relations with their former enemies determine the nature of this "Peace without Peace," as one government official described the current situation. In places such as Mayama, Ninja militia members and government troops "cohabit" peacefully, respecting locally brokered agreements not to publicly carry weapons. In most areas however, government soldiers and former Ninja militia fighters still openly carry arms. In the Ninja strongholds in western Pool, the government military and political presence is mostly symbolic. The predominance of Ninja in such zones has led to increased lawlessness, particularly along the railway, where banditry is still a regular phenomenon. Large-scale resettlement in Pool has occurred since the March accords. Without a long-term resolution to the conflict, however, the "Peace without Peace" remains fragile at best.

Conditions remain uncertain for those who have returned home. Many families still feel unsafe, and performing daily activities that take them far from home can pose significant risk. The presence of uncontrolled militia can deteriorate into banditry, with reports of exactions and reprisals still common.

The conflict also dissolved the civic cohesion of Pool communities. Many villages have not re-established important community activities and social services at schools, health

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<sup>3</sup> The first period of civil conflict after the transition to democracy in 1991 was from 1993-1994. The second conflict, which brought current President Sassou to power was in 1997. The 1998-1999 conflict and the 2002-2003 conflict are the third and fourth periods of unrest.

<sup>4</sup> The Department of Pool is one of ten administrative regions in the country. Following common usage, this report may refer to the Department of Pool simply as Pool.

centers, and places of worship. The absence of important members of civil society in these village-level structures further heightens this sense of disjointedness and stunts the recovery of these areas.

Limited humanitarian access, minimal official data and the dearth of other sources of information mean that few outside the Department of Pool are aware of the realities of life there. On both national and international levels, the problems still confronting Pool are not well publicized. Even in Brazzaville, less than 100km from Pool's administrative seat in Kinkala, little is known about the difficult conditions in which the population lives.

### **The 2002-2003 Conflict**

The 2002-2003 conflict reportedly started in the town of Kindamba in northern Pool in March 2002. Hostilities broke out in the shadow of failed negotiations for disarmament and just ten days after presidential election won by President Sassou N'Guesso. Tens of thousands of people began fleeing Pool. In early April 2002, the conflict intensified after government forces responded to a Ninja attack on a train. After further insurgencies in Mayama, Vindza and Kimba, Brazzaville dispatched government troop reinforcements to the region. A security operation in April 2002 in southern Brazzaville led to widespread panic and the temporary displacement of people from the Makelekele and Bas Congo neighborhoods. Many of their vacated homes were looted. As the conflict escalated, areas in Pool became increasingly unreachable, until almost the entire region was inaccessible.

After the first large population movements in March and April, a second exodus from Pool occurred in October 2002 when armed groups attacked villages as close as 30 kilometers from Brazzaville, such as Mbanza-Ndounga, Yanga, and Linzolo. Families fled on foot towards Brazzaville where they were forced to temporarily settle in eight ad-hoc sites established in schools and churches in the far southwestern outskirts, west of the Djoué River. About 10,000 people lived in these camps. At the time, the UN estimated that the number of internally displaced people (IDP) within Pool, Bouenza, and Brazzaville reached 100,000.

The conflict continued until March 2003, when the government and the *Conseil National de Résistance* (CNR)—the Ninjas' political arm—signed agreements reaffirming commitments to the December 1999 Peace Accords and Cessation of Hostilities agreements. The Ninja rebels agreed to disarm and enable the restoration of state authority in Pool. For its part, the government consented to guarantee an amnesty for the rebels, reintegrate them into the national army, and include rebel representatives in a special committee to be formed to establish peace.

The security conditions in Pool gradually improved after the signing of these accords. Displaced families slowly started to return home to restart their lives. Many, however, found their homes looted and damaged. Most of these families had lost corrugated iron roofing and essential household goods to looters. Systematic destruction of homes in such places as Louloubou and Kimbedi has left entire villages virtually homeless. Community health and education infrastructure were also affected, their material and equipment stolen and their personnel absent. International and local NGOs responded to some of the emergency needs with health interventions, shelter assistance, distribution of essential household items, and some small-scale road rehabilitation activities. The difficulty in accessing some of the zones that were the most affected means that the humanitarian efforts to date have only begun to address the needs.

### **Legislative Elections**

After the presidential elections in March 2002, legislative elections were scheduled for May and June 2002 for the 137 members of the National Assembly, as well as the

department counselors, who select representatives to serve in the national Senate. At the local level, the counselors also play an important role in determining the department's development budget.

In mid-June 2002, just before the second round of votes for the National Assembly, Brazzaville was hit by a wave of insecurity. Ninja militiamen attacked police stations and a military base near Brazzaville's international airport. Despite calls to postpone the second round of voting, elections went ahead in most constituencies, or voting districts. Due to continued insecurity, however, voters in eight of the fourteen constituencies in Pool<sup>5</sup> did not go to the polls. As a result, people in these constituencies were unable to vote for National Assembly members or to elect counselors to serve at the departmental level. About a dozen positions in the Senate and National Assembly were empty and have since remained unfilled.<sup>6</sup>

More than two years later, in those constituencies, the postponed elections have yet to take place. Without representation for these conflict-affected areas, it is less likely that the critical issues facing Pool will be raised in Parliament. No representation also means fewer resources. Under normal circumstances, the elected counselors from each department form a Department Council to which Parliament allocates a development budget. These funds are used to supplement the centrally allocated health, education and security budgets. Because of the postponed 2002 elections, the Departmental Council for Pool is not complete and no budget has been allocated. The absence of this budget inhibits post-conflict recovery and substantially limits the role of the local administrators who would manage these funds.

### **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reinsertion (DDR)**

The end of the 2002-2003 conflict was accompanied by great expectations for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reinsertion (DDR) programs to help rid the Republic of Congo of the continued threat of small arms and youth militias. In April 2003, 2,300 ex-Ninjas surrendered weapons voluntarily following the signature of peace accords.<sup>7</sup> Since then, formal disarmament programs have stalled. In fact, despite multiple programs promising money for weapons, there has not been a single success: not one Ninja soldier has been demobilized in over 16 months.

In July 2000, after the 1998-1999 conflict, the Congolese Government, together with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), had initiated a disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion (DDR) program in response to the considerable number of small arms and militia groups remaining in the country after the successive civil conflicts of the 1990's. IOM reported that 11,114 weapons were collected, and 8,009 militia members reintegrated.

In 2001, the Congolese Government also created its own High Commission for the Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (HCRFF). Government Colonel Michel Ngakala leads the Commission with representation from the Government and the CNR. The World Bank issued a \$5 million credit to the HCRFF. With the intention of reintegrating ex-combatants into productive life, the commission financed 2,417 micro projects proposed by 6,658 ex-militia men from all over the country.

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<sup>5</sup> Ngoma Tsé Tsé, Kindamba, Kimba, Vinga, Mayama, Kinkala, and 2 constituencies in Mindouli.

<sup>6</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), "Congo: Electoral Committee announced for Pool Region," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 22 September 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), "Congo: Over 2,300 Ninjas surrender in recent days," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 23 April 2003.

In Pool, however, only 1,130 ex-combatants participated in these programs and were disarmed. The vast majority of Ninjas remained in Pool with the arms that they have retained since the 1998-1999 conflict. The UN reports that an additional 16,000 Ninjas were signed up for reintegration into civilian life, but were never incorporated into DDR programs for lack of funds. When hostilities resumed in 2002, they were easily re-recruited. While there are no numbers disaggregated for Pool, in early 2004, Colonel Ngakala estimated that there were no less than 42,000 small arms in circulation in the country.<sup>8</sup> After the first disarmament in April 2003, the CNR reported that they had 14,000 men enrolled in their militia. The Congolese Defence Minister, Jacques Yvon Ndolou, has estimated the Ninjas at 17,000. Ntoumi himself speaks of as many as 50,000.

Recognizing the urgent need to disarm Ninja ex-combatants, the European Union agreed to finance an emergency UNDP project to disarm 1,000 Ninjas for a cost of € 730,000 (US\$ 900,000). The objective was to finance micro-projects in exchange for arms surrendered to the UN. After months of negotiations between the Ninjas and the Government in mid-2003, the process stalled. In January 2004, the program was officially launched with Ntoumi's symbolic presentation to the Government of a rusty 14.5 mm cannon. But in a speech at the ceremony, Ntoumi imposed new conditions on the disarmament of his troops. In March 2004, the Government issued statements officially rejecting Ntoumi's new demands and, after nearly 12 months without progress, the European Union withdrew its funding.

The UNDP has recently launched a second program that offers the Ninjas a new opportunity to disarm. "Disarmament for Development" is a national program that aims to reduce the number of illegal small arms not just in Pool, but also throughout the country while assisting communities with high concentrations of ex-combatants and arms to receive development assistance. The program targets not only the ex-combatants, but also offers incentives to entire communities to surrender arms. In exchange for the returned weapons, communities will be rewarded with assistance funds to support activities such as school rehabilitation or purchase of a grain mill. The collected arms will be destroyed in a public ceremony. It is hoped that the program, worth €2 million (approximately US\$2.4 million), which started in August 2004, can impel Ninjas to give up their weapons for good.

### **The Department of Pool Today**

While a tenuous calm now holds in Pool, true peace remains elusive. The return of the majority of the population misleadingly conveys a sense of stability and normality. Indeed, in some districts, there is comparative stability and the timid resumption of productive activities. In others, high concentrations of armed militiamen and government troops darken the hopes for any meaningful restoration of normal life. As both groups become increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress to end the present stalemate, tensions can only rise.

Brazzaville has re-asserted political and military 'control' of all districts of Pool. In some districts however, this control is little more than a cosmetic presence. A Government-appointed Prefect heads the Department of Pool, and government sub-prefects now run the 13 districts — including the most remote areas of Pool, such as Vindza and Kimba. (See *Annex A: Map of the different districts in Pool*). Units of the *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC) or national army are also present throughout Pool, although at differing levels of force and authority. In some cases, government forces and Ninjas are present in the same villages. In others, they split up the terrain, choosing to occupy neighboring villages instead of living in the same vicinity.

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<sup>8</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), "Congo: DDR programme only partially completed," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2 February 2004.

The situation varies widely across the different districts — especially in the west where there is the strongest Ninja presence. A delicate balance of power exists between the Ninjas and the army, sometimes assisted by local committees comprised of representatives of the local administration (sub-prefect and village chiefs), the army and the Ninjas. In some towns, both groups carry arms; in others, agreements prohibit the carrying of arms. In Vindza, only the Ninjas carry arms. Some of the villages in rural areas are controlled solely by the Ninjas. The calm is often broken by the sound of gunfire, particularly in towns along the railway line and in Mindouli district. Frequent roadblocks are manned by Ninjas or by FAC soldiers demanding money from local transporters. Some areas are more stable than others. The southern and northeastern districts (Boko, Loumou, Louingui, Ignié and Ngabe) escaped the worst of the conflict and are not troubled by insecurity or militia presence. The central and northwestern districts still suffer from a high presence of militiamen and sporadic insecurity.

### **Demographic Information**

According to the most recent national census,<sup>9</sup> the population of the Republic of Congo was 2.57 million in 1996. With an average population growth rate estimated at 2.8% per year,<sup>10</sup> the 2004 national population estimate is 3,213,173. In 1996, the entire Department of Pool had a population of 253,946 including four towns that are administratively separate from the rural districts. While there was considerable displacement within Pool, and to Pool from Brazzaville in 1998-1999, the long-term impact on population figures is not known. Most population movements in 1998-1999 were due to fighting in Brazzaville that displaced urban inhabitants to Pool and other nearby areas. Applying a conservative annual population growth rate of 2.8% gives an estimated population of 312,529 in the Department of Pool in 2002 prior to the conflict.<sup>11</sup> Pool has the highest rural population among the Congo's ten departments: approximately 85% lives in rural villages outside of the towns, known administratively as *communes*.

