

Transitional Justice: A Condition for Peace, Growth and Development in South Kivu, a Case Study of the Kalehe Territory

Muchiga Zihindula Norbert¹, Ruphin Chinamula²

¹Department of Political and Administrative Sciences, University of Kinshasa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

²Legal Department, Matete Bar, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Email: bahigajocky702@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Norbert, M. Z., & Chinamula, R. (2025). Transitional Justice: A Condition for Peace, Growth and Development in South Kivu, a Case Study of the Kalehe Territory. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 15, 1212-1245.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2025.1511070>

Received: September 30, 2025

Accepted: November 25, 2025

Published: November 28, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, land rights are compromised by inadequate governance, corrupt practices, and the lack of integration of customary land rights into the formal legal framework. This situation generates numerous land conflicts, illegitimate land grabs, and the exclusion of local communities from their ancestral territories. Consequently, a dual land tenure system persists, legal security for landowners remains nonexistent, and economic development is hampered by these recurring conflicts and chronic instability. This article therefore examines the need for transitional justice in the Kalehe territory to resolve long-standing land, identity, and resource-related conflicts. Through a qualitative case study conducted with civil society actors using Tropes software, we demonstrate that a multidimensional approach, combining judicial, restorative, and institutional reforms, is essential for peace and development, while moving away from solutions based on the criminal justice system, which is often analyzed in the majority of cases related to this issue. The study highlights the profound impact of historical grievances and the inability of current systems to deliver justice to affected communities.

Keywords

Transitional Justice, Peace, Growth, Development

1. Introduction

For nearly twenty years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been gripped by an armed conflict that has escalated considerably, to the point that Congolese people speak of an endless war. This conflict originated in the mass

migrations of Hutu populations following the 1994 Rwandan genocide, as well as in various rebellions. Despite agreements and understandings, lasting peace has not been established. Although highly localized, these conflicts are linked to numerous territorial, social, identity-related, and economic issues at the regional, national, and international levels.

This article seeks to understand the need to shed light on the abuses committed and the historical context of refugee flows, to implement justice mechanisms (criminal or otherwise) for land and environmental crimes, to compensate affected communities, and to establish guarantees of non-recurrence in order to prevent future conflicts and environmental destruction. Addressing the underlying issues of security, land and environmental governance, and the social integration of refugees is essential for lasting peace and reconciliation.

The Kalehe territory, located north of Bukavu, is bordered by Walikale and Masisi in North Kivu, as well as Kabare, Shabunda, and Idjwi in South Kivu, and is connected to Rwanda by Lake Kivu. It comprises two chiefdoms, Buhavu and Buloho, and towns such as Bunyakiri, Kasheke, and Minova. Kalehe is home to a diverse population, including the Havu, Tembo, Rongeronge, Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi. The first four groups are considered indigenous, while the Hutu and Tutsi, descendants of migrants, are sometimes perceived as having a “questionable nationality”, which contributes to conflicts in the region.

The Tutsis and Hutus of Kalehe come from three waves of migration from Rwanda to the DRC: the first before colonization, the second linked to recruitment by the Belgian colonial administration for plantations, and the last, composed of Rwandan refugees, mainly Tutsis, fleeing the Hutu revolution of 1959. This distinction plays an important role in the recurring conflicts in Kalehe.

Local conflicts in the DRC are influenced by Rwandan armed groups such as the FDLR and the CNRD, the potential return of Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese refugees to Kalehe and, to some extent, by the creation of new rural communes by decree no. 18/020 of May 30, 2018. Past wars have further reinforced identity and political divisions, particularly due to armed resistance to the two main Congolese rebellions of the 1990s, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) and the Congolese Rally.

The FARDC and MONUSCO have conducted several operations against armed groups, such as Kimia I and II, Amani Leo, Amani ya Kweli, etc. These operations have not succeeded in restoring peace. Consultations on intercommunal dialogue have not eased tensions. Furthermore, the conflicts in Kalehe are linked to land, power, and identity issues (Adolphe, 2023; Huggins, 2015).

The Kalehe territory is part of a country rich in natural resources and untapped mineral wealth, estimated at over millions of dollars. This country possesses excellent potential for economic development that could improve the quality of life for its citizens. However, despite these abundant natural resources, the population of the Kaléhé territory, in an otherwise wealthy country, is among the five poorest in the world, with approximately 73.5% of its inhabitants living on less than \$2.15

a day. This dire situation is partly attributable to the protracted conflicts that have persisted since 1996, during which the entire population has been dispossessed of ancestral lands, sold by traditional chiefs to the wealthiest individuals. Some analysts even believe that these lands should be reserved exclusively for citizens and not for foreigners. To encourage investment in the agricultural sector, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo could implement laws requiring foreigners who have already acquired land to partner with Congolese citizens, provinces, or decentralized territorial entities in order to protect these lands. This would ensure local participation in land management, promote economic benefits for local communities, and potentially limit resource exploitation by outsiders. (Unruh & Williams, 2013a, 2013b) This approach can provide a framework for shared control, accountability, and the integration of local needs and rights into land management, although its effectiveness depends on rigorous implementation, rigorous monitoring, and the support of local civil society (Anseeuw & Alden, 2015). According to the research, land expropriation is another form of land insecurity, which exacerbates land conflicts between communities, constitutes a key dimension of instability, and is a major concern for peacebuilding in the Kalehe territory.

According to the CIFOR-ICRAF report, a researcher specializing in land and customary law, advocates for legal reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This reform would allow local communities in the Kalehe region to obtain land titles and participate in decisions concerning the management of land occupied by wealthy individuals. The Ngezayo conflict in Minova, in the Bulenga area, is an example: it indirectly addresses the issue of land protection by incorporating local and customary rights. Pabanel (1991), Vlassenroot & Huggins (2005) analyze the history of Rwandan migration to Kivu. They conclude that, to understand the influence of migration on ethnic violence in this region, it is necessary to examine settlement history, particularly in light of the resurgence of tribal violence in Kivu.

The Kalehe region has seen the arrival of Kinyarwanda-speaking migrants, whether from Rwanda or the neighboring Masisi region. We can distinguish those who emigrated as colonial workers before the 1950s, those whose arrival was supported by Mwami Sangara Hubert from 1953 onwards, those who came “with the help of relatives already settled in Kalehe”, and those who immigrated freely (Pourtier, 2009a, 2009b).

Several sources indicate that many Hutus brought by the colonizers remained anonymous because they did not present themselves to the Mwami (king) to resolve their situation. Access to land was often difficult for them, and their numbers escaped the control of local authorities. By working on the settlers’ plantations, they were able to gradually establish themselves. In 1959, a census conducted by chieftaincy agent Kibona Raphaël counted 400 Kinyarwanda speakers in the Highlands. Other waves of migration occurred in 1962, 1970, and 1994, with the massive arrival of refugees in eastern DRC (interview with a post chief, Minova, June 2010). However, the successive loss of Congolese nationality and the

rights of Kinyarwanda speakers in the Kalehe region exacerbated tensions between these groups, ultimately leading to armed conflict. While local dynamics are crucial, their connection to national and regional dimensions is not overlooked, particularly in times of war. (Regional elections of 1996 and 1998 to 2003) [Matabaro \(2009\)](#). It was observed that throughout the Kalehe territory, individuals had appropriated land by erecting fences and affixing signs claiming ownership. However, if these farms are visited, they are found to be completely empty, while the local population suffers from a lack of arable land to meet its economic needs.

Other civil society actors believe that other problems, such as deforestation caused by subsistence farming, increasing urbanization, and insufficient infrastructure development, also limit the amount of land available for local agriculture and deprive peaceful citizens of their land to the benefit of the wealthiest. However, according to Article 53 of the Law of July 20, 1973, concerning the general regime of property, land, and real estate, and the regime of securities, land is the indisputable, inalienable, and imprescriptible property of the State. Through this measure, the Congolese State nationalized land, thereby ending both the system of land ownership and the separation between state-owned and indigenous lands established by the colonial legislative power. Indeed, Article 385 of this law specifies that “upon the entry into force of this law, lands occupied by local communities shall become state-owned land” ([Matabaro, 2009](#)).

In this specific case, the Congolese state has the option of using transitional justice to resolve land disputes in the Kalehe territory by implementing a multidimensional and comprehensive strategy. This involves combining judicial and extrajudicial mechanisms, decentralizing processes to the community level, and ensuring the active participation of victims at every stage of reparations. Martha C. Nussbaum argues that these approaches are essential for a fair and effective transitional justice process and that they go beyond punitive measures.

The goal is to create inclusive policies regarding property rights, land tenure, and security, while recognizing that land belongs to the state. Prioritizing restorative justice and addressing the needs of affected communities is essential. By adopting this holistic and inclusive approach, the state can utilize a combination of courts, truth commissions, and community-based restorative justice initiatives to advance remedial justice. A multidimensional approach involving courts, truth commissions, and community-based reparation initiatives to address past harms is the best of all approaches ([Zehr, 1990](#)).

The institutions of the DRC must understand that the only way to maintain peace in the territory of Kalehe, devastated by multiple crises, is to support local actors by strengthening the capacities of communities, civil society organizations and victims' associations in order to ensure their active participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of reparation processes ([Robins, 2011](#)).

In other words, among all these initiatives, the essential element of a reparations strategy would be to ensure the effective participation of victims and affected com-

munities, who must be considered full partners, involved in decision-making from the identification of needs to the final evaluation of reparations programs. It is important to note that reparations are more effective when they take into account the specific needs and experiences of those harmed. (Brandon Hamber, 2000)

It is also important to provide concrete reparations that go beyond mere financial compensation, including measures to restore land rights, improve access to resources, and address security concerns. The focus must be on reconciliation and peace (Robins, 2011).