The 1996 census and 2002 population estimations for the Department of Pool are available in Annex C with a breakdown by district. Mindouli is the most populous district followed by Ngoma Tsé Tsé and Kinkala. Mindouli does not, however, have the largest number of villages. Other districts such as Louingui, Kinkala and Boko have more dispersed rural populations. (*See Annex C for the 1996 census and 2002 population estimations for the Department of Pool with a breakdown by district.*)

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted during June-July 2004. Two primary tools were used to collect data: first, a detailed survey among a cluster sampling of households in randomly selected villages was developed. Second, secondary data and primary information was collected to verify the status of health and school infrastructure in Pool.

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<sup>9</sup> The 1996 census has not been approved by the Government. However, it is recognized as the most recent reliable source of demographic information and is widely quoted by official publications. For this reason, it was used as the baseline data for this survey.

<sup>10</sup> Estimates for annual national population growth rates range between 2.8% and 3.2%. The World Bank Human Development Indicators and the UNICEF State of the World's Children Report (2003) state annual growth rates of 3.0% and 3.2% respectively. This report has applied a conservative 2.8% figure following recommendations from representatives with UNFPA in Brazzaville.

<sup>11</sup> This conservative growth rate was also used to account for high estimates of child mortality following the 1998-1999 conflict.

## Household Surveys

To target rural households affected by the conflict in the Department of Pool, districts that met the following criteria were selected:

- 1) Affected by the 2002-2003 conflict;
- 2) Continued presence of militia groups;
- 3) Relatively isolated, largely rural populations.

The seven districts that met these criteria were Kindamba, Kinkala, Kimba, Mbanza Ndounga, Mayama, Mindouli and Vindza. The districts in southern Pool, namely Loumo, Loungui, and Boko no longer have rebel militias and were less affected by fighting. While Ngoma Tsé Tsé experienced fighting and has a small presence of Ninjas, the population lives close to Brazzaville and tends to be less rural. Ignié and Ngabé experienced less fighting in 2002-2003 and are not inhabited by Ninjas.

The total population in the selected districts, excluding the *communes*, or towns, was 124,902 according to the 1996 census, and 147,410 in 2002 based on an annual growth estimate of 2.8%. These districts represent approximately 50% of the population of Pool. (See Annex D for a table of the population in the six districts and population estimates for 2002.)

Clusters were selected using a two-stage cluster methodology with probability proportionate to population size. The original sample size of households was estimated with a minimum confidence interval (CI) of 95%, a margin of error (ME) of 5%, and a design effect of 2.0 to account for clustering.<sup>12</sup> The *communes* were excluded from baseline population data to maintain the focus on the rural population: their inclusion would have skewed the clusters toward town centers and away from rural areas. Thirty clusters were selected among 26 villages. The teams surveyed a total of 865 households in 30 clusters during June and July 2004.<sup>13</sup> (See Annex B for a map of the selected villages and districts; see Annex E for a list of villages, population size, numbers of clusters, and surveys completed.)

Because the population of Kimba district is small, no villages were selected: effectively, the cluster selection interval jumped all of the villages in Kimba.<sup>14</sup> However, the following clusters were split between the other districts: Mindouli - fourteen clusters; Kinkala and Mbanza Ndounga – five clusters; and Kindamba, Mayama and Vindza – two clusters each. The spread of clusters across these six districts generally reflects the population density of each district. For example, Mindouli district had a total rural population of 46,260 (1996 census) representing 38% of the total population in the 6 districts, and 14 clusters, representing 46% of the sample.

The household questionnaire was developed in a participatory manner and translated into Lari, the local language predominant in Pool. The questionnaire was then field-tested in Linzolo village in Ngoma Tsé Tsé district and adjusted prior to implementation. Translating the questionnaire into the local language helped to standardize interview

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<sup>12</sup> A confidence interval is a range of values that has a high probability of containing the parameter being estimated. The 95% confidence interval is constructed in such a way that 95% of such intervals will contain the parameter. The margin of error is simply a measure of how "precise" the data are. The design effect is the ratio of the true variance of a statistic to the variance derived under simple random sampling assumptions. The values used in this study are standard for this methodology.

<sup>13</sup> The survey teams selected 30 households in 30 clusters in order to ensure that a minimum sample size of 769 corresponding to the margin of error was reached.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that Kimba district was created after the 1996 census was conducted, so it did not appear as an administrative entity in our baseline data. However, since Kimba district was carved out of Vindza district, all of the villages and the population of Kimba district were included in the baseline data.

questions and their interpretation. Thirty people were recruited to conduct the household survey and were trained in survey methodology. A local Protestant NGO, Action de Secours d'Urgence (ASU), participated in the development of the questionnaire, and two ASU staff were recruited for the survey team. Team members worked in pairs, spending an average of 40 minutes per household at roughly five households per day. Three pairs of evaluators covered each cluster and were supervised by a team leader, who ensured that the survey methodology was respected and reviewed the completed questionnaire for accuracy. Team leaders were also responsible for conducting key informant interviews with local authorities and health and education workers.

### **The Selection of Households**

In the chosen villages, the survey teams conducted surveys with randomly selected households. The evaluation team's first point of contact upon arrival was the village chief. A village mapping exercise was then conducted, in which the village chief and local stakeholders drew a map of the village in the earth. Once completed, a blindfolded individual threw a stone onto the map. The point on which the stone landed indicated the approximate location of the first household in the cluster, from which all the other households were selected. The second household was that closest to the first; the third was that closest to the second; and so on, until thirty households had been identified. In the case that nobody was available to complete the interview, the house was revisited the next day. If no one was available on the second day, the household was dropped from the survey and not replaced. The survey teams targeted female members for the interviews regardless of the gender of the head of the household. Females were sought for their knowledge of the health and nutrition of children and other female members in the household. Males answered the survey only when there was no adult female member of the household.

The household surveys were complemented with focus group discussions in Mbanza Ndounga, Mayama, and Kindamba districts. The focus groups concentrated on specific issues, such as food security and access to education. Information from the focus groups helped to increase understanding, clarify details and reveal important opinions and linkages. Men and women were consulted separately in groups of 8-12. When larger groups resulted, the focus groups were considered to be group interviews or discussions.

### **Survey Limitations**

Due to displacement and absence of families in abandoned and destroyed houses, it was not possible to reach the targeted 900 households. In cases in which household members were absent, the household was skipped and not replaced. This occurred in 35 cases, which resulted in reaching a total of 865 households.

Due to resource and time limitations, this evaluation did not attempt to gather comprehensive census information of the villages surveyed. This made it difficult to ascertain how many households were not living in the village due to continued displacement or housing destruction. For this reason, it is likely that information about displacement and level of housing destruction is underreported.

The level of destruction of houses in Pool could be higher than indicated for two additional reasons. First, the shelter assessment was conducted for the structure in which the family was currently living. Though families were asked whether or not their previous house was damaged or destroyed, the evaluation did not physically verify damage to previous homes. Among families reporting that they were living in abandoned structures, renting homes, or living with family or friends, a large portion reported that their previous home had suffered considerable damage or was destroyed. Second, IDPs staying with "host families" that were surveyed were not considered as



additional households and therefore not interviewed. It is likely that many of these families also had homes that were damaged or destroyed.

Violence against women may also be underreported for two reasons. First, there are strong cultural taboos associated with sexual assault or rape, including the possibility of divorce where the incident is acknowledged to a husband. Second, women interviewed would be less likely to report sexual violence to male members of survey teams than to female members. Although Caritas Congo actively recruited women surveyors, the field teams were mainly composed of men. The ongoing insecurity in the area and the difficult working and travel conditions, which required survey teams to remain overnight in villages for several days at a time, may have deterred women from applying and accepting positions.

There were two cases of villages that were no longer inhabited in the cluster sample: they were replaced by the nearest village. Loutété in Mindouli district replaced the village of Oualala because the survey teams found Oualala deserted. In Insini in Vindza district, the “Hospital” neighborhood of the village is no longer inhabited, so surveys were conducted in more distant neighborhoods that are administratively considered to be in the same village.

In Vindza district, Kimpuou village was added to supplement the number of households in Ikomi. Kimpuou is the nearest accessible village to Ikomi. To ensure 30 households in this cluster, 16 households were interviewed in Ikomi and 14 households were added in Kimpuou after a second random selection.

### **Health and Education Evaluations**

The assessment of health and school infrastructure was undertaken using two approaches. Secondary data was collected from local government authorities and national-level ministries, international organizations, UN agencies,<sup>15</sup> and local and international NGOs<sup>16</sup> (*See Annex F*) to provide an accurate and extensive overview of the current state of health and education services in Pool. This data was compiled, analyzed, and then used as the basis for interviews with representatives of those organizations. Additionally, the survey teams collected primary data in the 26 villages selected for the household survey. Team leaders used questionnaires to collect information on each state structure (health center, hospital, primary or secondary school) in the village. Data included the number and qualifications of personnel, access to and quality of equipment and materials, type and quantity of services offered, community support for and use of the structure, and the condition of the building.

This report draws background information from previous studies conducted on a local or national basis. A number of sources are cited in this report and a list of other sources is located in Annex I.

### **Local Mechanisms for Conflict Management and Resolution**

Survey teams gathered information on local mechanisms for conflict resolution during interviews with the authorities in each of the 26 selected villages, and with each district’s

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations agencies in Brazzaville, such as the UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) contributed valuable information to the final report.

<sup>16</sup> International NGOs working in the Pool include International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Boko and Mbanza Ndounga; Alisei in Mindouli; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Holland in Kinkala and Kindamba; MSF France in Mindouli; Comité d’Aide Médicale (CAM) in Ngoma Tsé Tsé and Mayama; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Mindouli and Kinkala; L’Agence d’Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED) in Mindouli and Kinkala; and Atlas Logistique in Mindouli.

sub-prefect. The interviews were complemented by focus group discussions as well as by the results of the household survey, during which questions about incidences of violence and perceptions of insecurity were asked.

## LIVELIHOOD RENEWAL

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*One quarter of all households are headed by women.*

### **Household Composition**

The average size of households surveyed is five people. One quarter of households are headed by women, 62% of whom are widowed and 33% of whom are divorced. Most of the male-headed households are monogamous, with a small minority having two or more wives. Nearly a third of the households had an elderly person living with them, and 13% included one handicapped member. Whether widowed, divorced or unmarried, 78% of the women-heading households support children, with an average of 2-3 children per household and half with children under the age of five.

While this study did not include a census in the target area, interviews with local authorities in each cluster included questions to compare village population before and after the two conflicts. While recognizing that the population sizes suggested might be estimates, numbers reported by the authorities do indicate a drop in population throughout the region. In some cases, the village population estimates were disproportionately high because they included the number of displaced people from other areas who had moved into the village.

### **Displacement**

The findings confirm that the level of displacement and the period of displacement during the 2002-2003 conflict was far worse than initially estimated. Though 94% of families reported being displaced during the previous conflict, virtually every family (99.8%) was displaced in the recent conflict. More than half said they were displaced for more than 12 months.

This report considers the best estimates of population displacement figures during the conflict to be well below the actual numbers. During the conflict, when the entire Department of Pool was inaccessible, UN-OCHA estimated 100,000 displaced people within Pool and Brazzaville. Yet this study shows that close to 100% of families in six of the ten Pool districts were displaced. Based on the 1996 census, approximately 124,000 were displaced in these six districts alone. Adjusting for population growth (2.8% growth per year), the displacement figure in 2002 is closer to 147,000 people, representing just half of Pool's population. Though these areas were the worst affected by the conflict with almost 100% displacement, all other districts also had displaced populations. The study thus concludes that the official UN OCHA estimate of the number of IDPs made at the time of the conflict is likely to be at least 50% below actual numbers.

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*Estimations of the number of IDPs made at the time of the conflict likely under reported the actual figure by more than 50%.*

More than half of the households were displaced for longer than a year, incurring a significant cost to people's lives. An additional 36% were displaced for longer than six months. Comparatively, in 1998-1999 less than a third were displaced for longer than a year, and 28% were displaced for six months or less. During the 2002-2003 conflict, 57% fled into the forest or stayed in another village. Nearly one-third went to another department and 10% fled to Brazzaville.

**Figure 1: Length of Displacement**

<b>Period:</b>	<b>1998-1999</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
Not Displaced	6%	0.2%
< 1 month	1%	0.5%
1 - 3 months	7%	2%
3 - 6 months	20%	8%
6 - 12 months	35%	35%
12 + months	31%	53%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>99.8%</b>

The effects of displacement are still visible and are captured in the results of the household surveys. Respondents reported a considerable number of family members who had not yet returned to Pool, representing upwards of 20% of the population. Families explained that the main reasons other members had not returned included insecurity, children continuing school in Brazzaville, poor access to health services, families members traumatized by the events, and fear of conflict restarting. Fifty-five families (6%) identified themselves as still being displaced because of the conflict. Another 16% said they were hosting other IDPs.

*Displacement of the Pool population in 2002-2003 was more widespread and for longer periods than during 1998-1999.*

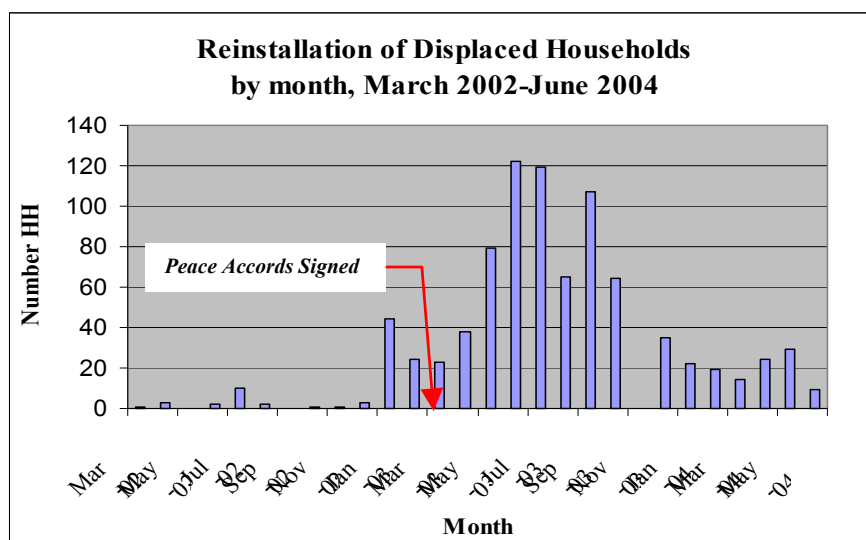
Due to the absence of data, attempts to estimate the number of IDPs remaining in Brazzaville and other districts were unsuccessful. All IDP camps in Brazzaville were officially closed in March 2004, though many IDPs stayed on in Brazzaville. Follow-up focus group discussions with displaced families in Brazzaville corroborate the reasons cited above for not returning, but also revealed families' desire to return home. Insecurity, whether perceived or real, is the major deterrent to displaced people resettling in Pool.

### **Return of the Displaced to Pool**

Though a few IDPs were returning before the beginning of 2003, the signing of the peace accords between the Government and the National Resistance Council (CNR) on 17 March 2003 encouraged more families to come back. In the months prior to the peace accords, only 23 families in the sample returned to Pool. The largest movement began in June 2003 with most people going back during the second half of 2003. The survey interviewed nine families who had just returned home in June 2004, indicating that displaced persons are still coming back to Pool.

*Resettlement is still continuing in the Pool.*

**Figure 2: Reinstallation of Displaced Households by Month, March 2002-June 2004**



58% of surveyed families were living in damaged homes.

### Disappearance of Villages

The disappearance of villages constitutes an alarming development that will substantially impede the renewal of livelihoods for returning families. Insecurity and the widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure are the main factors that have led to desertion by the local population. This study identified eight villages and two neighborhoods in Pool that have been abandoned and, effectively, no longer exist: Sha Sha and Mouvimba



*SOTEXCO factory: Since the signing of the Peace Accords in March 2003, the majority of 150,000 people who fled Pool have returned to their villages. In an old factory that was thriving before its closure in 1989 still live about 500 IDP. For them, returning has not been possible yet.*

in Kinkala district, Oualala in Mindouli district, Fia near Mayama, Moyen and Diolo in Vindza, Garé and N'kou to the north of Brazzaville, Kinkembo neighborhood in Mindouli district, and the center of Insini in Vindza district.<sup>17</sup>

### Childhood Death

One quarter (26%) of families reported that one or more children had died as a result of conditions during the conflict. A reported 335 children died as a result of the conflict. Most households lost between one and two children, although some lost as many as five or six. Some reported losing a child from guns misfiring, reprisal attacks against the family, or Ninjas firing their guns haphazardly. Others indicated that lack of access to health care, malaria, malnutrition, and lack of potable water contributed to child deaths in their household.

### **Displacement:**

*Repeated displacement during the conflicts in 2002-2003 and 1998-1999 have etched fear into many inhabitants of Pool. Tens of thousands of families lived in the forest for long periods of time to seek refuge from the fighting in the towns and villages.*

*Villagers surveyed for this report openly discussed their continued fear of internal displacement. In a number of villages, residents revealed that they are maintaining makeshift shelters in the forest in the event of future insecurity or conflict.*

*Farmers traditionally build rudimentary huts near their fields for protection during the rains and as a living space during the busy planting and harvest seasons. These shelters, however, are now being built with the express purpose of providing refuge during times of trouble and conflict. Families reported that they keep stocks of food and leave valuable items there as a precaution in case instability increases.*

<sup>17</sup> In addition to these villages, there are reports of towns that had between 3 and 6 times as many people living there before the conflicts.

## Shelter

### Housing Destruction

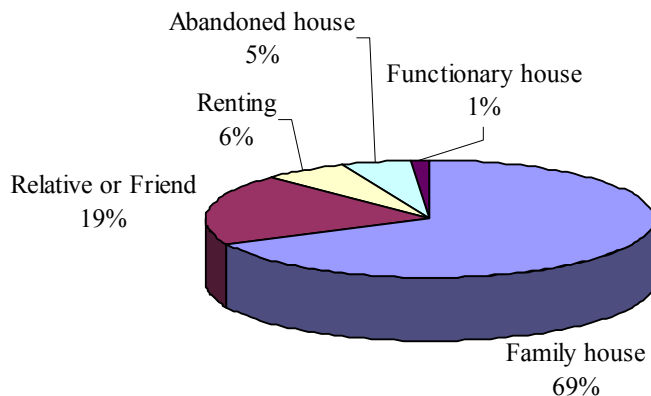
Despite the passage of time since the signing of the peace accords, housing conditions for many families remain desperate. Large-scale destruction of houses and slow rehabilitation means that many families (58%) still live in damaged or destroyed buildings. Only 25% have been able to repair their home. Another 30% are not living at home, 61% of whom indicated that this was due to the damage to the building. Curiously, most of the families interviewed who had lost their homes no longer consider themselves to be displaced.

Damage to Pool residents' homes was considerably worse following the 2002-2003 conflict compared to the previous conflict: 80% of respondents attributed damage solely to the 2002-2003 conflict. Another 6% said their home had been damaged during both conflicts, but only 14% reported that damage was from the 1998-1999 conflict.

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*80% of housing damage occurred during the 2002-2003 conflict, compared with 14% of homes damaged by the 1998-1999 conflict.*

**Figure 3: Where are you living now? (N=864)**



### Current

#### Housing

Homes were razed in helicopter bombardments or heavy weapons attacks, burned, or looted for their roofs, windows and doors. The most common damage was stolen metal roofing (26%), which left part or all of the roof uncovered. Another 26% of the houses had damage to one or more walls, and many houses had windows and doors stolen. Only 15% of the damage could be fully or partially attributed to weather or neglect.

Mindouli district was particularly badly affected during the 2002-2003 conflict. An evaluation of humanitarian conditions undertaken by Atlas Logistique in September-October 2003 identified the villages of Kingoyi, Kinkembo, Luolombo, and Kimbedi, situated along the railway line, as the most severely damaged. While the walls of some of the houses in these villages were still standing, soldiers had systematically looted metal and wood roofing structures, windows and doors. Villages northeast and south of Mindouli also experienced extensive looting and destruction. The study found that approximately half of Mindouli district's houses were destroyed; 25% have no roof; and only 25% remain intact. East of Mindouli, along the railway line, lie the villages of Missafou and Massembo Loubaki. The latter was completely destroyed. At the time of the evaluation, Massembo Loubaki was deserted. Missafou was sheltering a number of displaced people from nearby settlements. A mere 13% of houses along the railway line are still standing.

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*22% of all families surveyed are not living in their former home because it was destroyed.*

*Villages along the train line suffered widespread destruction and looting.*

Looting during the 2002-2003 conflict was particularly widespread: 94% of families lost belongings they had left in their houses while they were displaced. Most of the items lost were kitchen utensils, followed by bed linen, clothes, agricultural tools, and tables and chairs. Sixteen percent of the households reported stolen food stocks. Lost agricultural seeds or tools, hunting equipment, building materials, sewing machines, or commercial stock accounted for 30% of looted items. The loss of these essential possessions not only undermines households' ability to prepare food and restart economic activity, it sustains unacceptably low living standards and deteriorates the ability to maintain human dignity.

### **Damage and destruction of homes**

*Damaged and roofless homes dominate the landscape of scores of villages and towns in Pool. While some families have been able to rehabilitate their homes, housing still remains a major impediment to resettling villages and restarting livelihoods. Household surveys showed that 30% of families are not living in their previous homes mainly because of major damage or destruction.*

*Families have tried to repair damage with the limited means available to them, collecting scrap pieces of tin sheeting, tarpaulins, or thatch to replace missing roofs. Rainstorms and heavy winds are a particular threat and leave poorly protected homes exposed to harsh elements.*



*Housing destruction and reconstruction in the town of Mayama*

## **Economic Activities**

*32% of families are currently engaged in livestock activities compared to 84% prior to the conflict.*

### **Livelihood Occupations**

Agriculture is the most important economic activity in Pool. Overall, 91% of households were engaged in arable farming either as a primary or secondary source of income. Of these, 71% undertook some sort of secondary economic activity, the most common being vegetable gardening (26%) and petty commerce (17%). A further discussion of agricultural production is available in the following Food Security section.

The Department of Pool was once renowned for its livestock. Prior to the 2002-2003 conflict, 84% of the population kept farm animals, including pigs, goats and chickens. Now, mainly because of the high level of insecurity and theft, less than one third of the households have any animals at all. Those whose animals were stolen during the conflict likely do not have funds to restock.



Mayama: A villager in her house destroyed during fighting in April 2002. Materials for reconstruction are always lacking.

## Food Security

To assess the food security situation in the region, female members of household were asked a series of questions about food availability and eating habits to examine the extent to which coping mechanisms are used. The results were complemented with household information about agricultural production, utilization of food stocks, and access to markets.

### Agricultural Production

Agricultural activity is still far below pre-conflict levels. Despite the central subsistence role of agriculture, 33% of respondents had not harvested since they came back to their villages. Results were relatively consistent across districts, ranging from 26% of households in Mayama district to 40% in Mbanza Ndounga district that had not yet harvested. Of those households, 16% say that it will

be more than six months before they harvest. Furthermore, families who reported that their previous harvests were stolen were less likely to have harvested or planted. For a population dependent on small subsistence farming, the unavailability of produce presents a pressing problem in the short-term.