Civil society actors in Kaléhé believe that the violence and militarization of social relations stem from these issues. The dismantling of the CNRD by the Congolese army between late 2019 and early 2020 did not resolve the root causes of the conflicts. A 2023 study of 771 people from the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri, with a balanced representation of men and women, reveals the hopes and expectations of communities affected by the violence regarding the return of peace and security. Reynaert (2011). This is very important in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where conflict and insecurity persist. It is also an essential step towards establishing effective transitional justice. The search for truth involves ensuring an inclusive process and providing psychosocial and mental health support. The protection of victims and witnesses is also crucial (Autesserre, 2010a, 2010b). During the establishment of mechanisms for the implementation of transitional justice.

If criminal proceedings are considered, the objective is to identify, try, and convict the perpetrators. It is necessary to establish an international legal system, guarantee visible and accessible justice for all, protect victims and witnesses, and encourage dialogue within communities. Therefore, in order to restore the dignity of victims through reparations and the revelation of the truth, to strengthen social trust by addressing past grievances and establishing the rule of law, and to ensure future peace through institutional reform that prevents any recurrence.

Reparations measures include the social and economic reintegration of those affected, the return of displaced persons, psychological support, and public apologies. To prevent recurrence, it is essential to rapidly implement disarmament and public reintegration programs, reform the judicial system, monitor public institutions, and conduct awareness campaigns.

In terms of commemoration, this encompasses the construction of monuments, the evocation of tributes, the establishment of days of remembrance, and cultural activities. Concerns raised also included the lack of sanctions against the accused, the lack of initiative from political leaders, demands for reparations based on inaccurate data, and the manipulation of history during commemorative ceremonies. It argues that relying on these models neglects local customs and a tradition of restorative justice that values reconciliation and consensus over punishment. This author criticized the Western model of transitional justice applied to African contexts.

It is essential that the significant steps taken by policymakers and political leaders to create and implement a national transitional justice policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo enable us to “uncover the true reasons for the crimes in order to pursue the restoration of peace in our community. For if we do not find and address the true causes of the war, it will be impossible to move towards stability in the communities” (Teitel, 2000).

A key moment for transitional justice would be ensuring the non-recurrence of violence, as this is one of its main objectives. The effective implementation of these processes could help break the cycle of violence and consolidate peace in the DRC. Placing the voices of victims and affected communities at the heart of the DRC’s national transitional justice policy implies, in particular, specifically addressing their documented expectations and concerns, especially those expressed in the areas most affected by violence.

2. Literature Review

Transitional justice: definition, challenges of the current system, resource-related conflicts, political instability, accountability, full inclusion of victims, and strengthening judicial institutions. In this article, the transitional justice we refer to and define is characterized by its transitional dimension and constitutes a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy aimed at addressing the legacy left by a society affected by gross human rights violations, large-scale atrocities, land conflicts, and resource-related conflicts; the search for truth regarding specific abuses and the historical context of refugee flows and systematic repression (Kritz, 1995; Teitel, 2000).

It is not a homogeneous and unified system, but rather a combination of processes and mechanisms such as the search for truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, designed to promote the transition of a society in conflict or under an authoritarian regime towards peace, democracy and reconciliation.

An overview helps us understand how the overall framework should integrate specific transgressions and historical contexts, such as refugee movements and environmental offenses, while ensuring that affected communities remain at the heart of the process. There are variations in the types of offenses and their social contexts. Experts note a trend toward using transitional justice to examine these situations or developing theories of state-led reparations (Ring et al., 2022).

2.1. Importance and Advantages of Transitional Justice

Transitional justice offers numerous advantages for a country’s reconstruction and reconciliation. It also facilitates investigations into crimes and the building of a better future. According to Van Zyl (2005), the Transitional justice can offer the following advantages: Examining the root causes of conflicts and formulating recommendations to prevent their recurrence; prosecuting and punishing perpetrators of crimes, thereby minimizing the thirst for revenge among victims; removing

former government aggressors and improving institutional effectiveness and human rights standards can contribute to state development and institutional reforms; truth commissions and reparations initiatives can raise awareness of the vulnerability of marginalized communities and help combat inequality; and denouncing wrongdoing and promoting accountability can advance the rule of law, restore trust in state institutions, and consolidate democracy.

The victims long for peace to return so that the search for truth can proceed calmly. Peace remains the absolute priority, because without it, investigations are difficult... [and] with each passing day, we record more cases of war crimes and serious human rights violations. – Interview with a civil society actor from Kalehe-Ihusi.

2.2. The Challenges of the Current System

The judicial system of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently perceived as inefficient and poorly equipped. The government's failure to address past and present mass atrocities has fostered a widespread culture of impunity (Murhula, 2022). Consequently, the judicial system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is often deemed inadequate to handle mass atrocities, despite efforts to establish a transitional justice system. The government has demonstrated a strong commitment to this process, and significant progress has been made with the support of other countries, but several challenges remain. Political influence, a lack of resources, and the difficulty in grasping the full extent of past crimes are challenges that affect the implementation and effectiveness of justice and reconciliation processes in a context of human rights violations. Political interests can undermine transitional justice efforts by influencing which crimes are addressed, which perpetrators are prosecuted, and how victims are compensated.

Creating a new legal framework will likely require a comprehensive approach, which could benefit from the support of the international community, to ensure that the perpetrators of these acts are effectively prosecuted and that victims obtain appropriate redress.

However, Limitations in financial and human resources in many African countries can hinder the establishment and operation of effective transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, tribunals, or reparations programs. According to some studies, the difficulty in grasping the full scope and complexity of past and present crimes requires specialized expertise in areas such as criminal investigation, historical analysis and victim support, expertise which may be lacking.

2.3. Exclusion in Policymaking

The national transitional justice policy currently being developed in the DRC is considered flawed because it is based on initial consultations conducted in only a few provinces, thus ignoring the experiences of victims in the hardest-hit areas, such as the Kaléhé territory, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. However, ignoring

the victims in these areas within the transitional justice process generates a profound sense of injustice, undermines reconciliation, and risks perpetuating impunity (Auger, 2007).

By neglecting the most affected communities, these restorative justice initiatives fail to offer comprehensive redress and may even generate new grievances, as they do not fully address the aftereffects of past traumas. However, according to Zehr (1990), this Restorative justice aims to repair harm by addressing the needs of all those affected. It states that the objective is to alleviate suffering and meet the needs of stakeholders, particularly those most directly impacted. He suggests that this restorative justice should be centered on a process where all stakeholders discuss and respond to the needs of people affected by an offense. It was explained that the key principles of restorative justice include the offender's responsibility, the victim's involvement, and facilitating constructive dialogue to address needs and repair harm. Therefore, the DRC must demonstrate which path of justice it truly intends to take to save the people of Kalehe, who ultimately remain voiceless. The fate of the DRC rests in the hands of its institutions.

2.4. Consequences of Negligence towards the Most Affected Victims

The perpetuation of injustice is also the case when victims living in the most affected areas are neglected, they may feel abandoned by the justice system, leading to a sense of injustice and the belief that the perpetrators of the crimes will go unpunished. Some research discussed how neglect can lead to an "unfairness assessment" of the world, which corresponds to the feeling of being abandoned by the system.

In this case, the best way for the DRC government to address this problem in a balanced manner would be to implement an effective transitional justice mechanism, which requires a combination of judicial and non-judicial approaches, such as specialized or hybrid courts to prosecute perpetrators of crimes, truth commissions to publicly acknowledge past abuses, and comprehensive reparations programs that go beyond financial compensation (Bastick et al., 2007). A robust communication strategy and institutional reform are also essential to rebuild trust, demonstrate accountability, and prevent future harm.

Civil society actors in the Kalehe region believe that, for the country's transitional justice system to deliver reparations and ensure that victims are informed, it is essential to guarantee the participation and consultation of beneficiaries in the design and implementation of reparations. This allows reparations to be tailored to the local context and contributes effectively to addressing the harm suffered. For example, in some countries, victims have prioritized life annuities and access to services; in some contexts, individual reparations and compensation have been favored, while in others, they have been collective.

The example of reparations in Sierra Leone could be useful to the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In August 2008, the Sierra Leonean

government, in partnership with the United Nations, launched a one-year project to strengthen the capacity of the National Social Action Commission. This project aimed to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations regarding reparations. These recommendations included the construction or improvement of necessary infrastructure, the provision of emergency aid to victims, and the registration of affected individuals. The project received \$3 million in funding from the United Nations Peace Fund. In 2010, 29,733 people were reached, including victims of sexual violence, who were among the five priority categories of victims receiving emergency assistance. Victims of sexual violence received modest compensation, and 235 underwent fistula surgery. The UN Special Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women, in collaboration with the German government, strengthened programs to assist victims of sexual violence by offering, for example, microloans, human rights training, and psychological support. They are seeking funding to enhance this assistance, which could include free healthcare, fistula surgery for those who need it, and HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment for victims of sexual violence. If funds are available, housing could also be offered to the most vulnerable victims.

In the Kalehe territory, the money was intended to resolve the issue of land illegally seized or sold by Mwami Sangara to foreigners in Buzi. This situation has led to deadly conflicts and unjust imprisonments. In Bulenga, for example, a plantation owned by a foreigner is causing serious unrest. People wishing to work in the fields are forced into labor for the buyer's manager and must give up a quarter of their harvest. Today, the people of Kalehe are living the prediction, which he explained in his work "*Capital* refers to the wealth that accumulates through 'primitive accumulation', a historical process of forced dispossession of producers from their means of production, such as land. Today in Kalehe, the land belongs to wealthy men, resulting in a class of propertyless wage laborers (the proletariat) forced to sell their labor power to a new class of capitalists who own the means of production. This analytical framework allows us to understand exploitation, which is based on expropriation." of the many for the benefit of the few.

Another man from the same region, with legal training and a background as a lawyer in North Kivu, forced his neighbors to buy their land, compelling them to leave the village and sell their plots at ridiculously low prices. Some tried to resist, but this man had devastated their crops with his cattle. They had no choice but to sell, even reluctantly. In the city of Goma, they find themselves unemployed and are demanding fair compensation from the government. Similar situations are occurring throughout the Kalehe region. The UNDP report highlighted the need for land policy reforms, better land governance and better access to resources, and the risks of poverty associated with precarious and unsustainable land access methods.

3. Methodology

The methodology involves questioning the fundamental assumptions upon which

the conception of knowledge rests and examining the validity of the knowledge it allows us to develop. The two main epistemological positions that structure qualitative research are the positivist and constructivist paradigms.

Qualitative research encompasses “an investigative process aimed at understanding a social or human problem, based on the construction of a complex and holistic picture”, grounded in detailed observations of “informants in nature”. “A sound and well-argued methodological protocol is fundamental to ensuring the rigor and validity of a study.” Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of philosophical assumptions (such as the nature of reality and epistemology) and methodological choices in conducting rigorous research.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as opposing poles or dichotomies; rather, they represent the extremes of a continuum (Newman & Benz, 1998).

The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is often made by the use of words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or by the use of closed questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open questions (qualitative interview questions).

A more comprehensive approach to these differences lies in the researchers’ fundamental philosophical assumptions, the types of research strategies used (e.g., quantitative experiments or qualitative case studies), and the specific methods employed to implement these strategies (e.g., collecting quantitative data on instruments versus collecting qualitative data by observing a context).

Furthermore, both approaches have undergone a historical evolution, with quantitative approaches dominating social science research from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. During the second half of the 20th century, interest in qualitative research increased, leading to the development of mixed-methods research. Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The research process includes developing questions and procedures, collecting data—usually within the participant’s context—inductively analyzing the data (moving from details to main themes), and the researcher’s interpretation of the data’s significance. The final report is written in a flexible structure. Those who conduct this type of research favor an inductive approach, paying particular attention to individual meaning and taking into account the complexity of the situation.

Quantitative research allows for the testing of objective theories by examining the relationships between variables. These variables can be measured, usually using instruments, so that the numerical data can be analyzed using statistical methods. The final report is rigorously structured: introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. Like qualitative researchers, those who conduct this type of investigation assume that theories must be tested inductively, that measures to guard against bias must be implemented, that alternative explanations must be ruled out, and that the results must be generalizable and reproducible.

Mixed methods research is an investigative approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. It is based on philosophical postulates, the joint use of these two approaches, and their integration within a single study. It is therefore not simply a matter of collecting and analyzing these two types of data; it also involves their combined use, resulting in a study with greater overall robustness than purely qualitative or purely quantitative research.

In this sense, qualitative methodology justifies transitional justice by relying on an in-depth analysis of the root causes and consequences of abuses, such as environmental damage, land confiscations, and the massacres in Kalehe, in order to inform the design of justice mechanisms. This approach helps to restore the truth from the perspective of those affected, revealing the complexity and interdependence of the links between conflicts and their harmful consequences for populations and ecosystems. According to [Martha \(2006\)](#), when trials are important, they are not enough to heal the deep wounds left by mass violence, given that traditional legal remedies have limitations; a more comprehensive approach will be needed today.

As we have already pointed out, qualitative methods can reveal complex community narratives.

In the researcher's work on the link between genocide and ecocide, they argue that the forced seizure of land damages ecosystems that are integral to a people's existence, leading to both social and environmental destruction. These examples are sufficient to help us understand how land confiscation during the Kalehe conflict was facilitated or exacerbated by environmental destruction, thus contributing to a more complete picture of this injustice.

Transitional justice is essential for peace, development, and economic growth because it addresses the root causes and consequences of conflict-related abuses, such as environmental damage, land confiscations, and the Kalehe massacre, through its four pillars: truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence. By acknowledging past injustices, holding perpetrators accountable, providing reparations, and preventing future violence, it builds trust, restores social cohesion, and creates a stable and secure environment, which is essential for long-term development and growth.

To understand the contribution of the mechanisms implemented to apply transitional justice to the abuses committed by Rwandan refugees in the Kalehe territory, we situate our reasoning within a constructivist epistemological framework. Our study also adopts an inductive qualitative approach that favors multiple case studies ([Yin, 2014](#)) as a research strategy. The Kalehe territory was chosen as the study area, and our research will focus on six (8) civil society actors in this territory. Some research recommends working with at least three (3) cases. This strategy was chosen because it allows for comparisons between cases and within each case, and highlights the observed similarities and differences.

The chosen sampling method is deliberate, as the selection of actors from the various civil societies studied will be guided by our "how" research question

(Wacheux, 1996). We prioritize the principle of theoretical saturation regarding our sample size. This principle stipulates that “when adding interviews no longer enriches the model developed in practice, 4 to 8 interviews generally allow us to reach this saturation”. However, the variety of cases, their relevance to the phenomenon studied, the research topic, and the potential for discovery will be essential criteria to consider during our sampling process. We also rely on purposive sampling to collect our data in the Kalehe territory. The author emphasizes that purposive sampling allows for the collection of data on the multiplicity of testimonies and cases within the same area of action and from different civil society actors. This will serve as a tool to describe the discourses of civil society actors in Kaehe and of certain leaders in the territory. We wish to justify the qualitative approach to research on transitional justice in Kaehe because it will allow us to explore in depth the complexity of human experiences, the socio-political context, and the nuanced perspectives of those affected by conflict and violence. It will allow us to grasp the experiences, motivations, and the specific “how” and “why” of these phenomena, something that quantitative data cannot do. Methods such as in-depth interviews, ethnography, and narrative analysis allow researchers to gather rich, non-numerical data that unveil the complex, often hidden, ways in which inequality affects justice, peace, and development, revealing how these processes are lived and perceived on the ground. Exploring individuals’ lived experiences provides us with a deeper understanding of how transitional justice mechanisms are perceived and felt within their specific communities. This methodology can then reveal how pre-existing structural inequalities, such as socioeconomic marginalization, gender disparities, and land rights issues, are embedded in or interact with transitional justice processes—aspects that cannot be captured by statistics alone.

With regard to our case of transitional justice as a means of addressing land abuses which are at the heart of the conflict and the search for identity for the Tutsi population of the Kalehe territory in Numbi, Lumbishi and other parts of the territory, this approach is ideal for capturing subjective experiences at the local level and the complex interactions between these different social problems.

Given the vastness of the Kalehe region, the eight representatives from various civil society organizations are themselves victims of abuses of different kinds. These include the degradation of the ecosystem; the theft of their goats, chickens, and turkeys by passing refugees; the looting of their banana plantation; the slaughter of their cows; and even the murder of their child, who resisted the forced entry into the house so they could seize what they wanted. The civil society representatives were chosen based on their resilience in the face of adversity and their leadership roles within their communities. We contacted representatives from Central Kalehe, Kasheke, Nyamukubi, Nyabibwe, Minova, Bunyakiri, Ziralo, and Numbi. Each of them represents a group of 16 to 17 people from different households. Our interviews took the form of informal discussions, with each representative giving the others a chance to speak. It is important to become accustomed to this

practice for our recordings, especially when the representative directs us to the person who experienced the event in question.

In rural areas like Kalehe, civil society organizations play a crucial role in giving voice to local communities, holding institutions accountable, and facilitating peacebuilding. Their mission in the field of transitional justice would be to defend victims, document violations, promote reconciliation, and ensure that justice mechanisms are inclusive and adapted to the local context.

3.1. Structural Inequalities

Qualitative methods will allow us to explore how systemic inequalities, such as poverty or discrimination in land confiscation by the wealthiest in the Kalehe region, facilitated by Mwami Sangara, impact the effectiveness and fairness of transitional justice mechanisms, if this issue is not addressed in the example we have given of Sierra Leone.

Elster (2004) argues that superficial measures such as trials against perpetrators of wrongdoing are insufficient; transitional justice must also address and correct the deep-rooted inequalities that have generated these injustices, otherwise it cannot guarantee lasting success and fairness. He argues that failing to address the underlying economic, social, and political inequalities that have enabled past injustices will lead to the emergence of new conflicts and maintain an unstable and unjust society. According to this author, transitional justice cannot function in isolation and must address underlying problems such as poverty, discrimination, and other systemic inequalities.

He argues that a just and effective system requires a broader approach that addresses these root causes in order to ensure truly inclusive and sustainable justice mechanisms. For a system to be sustainable, it must consider the interaction of environmental, social, and economic factors and address the root causes of problems, not just their symptoms.

3.2. Interaction with Peace, Growth and Development

Going beyond quantitative data, we seek to understand how transitional justice efforts are closely linked to a society's broader efforts for peace, economic growth, and development.

Transitional justice efforts are linked to peace, economic growth, and development because they address the root causes of conflict by combining criminal, restorative, and social justice mechanisms to prevent future violence, promote reconciliation, and restore trust (Teitel, 2000).

Our approach is based on all the studies and interviews conducted with all stakeholders in the Kalehe territory who have suffered abuses, whether physical, moral or related to land issues.

According to Ruti Teitel (2000), transitional justice in relation to the qualitative approach aims to reduce the gap between peace and justice; law is considered a political compromise in times of transition, rather than a purely independent legal solution. Justice is then perceived as part of a broader process of political stabili-

zation, rather than as an autonomous end, emphasizes [Open Edition Books and Pierre Legrand](#).