The years of insecurity and displacement have depleted seed stocks. Though small-scale farmers generally rely on their own harvest to produce a seed store for the following season, only 25% of the households surveyed had used their own stock for recent planting activity (March/April for staple crops). Sixteen percent supplemented their own stock with seeds that were bought, borrowed, or given, and 25% had no seed, relying entirely on seed being given by NGOs, friends or family. More than a quarter of households bought all their seeds during the last planting season (40% purchased seeds in their own village; 36% purchased in Brazzaville;<sup>18</sup> 24% bought seeds from other villages in Pool or the neighboring region). Having to buy seed is an additional financial burden on households recovering from long periods of conflict and displacement. Some families did not plant staple crops in March/April because they were not able to procure seeds at all.

Although the majority of people have started to plant, harvest is still distant for some. This is likely due to a heavy reliance on manioc, the primary crop for 85% of families, which requires more than eight months to mature. Of the returned families who had

*Reduced access to seed remains a constraint on agricultural production.*

<sup>18</sup> Group discussions indicated that seeds are not normally bought in Brazzaville, but were on this occasion because of poor local markets and the need to purchase seeds before returning to Pool.

harvested, only 28% had harvested manioc. Over 70% had harvested shorter-cycle maize, peanut and vegetable crops.

In comparison to seed stocks, a higher number of families had access to agricultural tools. Donations supplied 37% of rural families with essential agricultural tools, representing a larger percentage than families who had been donated seeds. The level of donations is largely attributed to NGO tool distribution as part of return kit programs reaching a wider beneficiary group than the agriculture programs giving seed. All farming households had access to at least one type of agricultural tool, and 71% possessed both a machete and a hoe. Fourteen percent had only one tool while some families borrowed from others.

### **Food Utilization**

Most of the families consumed their last harvest. Of the 87% who said they ate all or part of their last harvest, 27% consumed all their harvest and 39% sold a portion. A considerable amount of produce was stolen from families' last harvest: 10% claimed that all their harvest was stolen, and 6% said that part of their produce had been stolen. Only 16% of families stored any of their last harvest (9% ate some and stored the rest, 7% ate, sold and stored their harvest). This low number helps to explain the shortage of seeds.<sup>19</sup>

Looting has resulted in a prolonged challenge to farmers' productive capacity. Families who had all or part of their previous harvest stolen are particularly vulnerable. Although these families constituted just 16% of the total sample, they represented 49% of the families who were yet to harvest. In this subgroup, not a single household had stored any seeds for the next planting season.

### **Household Consumption**

High levels of food insecurity have been caused by long periods of displacement, looting of food stock from homes and the fields, economic difficulties, low levels of agricultural production, and absence of seed stock. To address the severe food shortages being experienced in Pool, families are forced to adopt moderate and sometimes severe coping mechanisms. These include reducing the number of meals, reducing favorite or more expensive food items, and certain members of the household going without food.

The most common coping strategy was eating less preferred or less expensive food: 97% cut back on preferred or pricier meals due to shortages of food or finances. Eighty-eight percent of households reduce their daily food consumption at some point during the week to ensure that there is enough food for other family members. Adult family members going without food to feed their children was also common: 26% of respondents cut meals between 4-6 days per week and 44% cut meals 1-3 days per week. More than half of respondents (55%) admit that they do not eat for at least one day per week because there is no food at home.

Despite the severe food shortages, families did not often resort to borrowing or buying food on credit, perhaps indicative of the low level of production experienced in the region or poor market access. Only 1% of households borrowed food every day of the week, 7% borrowed often (4-6 days), 29% rarely (less than three days) and 63% of households never borrowed food to eat.

### **Access to Markets and Transportation**

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<sup>19</sup> The number of households that had a seed store may have been underestimated due to the fact that seeds may be collected earlier when crops are standing and set aside for seed before being considered a "harvest." It is unknown how many respondents may have interpreted "harvest" in an inclusive or exclusive sense.



Transport links are essential for rural farmers to access markets to sell their agricultural produce and buy essential goods. Road conditions in Pool, however, are so bad, and armed militias manning roadblocks and demanding money so frequent, that few commercial transporters venture into the region. Only five out of the 26 villages included in the survey have a truck stopping or passing through during the week. Prior to the conflict, 10 villages had trucks stopping or passing through at least once a week. Eight of the villages in the study are located along the railway line, with upwards of than five trains passing through a week. It is not clear whether villagers along the railway have better market access than the other villages.



*The road between Brazzaville and Mayama has not been maintained and is not passable in many places.*

Villagers explained that the trucks did not come more regularly because of the poor condition of the roads (45%), insecurity (25%) and roadblocks erected by armed groups (20%). Manufactured goods are in short supply as a result of resettled families' low purchasing power and the lack of commercial transportation. Even essential household items such as soap are absent from local markets and households. Sixty-four percent of families reported that they do not have soap in their home. Though soap can serve as an indicator of hygiene and sanitation, it is also a strong indicator that markets and dispensable income have yet to be revitalized in Pool. Prices have increased due to limited availability, and in some cases soap cannot be bought.

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*Local markets have not recovered. 64% of families say that they do not have soap in their home, a common manufactured good that was widely available before the conflict.*

Insecurity and poor infrastructure are increasing commercial transportation costs to excessive levels. The cost of renting a truck roundtrip from Kinkala to Brazzaville is about between US\$800-1000. Bribes paid at roadblocks between Kinkala and Brazzaville can cost an additional \$20 for a single trip. Prior to the conflict, the same trip cost between US\$600-700; this 25% increase is resulting in fewer traders and higher costs passed on to the population.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Only 8% of households collect water from a tap. The majority (63%) reported a natural spring as their primary water source. A third of households have to walk over a kilometer to their water source, some walking as far as 7km.

According to Sphere Project minimum standards,<sup>20</sup> each household should have two water collection vessels of 1-20 liters, plus water storage vessels of 20 liters. In Pool, 56% of respondents fall below Sphere standards, with access to two or fewer recipients per household.<sup>21</sup> Sphere standards also indicate that each person should have access to 15L of water per day. The average household size in Pool is 4.8 people, meaning that 72L of water should be collected daily. However, more than half (54%) of all

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<sup>20</sup> The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. Geneva: The Sphere Project, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> "Recipient" was defined as a container dedicated specifically to water, so that cooking pots would not be registered in the answer.

households have a water storage capacity of 25 liters or less. It is likely that families have a limited store of water or are making repeated trips to collect water each day.

Though 72% of respondents have access to a latrine, 59% share with 5 or more people, and 18% share with 10 or more people.

## EDUCATION

### Methodology

The education assessment included the collection of secondary information from the various offices of the Ministry of Education and the departmental education office in Pool. Primary information was collected through the household surveys using a series of questions about education and access to schools. School assessments were also conducted in the field to evaluate the state of education services and infrastructure in villages where household surveys were completed. A total of 37 schools in the districts of Kindamba (6), Mindouli (22), Mbanza Ndounga (4), and Kinkala (5) were assessed, representing 28 primary schools and nine middle and secondary schools (*Collèges d'éducation générale* - CEGs). Where possible, the school director (21) was interviewed. If he or she was absent, a school teacher (7) or a member of the parent-student committee or village committee (7) was interviewed. A total of 33 schools of the 37 surveyed were open during the 2003-2004 school year, including 25 primary schools and 8 CEGs. The non-functioning schools were only included in survey questions about physical condition, year of last opening, and reasons why the school was not functioning. In addition, focus groups with community members were conducted, which supported the other findings. *See Annex G for additional education survey information.*

### Overview

As the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year gets under way, a number of schools are still closed. Those that are open function in makeshift buildings with little or no equipment or teaching materials. There is also a teacher shortage, demonstrated by the fact that some local communities have hired “voluntary” teachers, whose salary is paid by parents. Unfortunately, this means that parents who have not yet recovered from the consequences of displacement and interrupted livelihoods are required to pay higher than normal fees for their children’s education. The Ministry of Education has recently tried to address the added hardships in Pool by lowering school fees. With the cost of additional teachers, most parents pay even higher fees, which contribute to higher drop out rates when parents can no longer pay.

### National Education Structure

Pre-school is optional for children between the ages of three and five. Primary school starts at age six. In year six, when children are twelve years old, they take the *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires Elémentaires*<sup>22</sup> (CEPE), which permits them to continue on to secondary school.

Secondary education is accessible in technical centers or general, technical or professional education schools. Secondary education can take six or seven years and is divided into two cycles, the first for children aged 13-16, and the second for children aged 17-19. At the end of the first cycle, pupils take the *Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle*<sup>23</sup> (BEPC) or the *Brevet d'Etudes Techniques*<sup>24</sup> (BET). The second cycle ends with

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<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Elementary Studies

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of First Cycle Studies

<sup>24</sup> Certificate of Technical Studies

the Baccalauréat or a professional diploma. Higher education is available at Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville.

### School Attendance

The household surveys suggest that, on average, one in four school-age children in Pool are not attending school. School attendance is even lower in the more isolated northern districts. In Mayama, 67% of all school age children in the three villages surveyed do not go to school, and in the three villages surveyed in Vindza, 72% of children do not go to school.

*Education in the Pool region is in a state of crisis.*

More than half of these families no longer had the financial means to send their children to school. Another 12% reported that the school was closed, and 12% reported having children who were not going to school because they were beyond the normal age. Only four households out of the entire sample reported that they were sending children above the normal age to school (see tables and charts below for a summary of comparable school attendance and enrollment figures).

The number of functioning schools fell during the academic years of 1998-1999 and 2002-2003. The number of active teachers shows a similar pattern, reaching a high of 459 in 1999-2000 and a low of 71 in 2002-2003. Even between 2000 and 2002, the number of teachers was still extremely low, with an average of less than one teacher per school.

*29% of families have children who abandoned school because of the conflict.*

**Figure 4: Number Primary Schools, Teachers, Pupils and Classes, 1998-2004** <sup>25</sup>

School Year	Number of Schools	Number of Active Teachers	Number of Pupils	Number of Classes	Number of Classrooms
1998-1999	58	106	6,427	299	143
1999-2000	312	459	20,591	N/A	652
2000-2001	317	271	37,270	1,472	892
2001-2002	318	280	41,556	635	916
2002-2003	62	71	7,425	249	127
2003-2004	249	N/A	30,710	N/A	N/A

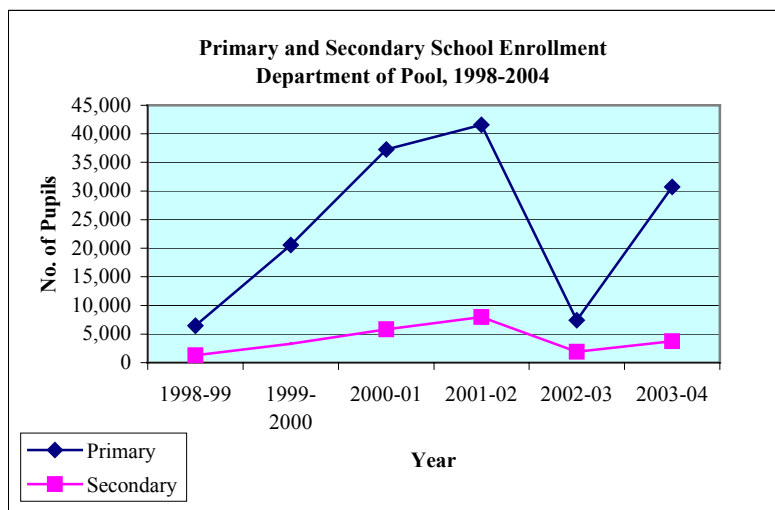
In a relatively normal year, such as 2001-2002, 318 schools with a total of 41,556 primary students were open. In 2002-2003, only 62 schools with 7,425 students were open. Comparing the year following each of the conflicts demonstrates the downward trend in access to education. Within a year of the end of the 1998-1999 conflict, nearly all the schools in Pool had re-opened. In the year following the 2002-2003 conflict, only 78% of the schools were functioning despite a higher enrollment than 1999-2000. Infrastructure damage has been a major limitation to opening schools following the most recent conflict.