These efforts will contribute to stabilizing the Kalehe region by bringing perpetrators of crimes to justice, compensating victims, and reforming institutions. Addressing the socio-economic grievances that often fuel conflict is an aspect emphasized by several civil society actors in Kalehe. It is crucial for achieving lasting peace and development.

3.3. Holistic Understanding

This methodology offers a more complete picture than can be obtained with quantitative data alone, which can miss the nuances of human experience and the complex social dynamics at play.

3.4. Justification for Using a Qualitative Approach

3.4.1. In-Depth Understanding

Qualitative research, through methods such as interviews and focus groups, allows researchers to gain in-depth knowledge of the “how” and “why” of people’s beliefs, actions, and experiences regarding transitional justice.

3.4.2. Contextual Sensitivity

The Kalehe territory has a history marked by conflict, ethnic diversity, and socio-economic challenges. A qualitative approach allows for a better contextualization of the results within this specific context, as explained in this study on transitional justice.

3.4.3. Capturing Complex Interrelationships

This research theme focuses on complex and interdependent concepts such as peace, growth, development, and justice. A qualitative method is particularly well-suited to exploring these complex and difficult-to-quantify relationships, as demonstrated by this research on transitional justice and peacebuilding.

3.4.4. Survivor-Centered Perspective

A qualitative approach is essential to understanding the direct impact of conflicts and justice mechanisms on individuals, particularly vulnerable populations. It allows for the meaningful collection of their testimonies and experiences, as highlighted in this study on transitional justice.

3.4.5. Flexibility

This methodology offers some flexibility to adapt the research as new information emerges, which is crucial in a dynamic and complex post-conflict environment like that of South Kivu.

Our sample consisted of 133 civil society actors, residents, and local officials. Using a qualitative approach, we employed a multidimensional perspective, including thematic analysis, to categorize their experiences and viewpoints. We adopted the transitional justice framework as our analytical structure, and con-

cepts such as truth-seeking, reparations, and institutional reform in the Kalehe context proved essential for understanding transitional justice specifically within the Kalehe territory. We also used different sample groups to explore variations in experiences, including civil society actors' and residents' perceptions of the effectiveness of different transitional justice mechanisms, and how officials might propose institutional reforms based on these perspectives.

4. Qualitative Analysis Framework

Establishing a structure and thematic analysis

We used thematic analysis to organize the data in order to identify, by analyzing and signaling patterns (themes) within the data collected from the sample groups.

5. Transitional Justice Framework

We applied a transitional justice framework to guide our analysis. The four pillars were as follows:

The search for truth has served us for We collected testimonies and evidence of abuses committed against the population of Kalehe. Legal proceedings allowed us to analyze how different study groups perceived the necessity and feasibility of criminal prosecution. We then focused on reparations to gather data on the types of reparations most desired by the population, such as financial compensation, symbolic gestures, or community projects. Subsequently, through analyses of institutional reforms, we sought to determine the institutional changes necessary to prevent future abuses. The data analysis by study group was conducted with civil society actors. This data analysis allowed us to understand their perspectives on the role of civil society in transitional justice, their experience in evidence gathering, and the solutions they propose for implementing transitional justice mechanisms. The data collected from residents allowed us to understand their experiences of abuse, its impact on their lives, and their specific needs and aspirations regarding justice and reparations. Finally, the data collected from local leaders enabled us to analyze and understand their perspectives on the political and administrative challenges and opportunities related to implementing transitional justice measures, as well as the institutional reforms they propose.

6. Integration of Results

We compared and contrasted the data from each sample were analyzed to identify common themes and points of divergence. For example, while residents prioritize immediate reparations, leaders may prioritize long-term institutional reforms. To this end, we deemed it necessary to synthesize the results. At this stage, the objective was to synthesize the findings from the different sample groups to provide a comprehensive picture of the situation in Kalehe. We then used our analysis to develop a nuanced and context-appropriate transitional justice proposal that addresses the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

The use of purposive sampling is justified by the fact that, as in many African

countries (Nkakleu & Manga, 2016), employees and managers are often reluctant to participate in surveys and polls. The majority of study participants are civil society actors, specifically individuals who experienced the situation of Rwandan refugees crossing the border in 1994. The influx of Rwandan refugees into the Kalehe region exacerbated environmental degradation through deforestation, soil degradation, and pressure on resources. However, the recent landslides and floods of May 2023 also highlight the impact of climate change and poor land management, compounded by poverty and political insecurity. Transitional justice could provide redress through restorative approaches such as land restitution and compensation for damages, as well as through accountability measures such as criminal prosecutions for environmental crimes and institutional reforms aimed at preventing future harm.

Our sample size was determined according to the principle of theoretical saturation, which states that “when adding more interviews no longer enriches the model developed in practice, 7 to 12 interviews are generally sufficient to reach this saturation”. In this study, the theoretical saturation threshold was reached at the 7th interview. The interview guide served as the data collection tool and was structured around 8 main themes, as shown in Box 1 below:

Box 1: Prototype of the semi-structured interview guide

The themes that help us understand beliefs and actions related to transitional justice in Kalehe include understanding the mechanisms of abuse and complicity, the impact of violence on different groups, the reasons for seeking or avoiding justice, the role of local culture in reconciliation, and the impact of conflict on social trust and governance. By examining the “how” and the “why,” it is possible to develop effective strategies for accountability, victim support, and building lasting peace.

Topics to explore:

Theme 1. Mechanisms of abuse and complicity:

How were these abuses committed? Who was involved and why? What systemic and individual factors enabled these violations?

Theme 2. Impact of violence on different groups:

How has the conflict affected different demographic groups (e.g., women, children, ethnic groups, political opponents)? What are their specific experiences, needs, and views regarding justice and reparations?

Theme 3. Perceptions of justice and responsibility:

Why do some survivors pursue criminal charges while others prioritize truth, apologies, or reparations? Why do some victims or communities hesitate to use the justice system?

Theme 4. The role of local culture in conflict and reconciliation:

How have cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions contributed to or mitigated violence? How can local cultural practices be leveraged to promote healing and reconciliation?

Theme 5. The legacies of the conflict:

What are the long-term social and psychological impacts of the conflict? How have the abuses undermined social trust and how can it be restored through both punitive and restorative measures?

Theme 6. Institutional failures and reforms:

What role do existing institutions play in this conflict? What institutional reforms are needed to prevent future abuses and guarantee justice?

Source: Author of literature.

Data collection through interviews followed several steps: equipped with documents attesting to our affiliation with a social science research laboratory at the University of Kinshasa and the University of Yaoundé II (Cameroon), we first requested interviews with various civil society actors in the Kaléhé territory. We conducted semi-structured interviews, using direct questions and active listening to better understand the different themes discussed with stakeholders involved in the phenomenon of transitional justice. The choice of method depended on our objective: we sometimes favored structured interviews to collect specific data and semi-structured interviews to explore certain perspectives in greater depth. We opted for structured interviews because of their rigorous framework and closed-ended questions, which allowed us to obtain precise and essential answers, leading us to a qualitative study. The semi-structured interview allowed us to ask open-ended questions and provided a flexible framework, ideal for the qualitative data we were seeking. Our sample consisted of eight civil society actors from the Kaléhé territory. Interaction techniques included follow-up questions to elicit clarifications and active listening, with paraphrasing and encouragement, to elicit more in-depth discussions from the participants.

For data collection and analysis, audio recordings allowed us to transcribe the interviews. The data were then coded to identify recurring themes, and studies were conducted to analyze the information. This data collection took place between August and November 2024. We encountered reluctance from several civil society actors, particularly groups of people who had suffered abuses and atrocities. This explains the reluctance of the population to participate in interviews and the reluctance of civil society leaders to participate in surveys and polls in the Kalehe territory.

Faced with this situation, we sought the assistance of the administrator of the Kaléhé territory, as well as priests and pastors from the various church communities, to facilitate our work. This approach, however, does not contradict the need for qualitative researchers to remain open to new events and emerging categories—that is, those that are empirically grounded (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012). Data analysis prioritized thematic content analysis. More specifically, we combined full transcription with analysis using the Trops software to highlight the results.

This highlights that this strategy of triangulating data analysis tools strengthens the internal and external validity of the research. According to our analyses using Trops software, the respondents' arguments in all interviews were descriptive.

Data collection through interviews was conducted after obtaining official

documents from the University of Kinshasa. Requests were sent to leaders of civil society organizations in the Kalehe territory. The structured interviews emphasized direct questions and active listening to better understand land and identity conflicts, as well as the abuses perpetrated against the population by Rwandan refugee movements between Gashusha and Nyabibwe, within the Kalehe territory. The methods chosen depended on the objectives: structured interviews yielded precise data, while semi-structured interviews facilitated more in-depth discussions. A sample of eight civil society organizations, along with their subdivisions, was consulted. The interviews adopted a non-directive approach to encourage participants to speak freely. Follow-up questions were used to elicit clarifications. Audio recordings of the interviews were used for transcription. The data were then processed using Tropes software, revealing recurring themes. Data collection took place between September and December 2024, but the reluctance of several civil society organizations to participate necessitated the involvement of influential figures. This study adopted a phenomenological or socio-constructivist paradigm to analyze the social conflict surrounding transitional justice in the context of land and identity disputes. Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, combining full transcripts and Tropes software.

7. Results of the Empirical Research

Before placing our findings in context, it is important to recall that this article aimed to understand and analyze the local community's perception of the links between different transitional justice mechanisms (such as truth commissions, reparations, and institutional reforms) and its experience with peace, security, and development. This approach notably involves understanding the meaning of justice for this community, the impact of past violations on it, and identifying the mechanisms deemed most effective for restoring social trust and preventing future violence. In this context, exploring local conceptions of justice means grasping what the concept of "justice" represents for the inhabitants of Kalehe, within a historical context marked by violence, recognizing that this notion extends beyond the strictly legal framework. It will then be necessary to assess the perception of past and present transitional justice initiatives, analyzing how these measures, whether judicial or not, are perceived by the community and determining their effectiveness in promoting peace, security, and development.

To present the textual findings related to transitional justice as an essential condition for peace, justice, and development, we grouped the responses according to themes such as victim recognition, institutional trust, and the prevention of recidivism. These elements are then integrated into a coherent narrative illustrating the interconnectedness of these concepts through direct quotations. This presentation is structured around the fundamental pillars of transitional justice, presented thematically, the most important being: truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence, each pillar supported by relevant textual extracts.

8. Coherent Narratives Illustrate the Interconnectedness of Textual Responses or Actors' Responses through Direct Quotations

8.1. Mechanisms of Abuse and Complicity

R/II/The main actors in the conflicts in the Kalehe region, who are calling for transitional justice, are various armed groups, including the Rwandan CNRD and Congolese Hutu groups such as the Mai-Mai Kirikicho and the Nyatura Kalume. The actors to whom we submitted the interview guide described the situation: "These clashes also affect our communities, who are victims of abuses, particularly the Havu people. The state's military presence in this area remains limited." The conflicts in Kalehe are triggered by historical and ethnic tensions exacerbated by colonial fragmentation, land disputes, political manipulation, the presence of armed groups, and the struggle for control of natural resources. These factors necessitate transitional justice to address historical grievances as well as persistent feelings of revenge and hatred. Tensions between Tutsis and Hutus date back to the colonial era, when the Belgian administration favored a Tutsi elite, creating ethnic divisions that led to violence when the Hutus seized power. This violence, in turn, facilitated the massive influx of Rwandan refugees. The 1994 Rwandan genocide and the ensuing conflicts displaced hundreds of thousands of people, particularly Hutus, to eastern Congo (present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo).

These migratory movements have exacerbated tensions with our local communities, such as the Tembo and the Havu, who feel invaded. The return of Tutsi refugees is a particularly sensitive issue. They are seeking to reclaim lands abandoned and illegally occupied during their displacement in Tanzania and Uganda during the wars of Idi Amin and Museveni. This situation has provoked strong opposition from the local populations now settled in these territories. Furthermore, some land was allocated to the Tutsis through coercion and manipulation by certain Bami (chiefs), who ceded land belonging to the Bashamuka, a people respected by the Bahavu, in exchange for money. This land was sometimes resold by the Mwami (chief) of Buzi without him knowing the precise extent of the land sold, as he himself resided in Kinshasa. His son perpetuated this policy of selling land, thus generating conflicts in the Kalehe territory. Furthermore, some local groups, such as the Tembo of Ziralo, have mobilized to gain autonomy from Buzi, fearing increased expropriation of their lands. I would also like to emphasize the existence of political manipulation, through which certain politicians and elites exploit ethnic stereotypes and prejudices to incite conflict. Regarding armed groups with resources, the conflicts have fostered the militarization of communities, as illustrated by the case of the Mai-Mai, who initially joined the AFDL before turning against it due to Rwanda's support for the RCD.

Furthermore, natural resources, particularly minerals, constitute a major source of funding for many armed groups; their control remains a central issue in

current conflicts. This is why I believe that transitional justice is essential in Kalehe today to end the cycles of violence, hatred, and revenge. To be effective, it must address the root causes of the conflicts, such as: resolving land disputes, managing the return of refugees, establishing judicial mechanisms capable of prosecuting crimes, reconciliation between different communities, and building lasting and inclusive peace. It is also important to note that different groups have suffered specific impacts related to their role and the historical context of the conflict, particularly with regard to land disputes and the management of returns. Moreover, political opponents may be victims of persecution or see their demands marginalized. These groups therefore need the establishment of fair and appropriate judicial mechanisms.

8.2. Impact of Violence on Different Groups

R/I2/The conflict has highlighted the urgent need for effective judicial mechanisms to prosecute perpetrators of crimes. Victims of the conflict, across all demographic groups, must have access to fair trials, adequate reparations, and psychosocial support. Justice and reparations are fundamental steps toward healing, reconciliation, and accountability. Reconciliation initiatives have been hampered by deep divisions, historical resentments, and the lingering effects of violence. Building lasting peace requires inclusive processes that take into account the needs of all demographic groups.

Promoting dialogue and ensuring political and social stability. The differences of opinion between the various groups regarding methods for achieving peace underline the importance of a participatory process that strengthens trust and addresses the root causes of the conflict: institutional failures and necessary reforms.

R/I3/What role do existing institutions play in this conflict? What institutional reforms are needed to prevent future abuses and guarantee justice?

8.3. The Aftermath of the Conflict

R/I3/To address this problem, institutions are often weakened by conflict, which renders them corrupt, ineffective, or exclusionary. Reforms are essential to establish accountable and effective systems. Priorities for institutional reform include strengthening the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, establishing inclusive legal and constitutional frameworks, reforming the security sector to ensure its accountability to the public, and integrating customary justice systems with respect for human rights. Currently, in a conflict context, the role of institutions is often unclear or poorly defined. They prove ineffective and corrupt, unable to provide essential services or guarantee equitable access to justice. Corruption further weakens the effectiveness of our national institutions and frequently maintains links with international trafficking networks. Moreover, existing legal and social structures have perpetuated exclusion by favoring some groups at the expense of others. This is the case, for example, with a law on patrilineal citizenship, which can disadvantage women and their children. However, according to

the Official Gazette of the DRC, Land Code, Special Issue, April 5, 2006, p. 24, under Law No. 24, the Congolese state redistributed land ownership. According to this law, the competent authority, such as Parliament, must own at least 2,000 hectares of rural land and at least 100 hectares of urban land; the President of the Republic must own more than 1,000 hectares of rural land and less than 2,000 hectares of urban land, or more than 50 hectares and less than 100 hectares of urban land; and the Ministers of Land Affairs must own between 200 and 1,000 hectares of rural land, or between 10 and 50 hectares of urban land. Provincial governors must own no more than 200 hectares of rural land and no more than 10 hectares of urban land; and land registrars must own less than 10 hectares of rural land and less than 50 hectares of urban land. Despite this legal distribution, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our land rights are violated by inadequate governance, corrupt practices, and the lack of integration of customary land rights into the formal legal framework. This situation leads to a proliferation of land conflicts in the Kalehe territory, illegitimate land grabs by wealthy individuals facilitated by certain Bami (as is the case in Buzi), and the exclusion of local communities from their ancestral territories. Consequently, a dual land system persists. The legal security of landowners remains precarious, and economic development is hampered by these recurring conflicts and structural instability. Yet, the conflict between customary law and state law is often decisive in matters of land rights and land-use planning. The judicial system of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently in peril, it must be acknowledged, my dear friend. The local media report on this regularly. However, in post-conflict contexts, it is common for judicial and security institutions to be degraded or weakened, hence the need for reform. Here in the Kaléhé region, we are still waiting for this reform. Informal or non-state judicial systems sometimes fill certain gaps, but they can also perpetuate discriminatory practices and lead to human rights violations if they are not properly regulated. If I had the power to decide, I would immediately undertake the essential institutional reforms to restore justice and preserve the peace necessary to limit abuses linked to the arbitrary use of power. Regarding the security sector, it is crucial to develop a democratic, accountable, and public-service-oriented system, particularly through security sector reform (SSR). Establishing inclusive legal frameworks, coupled with the ratification of international human rights treaties and the adoption of new constitutional provisions, would greatly contribute to the protection of individuals. Integrating customary and informal justice systems requires collaboration between governments and existing non-state judicial mechanisms to ensure their adherence to human rights standards. Furthermore, implementing transitional justice in the Kalehe region requires tools such as truth commissions, reparations, and the establishment of judicial accountability. These mechanisms are essential for redressing past violations, recognizing victims, and preventing future atrocities. Moreover, it is crucial to guarantee public services capable of meeting basic needs, particularly in education and healthcare. This would address underlying injustices while fostering genuine rec-

conciliation. To achieve economic justice, lasting reforms are needed, such as improved access to land ownership, the promotion of fair wages, and progressive tax policies. These would address the economic concerns arising from the fact that territorial administration has been stripped of its economic power in favor of customary authorities for political reasons. Uncertainty persists. This situation is exacerbated by a complete stagnation in infrastructure development: no projects have been launched in the Kalehe territory for thirty years. 3. Impact of violence on different groups.

8.4. Perceptions of Justice and Responsibility

I/3. How has the conflict affected different demographic groups (e.g., women, children, ethnic groups, political opponents of the land conflict, the management of the return of Rwandan refugees since 1994, the establishment of justice mechanisms to prosecute crimes committed, reconciliation between different communities, and the establishment of lasting and inclusive peace in the Kalehe territory)? What are their specific experiences, needs, and perspectives regarding justice and reparations?

A/The conflict in Kalehe has had a particularly serious impact on our women, our children and our ethnic groups.

Due to massive population displacements, violence, including sexual violence, and the disruption of essential services, our children suffer lasting physical and psychological trauma and remain vulnerable to exploitation, while women are the primary victims of the resurgence of gender-based violence. Furthermore, ethnic and political groups have specific needs related to land disputes, managing the return of refugees, and the need to establish fair and inclusive justice and reconciliation mechanisms. For example, my personal experience allows me to affirm that women are particularly exposed to gender-based violence, sexual assault, and various forms of physical and psychological trauma. They also face significant difficulties accessing essential services, particularly reproductive and maternal health. It is imperative that they have effective access to justice and appropriate reparations for victims of violence. Their active participation in peace processes is crucial, as they often play a decisive role in the sustainable restoration of peace and in reconciliation efforts. Children face forced displacement, food insecurity, educational difficulties, and direct violence. They remain particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological harm, which can lead to long-term consequences such as anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders. It is imperative to protect these children from all forms of violence and exploitation, guarantee their effective access to education and healthcare, and provide them with essential psychosocial support to overcome their trauma.