*There were 22% fewer schools operating during the most recent school year (2003-2004) than before the last conflict.*

Though children have gradually started to return to primary school, secondary schools are receiving fewer students. In 2003-2004, primary schools had approximately 74% of the number of students in 2001-2002. In the same year, secondary schools had a mere 47% of 2001-2002 school levels.

<sup>25</sup> Office for Statistics on Primary and Secondary Education (1998-2003), Ministry of Education (2003-2004)

**Figure 5: Comparison of Primary and Secondary Enrollment, 1998-2004**



As shown above, while the trend is the same, secondary schools account for a dwindling portion of overall enrollment. In 2003-2004, 88% of students were enrolled in primary schools, and only 12% in secondary schools. This represents a fall in secondary school attendance from 16% in 2001-2002. While some displaced students may have continued school in other areas, a substantial number of students are opting out of the secondary school system. Even in 25 primary schools surveyed, this trend was evident. The Year 6 enrollment was 29% of the size of Year 1 enrollment.

*During the last conflict both primary and secondary schools dropped to attendance levels similar to the 1998-1999 conflict. The recovery in attendance is slow with secondary schools showing only a slight*

Records from the National Statistics Office show that secondary schools have also suffered the effects of the conflicts. In a normal year, 47 or 48 secondary schools are open in Pool. This number dropped to 15 in 2002-2003. The number of secondary school teachers decreased significantly as a result of the fighting and insecurity, with only 49 teachers active during the 2002-2003 school year. The number of classrooms also fell to a new low: in 2002-2003 only 43 classrooms were available in the whole of Pool, compared to 254 in the year before.

**Figure 6: Number of Secondary Schools, Teachers, Pupils and Classes, 1998-2004**<sup>26</sup>

School Year	Number of Schools	Number of Active Teachers	Number of Pupils	Number of Classes	Number of Classrooms
1998-1999	15	82	1,288	44	49
2000-2001	47	248	5,834	169	229
2001-2002	48	205	7,940	102	254
2002-2003	15	49	1,932	45	43
2003-2004	38	N/A	3,739	N/A	N/A

Many students leave due to financial hardship or the need to work, primarily in agriculture. These youth are unlikely to return to school, and some of them may never learn to read and write. In a context of intermittent conflict, ease of access to small arms, and a large local presence of Ninja militia, the education crisis in Pool may constitute a serious threat to the region's future prosperity and stability.

#### Shortage of Teachers

Qualified teachers are in short supply. Official statistics include both government salaried teachers and community-supported "volunteer" teachers. The government-

<sup>26</sup> Office for Statistics on Primary and Secondary Education (1998-2003), Ministry of Education (2003-2004).

trained and paid teachers are supplemented by community volunteers, who generally receive financial incentives from the students' parents. These volunteer teachers have not been formally trained, and the only requirement for the position is completion of the first cycle of secondary school.

*In 34 functioning schools surveyed, 58% of teachers are "volunteers" paid by the community.*

On average, there is one qualified teacher for two grades. Each primary school teacher (either qualified or volunteer) is responsible for an average of 52 students. An extreme example is Mafouana School in Mindouli district, where there is an average of 114 students per teacher. Twenty-one of the 25 primary schools that were open in 2003-2004 were partially staffed by community volunteers. Six of the schools do not have a single qualified teacher, and a further ten only have one. Overall, the number of community volunteers outweighs the number of government employees teaching in primary schools: out of 95 teachers, 55 (58%) are volunteers.

The high proportion of secondary teachers who are untrained community volunteers gives additional cause for concern. The majority, 19 out of 36 teachers, are untrained community volunteers.

Of the 35 schools sampled in Pool, 10 schools reported that teachers left during the year. Insecurity was the most common reason (4), with irregular payment of salaries also cited as a reason for leaving (2).

### **Higher School Fees**

The need for teachers is adding to financial hardship for families. Data on school fees was available at 23 of the 25 functioning primary schools and at the 9 functioning secondary schools and helped to reveal the actual costs of sending children to school. According to the government, the official school fee established for primary schools in Pool is 750 cfa (US\$1.31) per year and 1000 cfa (US\$1.75) for secondary schools. In total, eleven primary schools (50%) and three CEGs (38%) charge additional fees that are far above the established rate to pay for community volunteer teacher. This generally means parents pay an average 150-300 cfa per month in extra fees for each student. Among all of the functioning schools surveyed, parents paid an average annual fee of 2,380 cfa (US\$4.18), with the highest fees reaching 9,750 cfa (US\$17.10). Discussions with families indicate that this is a large burden for families who have only begun to restart productive activities and live in a place where the absence of markets generally means that currency is in short supply. As a result, many families are unable to pay.



*Schools were not spared by the conflict. Almost two years after the last of the conflict, numerous primary, middle, and high schools cannot receive students. In the mid-1990s, nearly 5,000 students from Pool took the Baccalauréat test to complete their secondary education. Last year, only 100 passed this exam. This school in Louingi has no doors or desks, and its roof is incomplete.*

### **School Closure**

A high number of schools were closed for the last school year. The Ministry of Education confirms that 57% of pre-schools, 13% of primary schools and 11% of secondary schools in Pool are closed. The situation is particularly acute in Vindza and Kindamba districts, where 46% and 37% respectively of all primary schools are closed. In Mayama, 27% of primary schools have been closed, mainly due to infrastructure destruction and lack of teachers. In Goma Tsé Tsé, 20% are closed.

*The 2002-2003 conflict is the principal cause for school infrastructure damage.*

### Infrastructure Damage

School infrastructure is in a critical state. According to the Ministry of Education, 85% of school buildings in Pool are in need of significant repair. The field assessment confirmed this account: of the 37 schools assessed for physical damage, 68 of 99 buildings (69%) in 30 schools were totally or partially destroyed. Most of the damage and destruction was caused by looting and actual combat. Often, the walls were completely or partially knocked down, the corrugated iron roofing had been stolen and windows and doors had been pulled from their frames. In total, the 2002-2003 conflict was responsible for 72% of all schools suffering damage or destruction.

**Figure 7: Years in Which Schools were Damaged  
(Sample of 35 Primary and Secondary Schools)**

Year that Damage was Inflicted	# of Schools
1997	1
1998	3
1999	2
2000	1
2001	2
2002	21

The rehabilitation of school buildings is slow. Only three schools of those damaged have undergone any rehabilitation. Two were rehabilitated by the community and one rehabilitated by UNICEF.

#### **Education:**

*Education systems in Pool are in crisis. Just prior to the start of the 2004-2005 school year, the Education Department for Pool reported that approximately one-third of government teachers were absent from their assigned villages. Open teaching positions will likely be filled by the local communities themselves and paid for by parents through higher school fees.*

*Infrastructure damage is also limiting the quality of education. More than two-thirds of all school buildings in the Department of Pool have suffered serious damage. Louingui's Collège d'éducation générale (CEG) pictured here is a typical example. During the most recent conflict, the government used the CEG in Louingui as a base for its soldiers and landing ground for helicopters bringing in supplies. The helicopters caused structural damage and dislodged the tin roofing, which was subsequently stolen.*

*This year Louingui's CEG is expecting more students, but will be unable to accommodate them. Of its eight classrooms, only two are functional; the other six are missing roofs.*



## Equipment

Schools in Pool lack essential equipment and material. Government statistics for the region indicate that textbooks in schools are too few to serve the number of students. According to government figures for 2003-2004, the ratio of textbooks to students is 15:1 in primary schools and 18:1 in secondary schools. Field assessments revealed that 22 out of 28 schools do not have access to textbooks, and many schools had their desks stolen or broken during the conflict. On average, six pupils share each desk in the primary schools. At least 15% of primary schools have no desks at all.

## HEALTH CARE

*Note: this section of the study does not serve as a health survey and did not collect data on health status of the population. The focus was on factors affecting access.*

### Overview

With the availability of donor funding and international NGO interest, health centers in Pool have been assisted and rehabilitated considerably more than other types of community infrastructure. Indeed, international NGOs have played and continue to play a key role in keeping health centers open: 43% of health facilities in the six surveyed districts are being supported by international NGOs. These agencies implement a range of programs including rehabilitating infrastructure, replacing essential equipment, training and supporting health center staff, providing free medicines, and supervising drug management. Despite this concentration of assistance in the health sector though, much remains to be done, since one-third of health centers in the six districts studied are still closed.

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*One-third of health centers in Pool are not functioning.*

Questions still remain about the future of the staffing, training, drug procurement, and local financing of health services. As funding is ending for some of the emergency health interventions, a number of international NGOs may have to terminate their programs. And yet, the effective transition of the centers to local management cannot be completed in the current context. Government recruitment and staff training is still weak, with local communities or donor-financed projects bearing much of the cost. Communities are presently unable to assume the high financial contributions necessary to ensure the basic functioning of the centers and payment of essential drugs. Furthermore, insecurity is affecting health outreach. Three of the health facilities have not carried out vaccination campaigns in the last twelve months because of insecurity and equipment shortages.

### National Health Structure

The health service is directed at the central level by the General Health Direction (*Direction Générale de la Santé*), which is responsible for planning, setting standards, evaluating, controlling, mobilizing and designating resources to the nation's health services. At an intermediate level are the Regional Health Direction offices (*Direction Régionale de la Santé*), which are responsible for the regional management of health services. Each region is made up of Health Zones (*Circonscription Socio-Sanitaire*) known as CSS, which are then subdivided into Health Areas (*Aires de Santé*). Integrated Health Centers (*Centres de Santé Intégrés*) known as CSI operate in each of the Health Areas. Lower level health posts and dispensaries still exist, but will most likely be promoted to CSIs or will be phased out. Though there are private clinics and pharmacies in small numbers, they do not play a significant role in delivering health care services.

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*A large number of health centers have remained closed since the end of the 1998-1999 conflict.*

CSIs are the first point of contact for the population. The CSIs refer patients to the Reference Hospitals located in larger towns such as Kinkala and Mindouli. General

Hospitals provide the top level of service, University Hospital (CHU) in Brazzaville being the general hospital nearest to Pool. Specialist services exist in Brazzaville (the national public health laboratory, the national center for procurement of essential medicines, blood transfusion centers, leprosy centers, tuberculosis centers, and mobile AIDS clinics), as do private sector clinics and health centers.

### **Methodology**

The health infrastructure assessment included secondary information from a number of international NGOs working in primary health and infrastructure improvement in Pool and from the Government. The Ministry of Health provided information regarding the number of functioning centers, staffing, and the condition of their infrastructure. Secondary information was backed up by primary field data. The household surveys included questions about access to health services such as preferences for treatment, distance to health centers, and drug availability. Fourteen health centers were also surveyed in the villages where household surveys were conducted. *See Annex H for additional health survey information.*



*Administrative building in Mayama.*

### **Infrastructure**

Of 42 health centers in Pool, 29 are reported to be open, though most of them were damaged during the 2002-2003 conflict. Seven of the 14 health facilities surveyed by the research team had buildings that were partially or totally destroyed. Another five sustained partial damage during the conflict of 2002-2003. Of the 12 health facilities that were damaged in the conflicts, eight had undergone some NGO managed rehabilitation or reconstruction.

### **Drug Procurement**

Medicine procurement and management remains a significant problem. Among the 14 centers surveyed, only six have pharmacies. The others have only episodic access to medicines, if they can access them at all. Those that have access to medicines are almost exclusively reliant on international organizations such as MSF, ICRC and the World Health Organization (WHO). Generally, where there is no external assistance, there is no reliable source of medicines.

Drugs provided by international NGOs are available to patients free of charge, because NGOs' analysis reveals that the emergency post-conflict situation has increased poverty to such a degree that cost recovery schemes are not yet feasible. Some local NGOs involved in health center management do implement cost recovery schemes, but they vary widely in design and application. Some work with the community health committees to set user fees and to manage the acquired income while others set user fees themselves and use the revenue to pay their staff.