Furthermore, the state of school infrastructure is unacceptable. Institutions such as the Furaha Institute in Kalehe Centre, the Mbinga Institute, and the Ruharaga Institute do not meet the required standards for student facilities. This situation is even more concerning in schools located in remote areas such as

Mabula, Bushushu, Nyabibwe, Ishovu, Iko, Ibinja, and Ihoka, where the state of the infrastructure is alarming. We call for intervention aimed at rehabilitating these institutions through inclusive public investment that integrates all affected communities. Neither the Congolese government nor the United Nations—which authorized the entry of Rwandan refugees into the Democratic Republic of the Congo twenty-five years ago—has yet considered addressing the damage caused by this massive influx of refugees. Their priority remains security, stability, and the restoration of a dignified childhood.

8.5. The Role of Local Culture in Conflicts and Reconciliation

I/4. How have cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions contributed to violence?

How can local cultural practices be leveraged to promote healing and reconciliation?

R/I4. The role of local culture in conflict and reconciliation can play a dual role, both in the construction and resolution of conflicts. For example, certain norms related to honor can lead to violence. Similarly, the early learning of violent behaviors, often observed from childhood, can establish patterns perceived as different. Finally, gender inequalities are often rooted in certain customs and beliefs. These can perpetuate structures of male domination, thus reinforcing social imbalances and violence against women. It is therefore necessary to value cultural principles that prioritize peace, cooperation, and non-aggression, thereby helping to prevent acts of violence. Strengthening community ties is also essential. Cultural traditions and practices can play a key role in consolidating community relations and developing a collective identity, factors that can limit violent behavior. Promoting tolerance is equally crucial. By encouraging understanding and appreciation of differences, conflicts between different groups are reduced. Highlighting positive examples is another lever: demonstrating kind behavior encourages others to adopt similar attitudes. It is also wise to draw upon local cultural practices that promote healing and reconciliation. In this context, restorative justice enables the implementation of community-based mechanisms focused on rebuilding relationships and repairing harm, rather than strictly punitive sanctions, to guide communities toward peaceful conflict resolution and lasting reconciliation. Traditional ceremonies play a vital role in this dynamic, using rituals rooted in local culture to promote purification, forgiveness, and reintegration. These practices allow individuals and communities to overcome past wounds and reflect a genuinely African approach to transitional justice. This fosters the reappropriation of cultural practices, languages, and spiritual traditions. It would also be wise to organize activities focused on storytelling and sharing, drawing on oral traditions, cultural sites, and digital platforms, to transmit narratives that foster empathy and a shared understanding of the past. Furthermore, it is essential to encourage collective responsibility by promoting philosophical approaches such as Ubuntu in South Africa, which emphasize the interdependence of individuals and the importance of their collective contribution to the well-being of all.

8.6. The Aftermath of the Conflict

I/5. What are the long-term social and psychological impacts of the conflict? How have the abuses undermined social trust and how can it be restored through both punitive and restorative measures?

My brother, conflicts often have long-term consequences, including serious psychological trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Violence deeply undermines social trust by creating a climate of fear and resentment between individuals and groups. To some extent, this trust can be restored through a combination of punitive and restorative measures. Punitive actions, such as legal proceedings, aim to hold perpetrators of violence accountable, while restorative mechanisms prioritize reconciliation by seeking to repair harm through initiatives such as mediation or dialogue within communities.

The long-term social and psychological consequences demonstrate that a significant proportion of those affected by these conflicts develop chronic disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and a persistent sense of insecurity. Consider our region of Kalehe: the conflicts have deeply fractured our communities, leading to a marked disintegration of our social cohesion and a collapse of mutual trust. The intergenerational consequences are evident: trauma and cycles of violence are passed down from generation to generation, influencing the mental health and behavior of children growing up in a context marked by a conflictual past. Today, many of these children exhibit violent and brutal attitudes. The conflicts have severely damaged our infrastructure. During the influx of Rwandan Hutu refugees in 1994, those who left the Gashusha camp for Miti dispersed into the Nyabibwe mountains, destroying schools, churches, and ecosystems. They transported livestock—goats, chickens, and cows—and cut down trees. These upheavals profoundly disrupted the social and economic lives of the people of Kalehe, generating lasting economic instability that continues to fuel social tensions and inequalities today. In 2023, the Nyamukubi region was devastated by a landslide that claimed the lives of more than 1,500 people, including men, women, and children. Government-led reparations initiatives, consisting of small, poorly managed projects, have failed to provide any concrete solutions. A truly effective and structured reparations mechanism is imperative. These abuses deeply undermine social trust by eroding empathy for perpetrators of violence against civilians. They create a climate of fear and dehumanization, making life difficult for the victims. Civil society actors in Kalehe believe these actions have generated deep resentment between communities. The suffering resulting from these atrocities has fueled an intense desire for revenge, which risks poisoning relations between the different groups for a long time. Declarations of cooperation between communities abound on paper, but when trust is broken, individuals are less inclined to collaborate. We often place our hopes in God's hands. Restoring trust, particularly through appropriate punitive measures, could pave the way for legal proceedings against the perpetrators of these acts.

Bringing those responsible before official judicial bodies can bring a sense of justice and redress to the victims. Especially in cases of widespread and systematic abuse; international tribunals offer a means of establishing responsibility when national judicial systems fail.

This implies a structured dialogue where victims and perpetrators of violence meet to discuss the harm suffered. Community dialogues, for their part, offer a safe space where members of the same community, from different conflicting factions, share their experiences, listen to each other's stories, and work collectively to develop new social norms. Reparations mechanisms and truth commissions also play a vital role: they allow victims to testify while encouraging the nation to acknowledge past abuses. Whether material or symbolic, reparations aim to mitigate the tangible and intangible harm caused by the conflict. We envision integrating a comprehensive approach to reconciliation that combines punitive and restorative measures. Indeed, we believe that punitive justice alone may prove insufficient to heal social and psychological wounds, while purely restorative justice would be ineffective without ensuring accountability for the acts committed.

8.7. The Role of Local Culture in Conflict and Reconciliation

It is essential to understand that conflicts often have long-term consequences, including severe psychological trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, as well as social repercussions like eroded trust, fragmented communities, and the emergence of intergenerational cycles of violence. Abuse deeply undermines social trust by creating a climate of fear and resentment among individuals and groups. To some extent, this trust can be restored through a combination of punitive and restorative measures. Punitive actions, such as prosecutions, aim to hold perpetrators of abuse accountable, while efforts are made to repair harm through initiatives such as mediation or dialogue within communities. The prolonged social and psychological impacts demonstrate that a significant proportion of those affected by these conflicts develop chronic conditions, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, or a persistent sense of insecurity. Here, conflicts have deeply fractured our communities. Today, they live separated along ethnic, religious, or political lines, which has led to a marked disintegration of our social cohesion and a collapse of mutual trust. The intergenerational consequences are evident: trauma and cycles of violence are passed down from generation to generation, influencing the mental health and behavior of children growing up in a context marked by a conflictual past. Today, many of these children exhibit violent and brutal attitudes. Economically, the conflicts have severely damaged our infrastructure. During the influx of Rwandan Hutu refugees in 1994, those who left the Gashusha camp for Miti dispersed throughout the Nyabibwe mountains. During their journey, they destroyed schools, churches, and ecosystems, taking livestock—goats, chickens, and cows—with them. This upheaval profoundly disrupted the social and economic lives of the inhabitants of Kalehe, gen-

erating lasting economic instability that continues to fuel social tensions and inequalities. In 2023, the town of Nyamukubi was devastated by a landslide that claimed over 1,500 lives. Small-scale, poorly managed projects have failed to provide any concrete solutions. It is imperative to establish a truly effective and structured redress mechanism. These atrocities deeply undermine social trust by eroding empathy for those involved in violence against civilians and dehumanization, which makes it difficult for victims and perpetrators (or their respective groups) to see each other as human beings.

In Kalehe, these acts have generated deep resentment between the communities. The suffering caused by these atrocities has fueled an intense desire for revenge, which risks permanently poisoning relations between the different groups. Declarations of cooperation between the communities are ubiquitous on paper.

Individuals are less inclined to collaborate. This makes it more difficult to resolve common problems and rebuild community cohesion. However, as Africans, we often place our hopes in God's hands. Restoring trust, particularly through appropriate punitive measures, could pave the way for legal proceedings against perpetrators. Holding those responsible accountable before formal legal bodies can bring a sense of justice and redress to victims, while also deterring future abuses. Furthermore, through international justice, especially in cases of widespread and systematic abuse, international tribunals offer a means of obtaining redress when national justice systems fail. In this context, restorative measures such as victim-perpetrator mediation can be particularly effective: this is a structured dialogue where victims and perpetrators meet to discuss the harm suffered and find a mutually agreeable solution. Community dialogues, for their part, can offer a safe space where members of the same community, from different conflicting factions, can share their experiences and work collectively to develop new social norms. Reparations mechanisms and truth commissions also play a vital role in encouraging the nation to acknowledge past abuses. Whether material or symbolic, reparations aim to mitigate the tangible and intangible harm caused by conflict. We envision a comprehensive approach to reconciliation, combining punitive and restorative measures. Indeed, we believe that punitive justice alone may prove insufficient to heal social and psychological wounds, while purely restorative justice would be ineffective without ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of the acts committed.

9. Perceptions of Justice and Responsibility

I/7. Why do some survivors pursue criminal charges? Why might some victims or communities hesitate to use the justice system?