The table summarizes the status of health facilities in the six districts that were assessed, showing that one-third are closed. In fact, 17 out of 42, or 40%, were closed before the 2002-2003 conflict. Some health facilities, such as Kindamba Ngouedi, Kimanika, Kimbedi, Kilembe-Moussaka and Missamvi dispensaries, which were closed before the conflict are now open thanks to the intervention of NGOs.

*Medicine is available only in health centers supported by outside organizations.*



**Figure 8: Summary of Health Facilities Closed Before and After the Conflict 2002-2003**

District	No. of Health Facilities	No. of Facilities Closed Before the Conflict	No. of Facilities Open Before Conflict	No. of Facilities Open Now
Mbanza Ndounga	3	0	3	1
Kinkala	9	2	7	8
Vindza	4	3	1	1
Mayama	6	1	5	5
Kindamba	8	6	2	4
Mindouli	12	5	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>

### Household Access to Health Care

Half of respondents utilized a health center in their village, some in combination with self-medication (7%), visits to traditional healers (2%), or visits to other health centers outside the village (6%). Only 5% indicated that they do not use health centers, instead self-medicating or visiting traditional healers. Of the 44% who reported that they do not visit a health center locally, almost half (49%) indicated that there was no health center locally, or that long distance prevented them from going. For 22%, lack of staff or medicine prevented them from going. Other reasons included cultural preference (15%), high cost (10%), and damaged infrastructure (4%).

### Medical Personnel

Not a single doctor was on duty in the 14 health facilities assessed. Only 17% of the 86 staff members at the surveyed health centers were paid by the state, the remainder being paid by the community. Only a small number of staff was reported to be absent because of the conflict (2%).

*Communities are supporting the cost of medical staff salaries.*

## SECURITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### Security

Despite the difficulty of accessing food, housing, and education, the chief concern among households is often security. A strong military presence, comprised of soldiers from the national army and Ninja ex-combatants, remains throughout the region. Both these groups continue to threaten the peace and security of the local population. Agreements between government soldiers and Ninjas in Mbanza Ndounga and Mayama that arms cannot be carried in public are rare improvements in a region where people are growing increasingly impatient at the lack of progress in the peace process. The tenuous calm that reigns in some places is broken by frequent gunfire and threatened by the intimidation of civilians. Efforts to create tri-partite committees representing the authorities, national army, and Ninjas have brought a certain degree of peace to some areas. Overall, the rule of law is dictated by the possession of arms.

One in five households has suffered an act of violence during or since the 2002-2003 conflict. Most of these reported crimes were committed against men and included 72 cases of murder. Twelve cases of sexual violence against women were reported,<sup>27</sup> including one account of alleged gang rape.

*1 in 5 households suffered an act of violence during the 2002-2003 conflict.*

<sup>27</sup> Due to shame associated with admitting to having experienced sexual violence, particularly when disclosing to a male interviewer, incidents of sexual violence are likely underreported.

One in five households reported that they do not feel safe in their own villages. The sense of insecurity is highest in Vindza district, where 42% of respondents said that they did not feel safe. Over 20% of residents in Kinkala and Mbanza Ndounga districts also expressed concern for their safety. Perceived threats included fear of physical or verbal attacks, fear of theft, and fear of rape (13%). Half of respondents associated their fears with the presence of armed men.

*Feelings of insecurity still prevail in the Pool.*

This perceived threat of sexual violence may be indicative of a wider incidence of rape or sexual assault than reported in the survey.<sup>28</sup> Admitting to being a survivor of rape is a considerable risk for both married and unmarried women, which can result in divorce or stigmatization.

It is difficult to say whether violence against the civilian population has decreased since the end of the 2002-2003 conflict, as some abuse and intimidation continue. Between April and June 2004, reported incidents of violence included three murders, one rape, and one serious injury among the survey population. It is likely that in the current context of Pool, acts of violence are underreported.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Proper governance structures are lacking in Pool, their administrators having fled with the rest of the population. Fifteen months after the signing of the peace accords, the structures are only just being reinstated, and with varying degrees of success. The Prefect in Kinkala, the administrative head of Pool, and all of the sub-prefects have been named. They have now assumed their positions and spend part of their time in Pool. The presence of these authority figures has encouraged the return of IDPs and the resumption of normal activities. The village chiefs have also played a role in community decision-making, resolving conflict and in receiving guests and outsiders.

Despite the noteworthy efforts to reinstate these structures, they are under considerable strain, particularly in some western and northern districts. The police are only present in the districts that are closest to Brazzaville and relatively unaffected by the conflict. The tribunals and courts of justice have relocated to Brazzaville, so their influence on everyday life in Pool is minimal.



*Ninja ex-combatant. In Mayama, most of the Ninjas who took up arms were originally villagers. Consequently, their integration into local life has been easier.*

The presence of armed men has undermined the traditional role of village chiefs in resolving problems between villagers. The authority of the chiefs is limited to conflicts between civilians, thus they cannot resolve conflicts that occur between Ninjas and civilians, military and civilians, or between the Ninjas and the military. Generally, the possession of arms commands local influence and authority.

As mentioned above, certain districts have developed mechanisms to resolve conflict. In Mbanza Ndounga and Mayama districts, an agreement negotiated between the local administrative authorities, the Ninjas and the

<sup>28</sup> Reports of sexual violence were also made to local health facilities.

*Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC), prohibits the carrying of arms in public. In these two districts, sub-prefects have created tri-partite committees comprised of themselves, the Ninjas leader and FAC representatives. These committees convene when civil disturbances occur, and negotiate to find a peaceful resolution. In other areas, the tri-partite Local Committees of Peace are not strong enough to resolve local issues. In Kinkala for example, a local village chief was reportedly imprisoned following a local committee meeting.

In Kindamba, although both the military and the Ninjas carry arms without incident, the situation remains volatile. Many villagers report that they have built and maintain huts in the forest to which they will flee if the fighting resumes.

In areas in which there is a stronger presence of Ninja ex-combatants and no agreement prohibiting arms in public, the power of traditional and administrative authorities is limited. In Vindza district where the situation is still very tense, the power of the sub-prefect is restricted, and the Ninjas retain a great deal of authority. In Mindouli district and in villages along the railway line, the Ninjas frequently fire their guns – sometimes they are trying to create order, sometimes panic. Occasionally they are attempting to provoke the government soldiers; at other times they are simply drunk or otherwise intoxicated. During the three days the survey team was working along the railway line in Kinkembo, Mindouli district, groups of Ninjas robbed the train almost every time it passed through the station.

## CONCLUSIONS

The people of Pool are facing the daunting task of restoring their homes, livelihoods and communities. Many have survived repeated conflicts and extended periods of displacement. They are starting again from zero, having returned to homes that have been looted and damaged for the second time in five years. They are farming fields with insufficient amounts of seed and tools. Many do not eat every day.

Government services are failing. Although international and local NGOs are providing emergency health services in some zones, education services in Pool have plummeted into a state of crisis without any external support. The future of whole generations is at stake: many youth in these communities are denied or are opting out of education, compromising their futures and the potential for peace.

The police and judiciary are largely absent and the local authorities are weak and under-resourced. The absence of a state budget assigned to the Department of Pool further undermines any authority the local officials may exercise. The presence of Ninja ex-combatants and soldiers from the national army is potentially explosive, particularly when all political negotiations between Pastor Ntoumi and the government seem to have stalled. Delays in implementing effective disarmament and demobilization programs fuel further tensions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Government of the Republic of Congo must assume primary responsibility for humanitarian well-being and therefore is addressed in the opening section of the Recommendations.*

### The National Government should:

- **Renew the dialogue and commitment to the peace process in Pool to achieve a real and lasting peace in the region.** The widespread presence of arms in Pool is a security risk and compromises efforts toward long-term peace. Efforts to eliminate the presence of arms in Pool must continue and be increased.
- **Sponsor an independent inquiry into human rights abuses related to the 2002-2003 conflict in the Department of Pool.** Efforts to investigate and eliminate human rights abuses in Pool should continue. During the last decade and in conjunction with the two conflicts, human rights abuses have been committed with impunity. These crimes against the population must cease and justice be restored.
- **Ensure that the population in all of the districts in Pool benefit from the legislative process and representation in the upper house of Parliament.** The lack of representation in certain districts weakens the voice of the people of Pool in the national government and denies them their right to a departmental investment budget that normally funds local level spending on essential health, education, administrative and security services.
- **Re-start government outreach services in Pool, supported by international organizations and NGOs, to improve access to shelter and agriculture needs.** Families need assistance accessing materials and rehabilitating housing. Access to seeds, tools and livestock for farming families throughout Pool should be expanded.
- **Guarantee safe access to Pool to allow the free movement of people, access to markets, and unimpeded humanitarian assistance.** Roadblocks (both government and ex-combatant) must be eliminated and not be used to intimidate travellers or to extort taxes from people. Systematic cases of theft and the general level of insecurity in railway stations and along the railway must be addressed. Investment is needed in roads throughout the Department of Pool, and in particular the road between Brazzaville and Kinkala, to give people freedom of movement and access to markets. The Government should ensure that the law is respected by providing resources to return law enforcement agencies to duty throughout Pool.
- **Prioritize education and health services in Pool. Schools and health facilities that are closed should be re-opened.** Teachers and health professionals need to be re-deployed to Pool to insure full coverage of health and education services. For health centers, the government should develop plans for the continued maintenance and support of health centers that are currently supported by international NGOs through emergency post-conflict programs.

### Local Civil Society Organizations should:

- **Raise the profile of the Department of Pool in the national context.** Despite being a source of insecurity in 2002-2003, the present situation in Pool has been largely under-reported and overlooked by most of the rest of the country, including Brazzaville. Civil society organizations can play an important role in reporting about the present situation and advocating for long-term solutions.
- **Actively support a renewal of the peace and reconciliation process, with each side recommitted to respecting the March 17, 2003 Accords.** Inhabitants in Pool desire a peaceful solution to the current friction. Local pressure and advocacy will play an important role in helping to restart the dialogue and arrive at a peaceful solution.

### Ex-combatants should:

- **Acknowledge their responsibility in the current situation of distress in which the Department finds itself.**
- **Facilitate and accelerate the process of disarmament, demobilization, and reinsertion (DDR).**

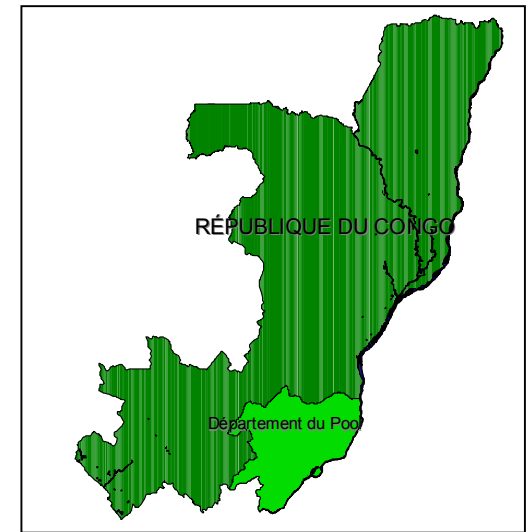
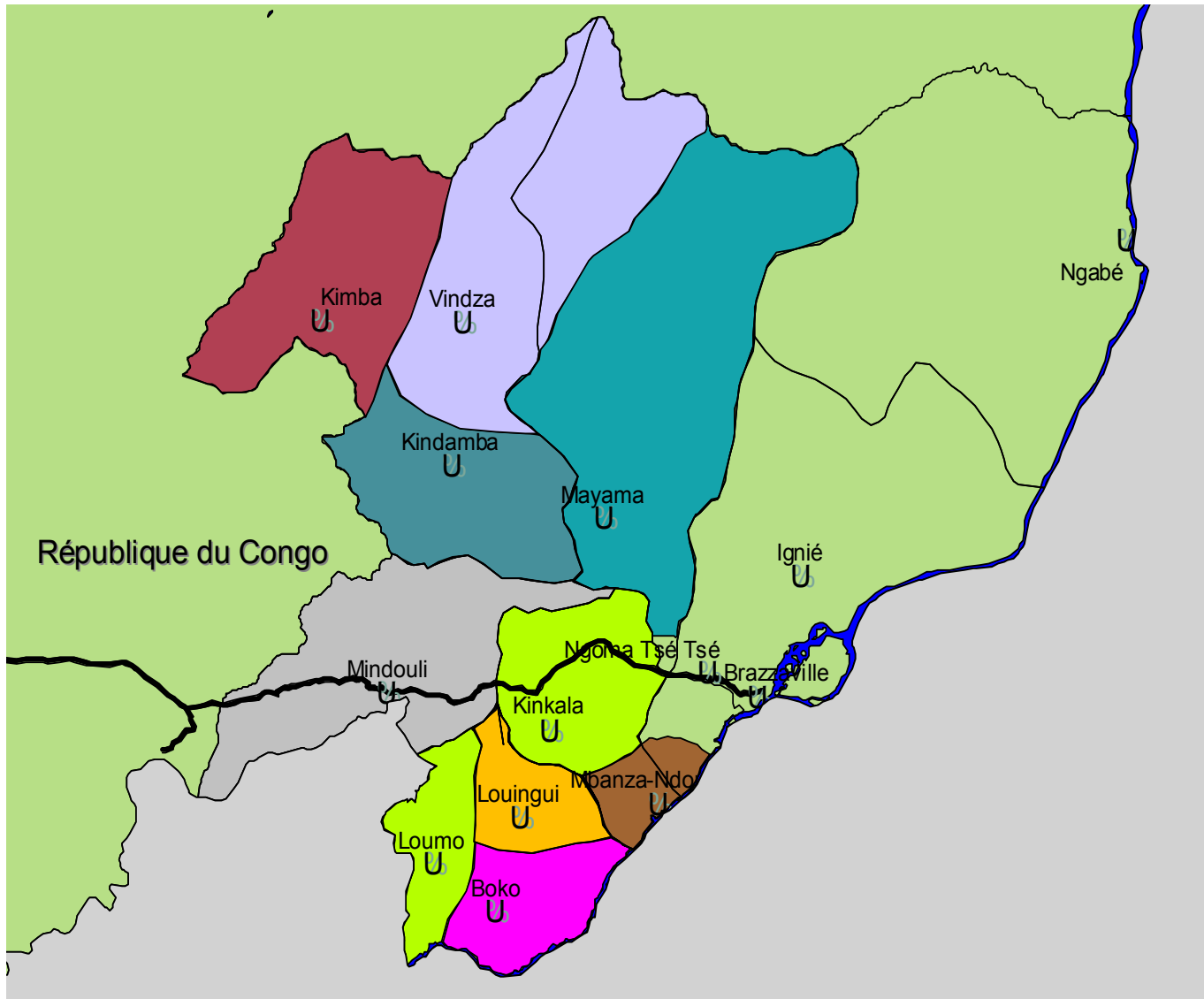
### The International Community should:

- **Support and encourage the Congolese government and Congolese civil society in restarting the peace and reconciliation process.** A peaceful environment is a pre-requisite for any chance of economic and social recovery. The disarmament of ex-combatants is essential if long lasting peace is to be achieved. Every effort must be made to maintain dialogue between signatories of the peace accords, and pressure should be exerted on conflicting parties to disarm, demobilize and reinsert ex-combatants into a national army or civilian life.
- **Commit donor funding to assist in renewal of livelihoods and rehabilitation of infrastructure in Pool.** There has been limited donor support for Pool since the 2002-2003 conflict, particularly in comparison to numerous programs undertaken after the 1998-1999 conflict. The impact of the most recent conflict documented in this survey and the present peace underlines the need to increase humanitarian activities. Agriculture and road rehabilitation for market renewal can help communities regain pre-conflict production levels. Schools will require significant support for rehabilitation, and health services need continued assistance from international NGOs before being fully transitioned to the government and local communities.
- **Assist the Congolese government in responding to the recommendations for renewing the peace process, ensuring political representation, improving road and rail access, and supporting social services in Pool.** Advocacy and support from the international community is pivotal for moving towards a long-term solution to the current problems in Pool.

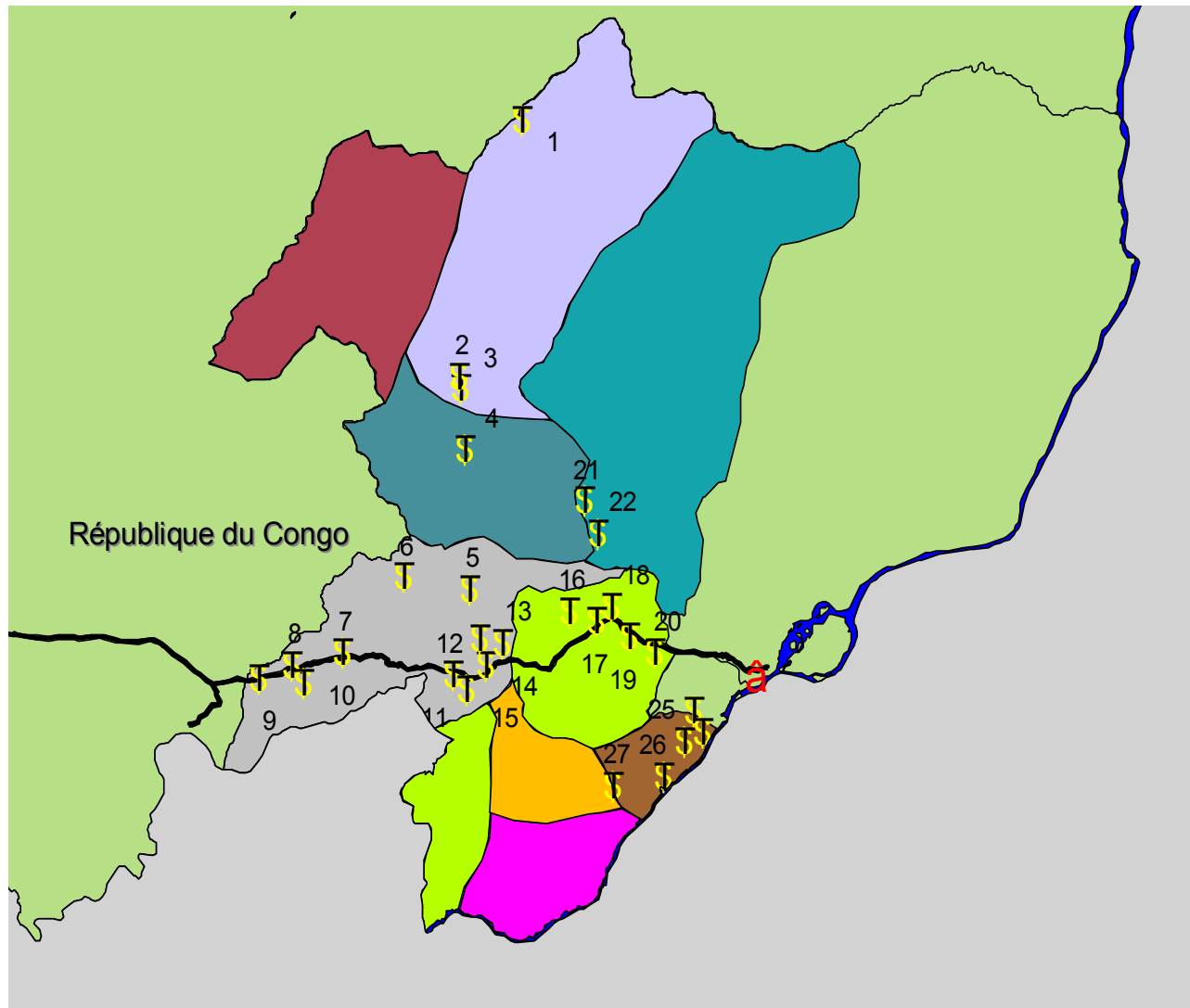
**The International Humanitarian Community should:**

- **Increase their presence in the Department of Pool and support interventions for renewal of agricultural production, rehabilitation of homes, and rebuilding local infrastructure to restart livelihoods. The crisis in Pool has largely been forgotten.**
  - Housing is a priority need in order to help families return home and renew their livelihoods.
  - Agricultural production requires significant assistance, particularly with seeds, if pre-conflict production levels are to be achieved.
  - More assistance is required for the rehabilitation of school infrastructure and equipment in Pool. The majority of school buildings suffered significant damage from the 2002-2003 conflict and need to be restored to their previous condition. Textbooks are essential and schools must be re-equipped with textbooks as well as desks, blackboards and chalk.

**ANNEX A: Map of the Department of Pool with 13 Districts**



**ANNEX B: Map of the Department of Pool with 13 Districts**



No.	Village
1	Insini
2	Kimpouo
3	Ikomi
4	Kindamba Centre
5	Kindamba Ngouedi
6	Kimanika
7	Kinkembo
8	Loulombo
9	Kimbedi
10	Nzinzi
11	Missafou
12	Massengo Ngoma
13	Yanga Nzala
14	Massembo Loubaki
15	Loutété
16	Zandou dia ba bakala
17	Madzia
18	Mpayaka
19	Mayongongo
20	Kibossi-Nguetani
21	Kindamba Pota
22	Mouvimba
23	Mayala
24	Mongo Moussaki
25	Mbanza Koubatika
26	Mbanza Ndounga Centre
27	Mpélo



**ANNEX C: Census Data 1996 and Population Estimations 2002, Department of Pool**

N°	District	National Census (1996)					Population Estimations (2002)
		Number of Villages	Households	Male	Female	Total	
1	Kinkala	62	6,665	13,776	15,805	29,581	34,912
2	Kinkala (commune)		3290	7131	7292	14,423	17,022
3	Kibouende (commune)		1,222	2,485	3,082	5,567	6,570
4	Boko	71	3,814	7,059	7,780	14,839	17,513
5	Boko (commune)		452	1162	1228	2,390	2,821
6	Mindouli	33	9,879	21,678	24,582	46,260	54,596
7	Mindouli (commune)		3,941	8,583	9,339	17,922	21,152
8	Kindamba	25	3,183	8,420	9,619	18,039	21,290
9	Ngoma Tsé Tsé	49	6,249	13,860	15,721	29,581	34,912
10	Mayama	19	1,507	3,951	4,023	7,974	9,411
11	Ngabé	35	4,321	10,445	10,561	21,006	24,791
12	Mbanza Ndounga	26	3,277	5,730	6,424	12,154	14,344
13	Louingui	54	2,499	5,169	5,844	11,013	12,998
14	Loumou	28	1,432	2,902	3,131	6,033	7,120
15	Ignié	52	4,388	8,994	8,138	17,132	20,219
16	Vindza	63	1,798	5,363	5,531	10,894	12,857
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>517</b>	<b>56,119</b>	<b>121,345</b>	<b>132,569</b>	<b>253,914</b>	<b>312,529</b>
<b>TOTAL (without communes):</b>		<b>517</b>	<b>49,012</b>	<b>107,347</b>	<b>117,159</b>	<b>224,506</b>	<b>264,964</b>

**ANNEX D: Census Data (1996) and Populations Estimations for 2002<sup>29</sup>, for Selected Six Districts**

N°	District	National Census (1996)					Population Estimations (2002)
		Number of villages	Households	Male	Female	Total	
1	Kinkala	62	6,665	13,776	15,805	29,581	34,912
2	Kinkala (commune)	-	3290	7131	7292	14,423	17,022
3	Kibouende (commune)	-	1,222	2,485	3,082	5,567	6,570
4	Mindouli	33	9,879	21,678	24,582	46,260	54,596
5	Mindouli (commune)	-	3,941	8,583	9,339	17,922	21,152
6	Kindamba	25	3,183	8,420	9,619	18,039	21,290
7	Mayama	19	1,507	3,951	4,023	7,974	9,411
8	Mbanza Ndounga	26	3,277	5,730	6,424	12,154	14,344
9	Vindza	63	1,798	5,363	5,531	10,894	12,857
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>228</b>	<b>34,762</b>	<b>77,117</b>	<b>85,697</b>	<b>162,814</b>	<b>192,154</b>
<b>TOTAL (without communes):</b>		<b>228</b>	<b>26,309</b>	<b>58,918</b>	<b>65,984</b>	<b>124,902</b>	<b>147,410</b>

<sup>29</sup> Population estimates for 2002 are based on lower growth forecasts of 2.8% per year. Studies indicate that growth is likely between 2.8-3.2% per year.