R/7. Survivors take diverse approaches to accessing justice. Some prioritize criminal prosecution in the hope of obtaining redress, while others primarily seek the truth, an apology, or compensation. However, several factors explain their reluctance to pursue legal action. These reasons include ongoing trauma, fear of further injury, lack of trust in the justice system, the length and complexity of

proceedings, and concerns about their safety or the limited effectiveness of the process. Therefore, the question arises: why do survivors choose different approaches to obtaining justice? The answer lies in their specific expectations and their desire to hold survivors accountable for their actions, which aligns with the primary objective of the criminal justice system. These survivors may prioritize a process focused on uncovering the truth, obtaining a formal apology, and acknowledging the harm suffered. For example, for groups such as comfort women, receiving a formal apology is of paramount importance in their pursuit of justice, even if the possibility of material compensation is not ruled out. Compensation, whether financial or otherwise, can address urgent needs and provide crucial support to survivors and their families. For people living in poverty, access to justice is often considered a priority. For some, symbolic or economic reparations offer some solace in the face of seemingly irreparable losses. However, victims sometimes hesitate to pursue legal action due to various obstacles. These obstacles are often deeply psychological and difficult for those unfamiliar with the experience to grasp. For example, survivors may refuse to pursue legal action, fearing it will reawaken past traumas and lead to ridicule from their community. Our justice system is often complex and emotionally charged, which leads some people to silence or forget. When victims have suffered serious crimes, such as human trafficking, the fear of reprisals becomes a major obstacle to pursuing legal action. This reluctance is compounded by systemic barriers, such as the lack of a magistrate in Kalehe, which significantly slows down the justice system. The latter is often perceived as difficult to understand and opaque. Furthermore, survivors may feel they have little control over the proceedings. Finding a lawyer can also prove extremely difficult. Although legal procedures do not always take into account the specific needs of those involved, Dysfunctions have been observed within the justice system and denounced by national and international organizations. Victims may hesitate to pursue legal action if they doubt the system's ability to produce concrete results, particularly when promised compensation is ultimately never paid. Furthermore, those who have suffered harm may prioritize other essential needs. They often focus on immediate concerns, such as financial security, rather than engaging in the lengthy and arduous process of legal proceedings. In certain specific contexts, particularly after conflicts, criminal prosecutions may be perceived as an obstacle to broader reconciliation goals. This leads some communities to opt for alternative solutions, such as reintegration programs, which are considered more aligned with their aspirations.

9.1. Explanation of the Methodology Used

To use Tropes in the qualitative analysis of the data from your eight interviews (17 people per interview, for a total sample of 133 people), we imported the transcripts into the software and then performed coding and thematic analysis. This allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the data, create initial codes to identify key concepts, and then group these codes into broader themes. Using Tropes

helped us manage and organize these codes and themes systematically, enabling us to analyze the trends and insights emerging from the data to answer our research question. Tropes also allowed us to annotate the data, which enabled us to mark specific sections of the text with our codes.

9.2. Theme Development

By grouping the codes, we found a significant portion of the data was analyzed during the review of our codes. We then moved on to identifying links between the codes and grouping similar codes. For example, the codes “community engagement” and “citizen participation” were grouped together, followed by “conflict” and “justice”. This allowed us to create scenarios to explain which concepts were most frequently mentioned by interview participants and which had a broader scope, enabling us to represent them graphically. By grouping the codes, we identified broader themes that ran through the data. These tropes allowed us to search for these themes across all your documents. For example, “increased participation in local governance”, transitional justice, and conflict emerged as recurring themes.

9.3. Improvement and Reporting

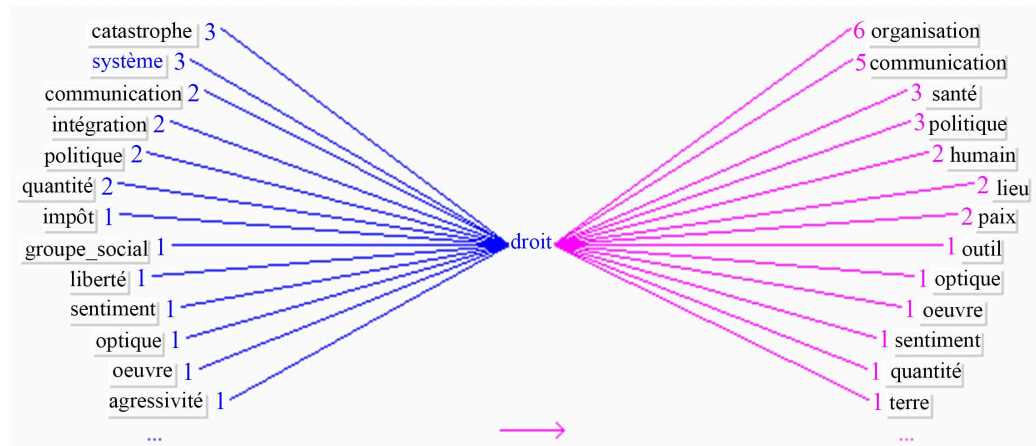
We examined the identified themes and found that they accurately reflected the data. We then discovered that these data points were distinct from one another. At this stage, we merged, split, or redefined certain themes. Thematic analysis helped us to write our final report and allowed us to extract relevant quotes and text excerpts illustrating each theme, which truly supported our analysis.

9.4. How Tropes Helped Us with the Specific Sample

Systematic organization: Thanks to its eight interviews, Tropes helped us avoid getting lost in the data by providing a structured method for coding and organizing all the information. When we identified variations, we found it best to code each interview individually. Tropes allowed us to determine how themes might differ between the eight groups or between individuals within the same group, even if they belonged to a larger sample. By prioritizing observations over statistics—with 133 people, this is clearly a qualitative rather than a statistically representative sample—the analysis aimed to understand the meaning and experiences of the participants rather than generalizing to the entire population. Tropes’ language was particularly well-suited to this type of in-depth interpretive analysis.

Based on the analysis conducted with Tropes (**Figure 1**), we created a scenario from words grouped within a reference universe (1) using the Tropes software. This scenario draws on full transcripts and interviews conducted with individuals involved in the events related to the abuses committed against the population during the passage of Rwandan Hutu refugees. It describes a situation in Kalehe, Africa, where political instability, resource conflicts, and communication breakdowns undermine peace, development, and the security of the population. It

highlights the challenges facing the local transitional justice system and the aggressive behaviors manifested in the absence of peace, security, and the rule of law. The scenario's structure, derived from the interviews submitted to the Tropes software, is based on dramatization: we first defined the setting as the territory of Kalehe, located in East Africa, near Lake Kivu. We presented this region as an area with a diverse population, including groups such as the Havu and the Tembo, and whose history is marked by ethnic and political complexities. The central conflict in this scenario stems from a combination of factors: political and social factors: political instability and the collapse of the rule of law are particularly pronounced; resource-related conflicts: these are land disputes or other conflicts, potentially exacerbated by the political situation; behaviors and emotions: these conflicts generate feelings of insecurity, fear, and aggression among the population; communication: the breakdown of communication channels between the different groups, government authorities, and NGOs hinders conflict resolution and the delivery of aid; and public safety challenges: impact on daily life and risks of violence. Health: The conflict affects the health of the population, notably through disruptions to the health system, an increase in health problems due to lack of access to care, stress, and poor living conditions, as well as the particular vulnerability of children to disease and violence. Quantification makes it possible to measure the components of the scenario within the software: demographic data from Kalehe serves as a reference. Quantity was defined as the amount of resources needed (e.g., medicines, food, security personnel) relative to available resources. Indicators, such as the number of health incidents, security breaches, or displaced persons, were used to monitor the evolving situation. The objective of this analysis is to identify a scenario. How to establish peace and improve security? How can we strengthen the organization of the security system and re-establish effective communication channels to mitigate conflicts and their consequences? Through semantic analysis, we were able to describe the interaction of elements within the software. For example, positive feedback loops: aggression



Source: Author using Tropes software.

Figure 1. In-depth interpretive analysis.

generates more conflict, which further degrades security and health, and increases the feeling of insecurity. Negative feedback loops: effective communication and the application of the rule of law can lead to de-escalation and improved health. By combining these elements, we used the Trops software to model the dynamics of a conflict and test the potential impact of different interventions, such as strengthening the organization of the judicial system to consider reparations, reconciliation, and the implementation of a transitional justice mechanism, as well as improving communication or increasing the security presence.

According to this star chart, the word “right” appears 65 times. Therefore, is transitional justice capable of providing answers to the atrocities committed in the Kalehe territory? The breakdown by word is as follows: Law 65%, Conflict 54%, Behavior and feelings 43%, Communication 42%, Africa 33%, Place (Kalehe) 23%, Behavior 22%, Politics 20%, Health 20%, Aggression 19%, Health system 16%, Organization 14%, Population 13%, Security 11%, Children 11%, Quantity 9%, Peace 9%.