## ANNEX E: The Clusters Selected by District with Population

No.	Village	District	Population (1996 Census)		Clusters	Surveys completed:
			Households	Population		
1	Kindamba Center	Kindamba	1,484	8,000	2	58
2	Kibossi-Nguetani	Kinkala	125	556	1	28
3	Madzia	Kinkala	1,197	4,821	1	29
4	Mayongongo	Kinkala	171	710	1	30
5	Mpayaka	Kinkala	88	525	1	30
6	Zandou dia ba bakala	Kinkala	91	536	1	29
7	Kindamba Pota	Mayama	39	195	1	30
8	Mouvimba	Mayama	81	463	1	27
9	Mbanza Koubatika	Mbanza Ndounga	107	365	1	29
10	Mayala	Mbanza Ndounga	102	274	1	27
11	Mbanza Ndounga Center	Mbanza Ndounga	488	1,896	1	30
12	Mongo Moussaki	Mbanza Ndounga	86	316	1	26
13	Mpelo	Mbanza Ndounga	125	449	1	29
14	Kimanika	Mindouli	307	1,411	1	29
15	Kimbedi	Mindouli	1,127	4,618	1	30
16	Kindamba Ngouedi	Mindouli	527	2,562	1	29
17	Kinkembo	Mindouli	1,419	6,656	2	58
18	Loulombo	Mindouli	1,019	4,824	2	57
19	Massembo Loubaki	Mindouli	1,078	5,277	2	60
20	Massengo Ngoma	Mindouli	97	533	1	28
21	Misafou	Mindouli	1,158	4,429	1	30
22	Nzinzi	Mindouli	453	2,014	1	29
23	Loutété <sup>30</sup>	Mindouli	135	551	1	30
24	Yanga Nzala	Mindouli	75	394	1	28
25	Insini	Vindza	32	222	1	25
26	Ikomi	Vindza	12	39	1	30
27	Kimpuou <sup>31</sup>	Vindza	29	235		
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>11,623</b>	<b>52,636</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>865</b>

<sup>30</sup> The village of Oualala was replaced by the village of Loutété. The village of Oualala is no longer inhabited because of insecurity. Former residents of Oualala identified in nearby villages were also included in this evaluation.

<sup>31</sup> The village of Kimpuou was added to supplement the number of households in Ikomi. Sixteen households were interviewed in Ikomi and fourteen households were added in Kimpuou after a second random selection. Kimpuou is the nearest accessible village to Ikomi.

## **ANNEX F: List of Organizations and Government Departments Interviewed**

### **International Organizations:**

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA)
UN Population Fund (UNFPA)
World Bank
UN Development Program (UNDP)
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
UN Education and Science Foundation (UNESCO)
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

### **International NGOs:**

L'Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED)
Alisei
Comité d'Aide Médicale
International Rescue Committee
Médecins Sans Frontières –France
Médecins Sans Frontières – Holland
Atlas Logistique

### **National Organizations:**

Catholic Church
Action de Secours d'Urgence
Justice and Peace Commission

### **Government:**

Ministry of Plan
General Direction for Humanitarian Action
Departmental Health Director for Pool
Departmental Education Director for Pool
Cabinet Director – Education
Sub-Prefect, Vindza
Sub-Prefect, Kindamba
Sub-Prefect, Mayama
Sub-Prefect, Mbandza Ndounga
Sub-Prefect Kinkala

## ANNEX G : Additional Information From School Surveys

**Table 1. Number of Schools Open and Closed in the Department of Pool in 2003-2004**

Districts	Number of Schools								
	Pre School			Primary			Secondary		
	Total	Open	Closed	Total	Open	Closed	Total	Open	Closed
<b>Kinkala</b>	2	2	0	47	45	2	7	4	3
<b>Kindamba</b>	1	0	1	27	17	10	2	2	0
<b>Mayama</b>	0	0	0	14	11	3	1	1	0
<b>Mbanza Ndounga</b>	1	1	0	16	14	2	1	1	0
<b>Mindouli</b>	4	0	4	45	37	8	9	8	1
<b>Kimba</b>	0	0	0	19	16	3	1	1	0
<b>Vindza**</b>	0	0	0	13	7	6	1	1	0
Loumou*	0	0	0	13	10	3	4	4	0
Ignié*	1	1	0	39	38	1	5	5	0
Goma Tse Tse*	1	0	1	20	19	1	3	3	0
Ngabe*	2	1	1	40	40	0	7	7	0
Boko*	1	1	0	26	24	2	4	3	1
Louingui*	1	0	1	19	17	2	2	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5</b>
# Closed as % of Total			57%			13%			11%

\*Statistics from the Ministry of Education in Brazzaville rather than from the Departmental Office for Education in Kinkala.  
 \*\* The Sub-Prefect for Vindza district gave slightly different information: according to him, seven primary schools out of fourteen and one secondary school were closed in 2003-2004.

**Table 2. Number of School Buildings in a Bad State of Repair by District**

District	No of Schools	# Buildings in a Bad State of Repair	# Buildings in a Good State of Repair	%
Kinkala	56	237	18	93
Goma Tse Tse	24	53	23	70
Ignié	45	116	20	85
Kindamba	30	58	2	97
Boko	31	82	28	75
Louingui	22	126	11	92
Loumou	17	27	35	44
Mayama	15	22	2	92
Mbanza Ndounga	18	48	14	62
Mindouli	58	192	3	98
Ngabe	49	82	22	79
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,043</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>85%</b>

**Table 3. Schools Participating in the Survey**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Type of School</b>	<b>State or Private</b>	<b>Open or Closed</b>
Génération Mpinou	Quartier Paroisse	Kindamba	Primary	Private	Open
Mbemba Moumbala	Quartier Loudzouri	Kindamba	Primary	State	Open
Loufoua Joseph	Makaka	Kindamba	Primary	State	Open
Nganga Ambroise	Qrt Kindamba Nkounkou	Kindamba	Primary	State	Open
Milongo Ngabandounou	centre du district	Kindamba	Primary	State	Open
Nganga Mouyakou	Qtier Paroisse	Kindamba	Primary	State	Open
Mayongongo	Kari Kari	Kinkala	Secondary	State	Open
Abraham Matouba	Madzia	Kinkala	Secondary	State	Open
Mbonzi Nkounka	Mpayaka	Kinkala	Primary	State	Open
Ntadi Ferdinand	PK Mayongongo	Kinkala	Primary	State	Open
Sainte Jeanne d'arc	Madzia	Kinkala	Primary	Private	Open
Koubatika	Mbanza Koubatika	Mbanza Ndounga	Primary	State	Open
Matoudidi Moukoko	Mbanza Ndounga I	Mbanza Ndounga	Primary	State	Open
Makaya Hômbé	Entre (Hombi- Mongo.M)	Mbanza Ndounga	Primary	State	Open
André Matsoua	Mpelo	Mbanza Ndounga	Primary	State	Open
Auguste Ndoura	Kimbedi	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
Massamba sakou	Kinkembo	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Closed
Ntsompy-Mboma	Massembo Loubaki	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
Malanda mâ Kounsi	Loulombo	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
Lombolo SO.FI.CO	Lombolo (Nzinzi)	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
CEG de Missafou	Missafou	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
Moungoyo Mbenza	Kindamba Ngouendi	Mindouli	Secondary	State	Open
Lounga Mbahou	Kimbedi	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Nsouari Makongui	Kimbedi	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Mabiala ma ngang	Kinkembo	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Kintouari	Kinkembo	Mindouli	Primary	State	Closed
Malembe-Kayi	Massembo Loubaki	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Nkounkou Mouki- Niama	Massembo Loubaki	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Mafouana	Loulombo	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Paul Massamba	Lombolo (Nzinzi)	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Massengo Ngoma	Massengo Ngoma	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Sainte Thérèse	Missafou	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Mindouli Gaspard	Missafou	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Mimpamba Bimbi	Kindamba Ngouendi	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open
Nkembo Nzambi	Yanga	Mindouli	Primary	State	Open

## ANNEX H : Additional Health Survey Information

**Table 1. Damage to Health Facilities by the Conflicts of 1998-99 and 2002-2003**

Health Facility	Damaged 1998-99	Damaged 2002-03
Mbanza Ndounga Integrated Health Center	Yes	Yes
Kimbedi-Ngongo Dispensary		
Kinkembo Integrated Health Center	Yes	Yes
Kinkembo Health Post		
Kimanika Integrated Health Center		Yes
Missafou Integrated Health Center	Yes	
Kindamba Ngouédi Integrated Health Center		Yes
Loulombo Integrated Health Center		Yes
Massembo Loubaki Integrated Health Center	Yes	Yes
Madzia, Integrated Health Center	Yes	
Mont Kari Kari Integrated Health Center	Yes	Yes
Mpayaka Health Post		Yes
Kindamba Reference Hospital	Yes	Yes
Diocesan Health Post, Kindamba		Yes

**Table 2. The Level of Damage Inflicted on Health Facility Buildings**

Health Facility	# of Buildings	Condition
Mbanza Ndounga Health Center	3	Three buildings a little damaged
Kinkembo Health Center	6	Six buildings that are partially destroyed by the conflict.
Kimanika Health Center	4	Four buildings that are a little damaged.
Missafou Health Center	5	Two buildings completely destroyed, one partially destroyed and two in good condition.
Kindamba Ngouédi Health Center	3	Three buildings a little damaged
Loulombo Health Center	3	Two buildings are partially destroyed and one is a little damaged
Massembo Loubaki Health Center	2	One building is a little damaged, and another is in good condition.
Madzia, Integrated Health Center	2	One building is completely destroyed and another is a little damaged
Mont Kari Kari Integrated Health Center	2	One building is partially destroyed and another is a little damaged.
Mpayaka Health Post	1	One building is partially destroyed.
Kindamba Reference Hospital	3	Three buildings a little damaged
Diocesan Health Post, Kindamba	2	Two buildings that are partially destroyed.
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Three totally destroyed, thirteen partially destroyed, fourteen damaged and three unharmed.</b>

**Table 3. Equipment at Health Facilities**

Health Facility	Fridge	Microscope	Sterilization Equipment	Scales	Consultation Bed	Stethoscope	Blood Pressure	# of Beds Now	# of Beds Before Conflict
Mpelo Dispensary (closed)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17	17
Mbanza Ndounga Health Center	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	10
Kimbedi-Ngongo Dispensary	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	4	12
Kinkembo Health Center	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	17
Kinkembo Health Post	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	0
Kimanika Health Center	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	0	12
Missafou Health Center	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	8	31
Kindamba Ngouédi Health Center	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	10	10
Loulombo Health Center	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		20
Massembo Loubaki Health Center	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	11	45
Madzia Health Center	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	0	12
Mont Kari Kari Health Center	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	12	
Mpayaka Health Post	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	12
Kindamba Reference Hospital	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	46	125
Diocesan Health Post, Kindamba	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	0	5
<b># Facilities with Equipment</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>328</b>

*Note: none of the health facilities that were assessed possess the capacity to do blood transfusions, and none said that they have HIV/AIDS blood tests available.*

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