10. Conclusion

For Kalehe, the most effective truth and reconciliation mechanisms rely on a combined leadership and participatory approach. These include the establishment of a truth commission tasked with documenting abuses and formulating recommendations, as well as a restorative justice process that integrates community dialogue and institutional reforms. This multidimensional strategy is essential for addressing land issues and past abuses, promoting accountability, and building lasting peace, ensuring that the population can participate in finding solutions. The DRC government should consider top-down mechanisms, including the establishment of a non-judicial truth commission to investigate, document, and publicly report on past abuses, particularly those related to land, within the ecosystem disrupted by the 1994 influx of Rwandan refugees. Implementing institutional reforms, based on reforming the institutions responsible for past abuses, such as the police or the judiciary, through audits and constitutional amendments, will help prevent future violations. Establishing legal and judicial mechanisms can complement the search for truth through prosecutions, potentially via a hybrid court, to prosecute serious crimes and punish perpetrators when the state is unable or unwilling to do so. Formal reparations will also be necessary, creating a fund and an authority to provide individual and collective material and economic compensation to victims and help them rebuild their livelihoods. Furthermore, a bottom-up mechanism can foster community reconciliation while supporting local initiatives focused on trauma healing and relationship rebuilding, mobilizing traditional, religious, and community leaders to mediate conflicts and promote dialogue. Promoting restorative justice can foster a process that brings together victims, perpetrators, and affected communities to discuss the consequences of their actions and seek solutions that prioritize reconciliation and coexistence. In this context, supporting civil society-led initia-

tives will enable local civil society organizations to conduct truth-seeking activities, facilitate community dialogue, and document local experiences. Utilizing creative and cultural approaches also allows for the harnessing of community art, education, and other creative spaces to combat negative stereotypes, cultivate empathy, and promote healing. Ultimately, the importance of an inclusive process lies in designing a participatory approach that involves victims and communities in shaping the transitional justice process, ensuring it is inclusive, context-specific, and responsive to their needs. All these mechanisms must aim to address specific needs by recognizing that women, men, girls, and boys who have experienced different types of violations are affected, while guaranteeing that the process is tailored to their specific needs and experiences.

Not only do a lack of political will, insufficient funding, and persistent insecurity hinder transitional justice in Kalehe by creating an environment of enduring impunity, but programs are also underfunded, and the complex security context makes implementing long-term solutions difficult. This situation prevents the effective implementation of justice mechanisms such as prosecutions and reparations, as the state struggles to provide the necessary security and financial support to institutions, while armed groups and political interests continue to disrupt progress.

11. Explanation of the Methodology Used

To use Tropes in the qualitative analysis of the data from your eight interviews (17 people per interview, for a total sample of 133 people), we imported the transcripts into the software and then performed coding and thematic analysis. This allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the data, create initial codes to identify key concepts, and then group these codes into broader themes. Using Tropes helped us manage and organize these codes and themes systematically, enabling us to analyze the trends and insights emerging from the data to answer our research question. Tropes also allowed us to annotate the data, which enabled us to mark specific sections of the text with our codes.

12. Theme Development

By grouping the codes, we found that a significant portion of the data was analyzed during the review of our codes. We then moved on to identifying links between the codes and grouping similar codes. For example, the codes “community engagement” and “citizen participation” were grouped together, followed by “conflict” and “justice”. This allowed us to create scenarios to explain which concepts were most frequently mentioned by interview participants and which had a broader scope, enabling us to represent them graphically. By grouping the codes, we identified broader themes that ran through the data. These tropes allowed us to search for these themes across all your documents. For example, “increased participation in local governance”, transitional justice, and conflict emerged as recurring themes.

13. Improvement and Report

We examined the identified themes and found that they accurately reflected the data. We then discovered that these data points were distinct from one another. At this stage, we merged, split, or redefined certain themes. Thematic analysis helped us to write our final report and allowed us to extract relevant quotes and text excerpts illustrating each theme, which truly supported our analysis.

14. How Tropes Helped Us with the Specific Sample

Systematic organization: Thanks to its eight interviews, Tropes helped us avoid getting lost in the data by providing a structured method for coding and organizing all the information. When we identified variations, we found it best to code each interview individually. Tropes allowed us to determine how themes might differ between the eight groups or between individuals within the same group, even if they belonged to a larger sample. By prioritizing observations over statistics—with 133 people, this is clearly a qualitative rather than a statistically representative sample—the analysis aimed to understand the meaning and experiences of the participants rather than generalizing to the entire population. Tropes' language was particularly well-suited to this type of in-depth interpretive analysis.

Political decision-makers must stop playing the game of impunity and manipulation. Their lack of political will is manifested in the impunity enjoyed by alleged perpetrators of crimes and in the manipulation of history and justice efforts for political ends; this type of practice must end. Diverging interests, particularly the political interests of elites, derail transitional justice processes, as they prioritize power and control over justice and stability. Short-term solutions and political agreements have sometimes sacrificed justice for immediate security measures, perpetuating a cycle of violence rather than lasting peace. As for funding, the scarcity of resources hinders justice efforts.

Political decision-makers must stop playing the game of impunity and manipulation. Their lack of political will is manifested in the impunity enjoyed by alleged perpetrators of crimes and in the manipulation of history and justice efforts for political ends; this type of practice must end. Competing interests, such as the political rivalries of elites, derail transitional justice processes, as they prioritize power and control over justice and stability. Short-term solutions and political agreements have sometimes sacrificed justice for immediate security measures, creating a cycle of violence rather than lasting peace. Regarding funding, the scarcity of resources means that transitional justice efforts in the Kalehe region face considerable challenges. For underfunded commissions, past attempts to address issues such as property rights have been hampered by underfunding and a lack of cooperation, which has weakened their ability to recover illegally acquired property or hold offenders accountable. The limited judicial authority of the commissions, even when they are established and issue findings, means they lack the legal authority and resources to implement their recommendations, resulting in a lack of prosecutions. The persistent insecurity and complex security environment in

Kalehe, characterized by multiple armed groups, intercommunal conflicts, and competition for resources, make the implementation of coherent justice programs extremely difficult.

Compromises are necessary when it comes to security. In the absence of a coherent security strategy, local authorities and communities are forced to make practical arrangements and compromises to cope with the constant threat of violence. As for the resurgence of grievances, the presence of armed groups reignites resentment and tensions between communities, further complicating efforts to lay the foundations for lasting peace. Unsuccessful security operations, relying solely on military or security options, have failed to protect civilians, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach. According to Karl Max (1959), the economic base or structure constitutes the foundation of society, and the superstructure, which includes political, legal, and ideological institutions, is determined by it. This means that the political authorities of the DRC must develop the territory based on a solid economic foundation, which will then influence all other structures.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

References

- Adolphe, K. S. (2023). Did the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) Increase or Decrease Security? *KAS African Law Study Library—Librairie Africaine d'Etudes Juridiques*, 10, 24-37. <https://doi.org/10.5771/2363-6262-2023-1-24>
- Anseuw, W., & Alden, C. (2015). *The Struggle over Land in Africa: Conflicts, Politics & Change*. HSRC Press.
- Auger, S. (2007). Healing a Nation's Wounds: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Drake University Social Science Journal*.
- Autesserre, S. (2010a). *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511761034>
- Autesserre, S. (2010b). *The Congo Problem: Local Violence and Failure to Consolidate International Peace (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bastick, M., Grimm, K., & Kunz, R. (2007). *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector*. Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).
- Elster, J. (2004). *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511607011>
- Hamber, B. (2000). Repairing the Irreparable: Dealing with the Double-Binds of Making Reparations for Crimes of the Past. *Ethnicity & Health*, 5, 215-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713667456>
- Huggins, C. (2015). Land Grabbing, Agricultural Investment and Agrarian Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In D. Dam-de Jong (Ed.), *International Law and Gov-*

- ernance of Natural Resources in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations* (pp. 267-365). Cambridge University Press.
- Kritz, N. J. (1995). *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes (Vol. 1)*. US Institute of Peace Press.
- Martha, C. N. (2006). *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. Harvard University Press.
- Matabaro, M. (2009). *The Land Crisis in Eastern DRC*. Great Lakes Africa.
- Murhula, P. B. B. (2022). Indigenous Restorative Justice Mechanisms as a Tool for Transitional Justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 22, 34-51.
- Newman, I., & Benz, CR (1998). *Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the Interactive Continuum*. SIU Press.
- Nkakleu, R., & Manga, B. (2016). L'implication organisationnelle des personnels-cadres dans les PME: Le rôle de la tontine d'entreprise en contexte camerounais. *Revue internationale P.M.E.*, 28, 287-313. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1035418ar>
- Pabanel, J. (1991). La question de la nationalité au Kivu. *Politique africaine*, 41, 32-40. <https://doi.org/10.3406/polaf.1991.5445>
- Paillé, P., & Mucchielli, A. (2012). *Qualitative Analysis in the Human and Social Sciences*. Armand Colin.
- Pourtier, R. (2009a). Kivu in the War: Actors and Issues. *EchoGéo*, 1-17.
- Pourtier, R. (2009b). *The Congo and the Kivu Powder Keg: Geopolitics of a High-Risk Periphery*. Café Géographique.
- Reynaert, J. (2011). MONUC/MONUSCO and Civil Protection in the Kivus. *International Peace Information Service*, 14, 1-47.
- Ring, S., Gleeson, K., & Stevenson, K. (2022). *Child Sexual Abuse Reported by Adult Survivors: Legal Responses in England and Wales, Ireland and Australia*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429468162>
- Robins, S. (2011). Towards Victim-Centred Transitional Justice: Understanding the Needs of Families of the Disappeared in Postconflict Nepal. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5, 75-98. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijq027>
- Teitel, R. G. (2000). *Transitional Justice*. Oxford University Press.
- Unruh, J., & Williams, R. C. (2013a). *Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. Routledge.
- Unruh, J., & Williams, R. C. (2013b). Land: A Foundation for Peacebuilding. In J. Unruh, & R. C. Williams (Eds.), *Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.
- Van Zyl, P. (2005). Promoting Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Societies. In *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (pp. 209-231).
- Vlassenroot, K., & Huggins, C. (2005). Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern DRC. In J. Huggins, & C. Clover (Eds.), *From the Ground Up: Land Rights, Conflict and Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa* (pp. 115-194). Institute for Security Studies.
- Wacheux, F. (1996). *Qualitative Research Methods in Management*. SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods)*. SAGE.
- Zehr, H. (1990). *Changing Lenses (Vol. 114)*. Herald Press.