

The chapter on Eritrea gives an account of how the country achieved its independence after winning the costly thirty years war of liberation under the leadership of the EPLF. The latter in spite of its impressive track record and promises for democracy and constitutional government has over a short time degenerated into full-fledged dictatorship in which detentions without trial have become the norm. Woodward rightly observes, 'many supporters of Eritrea's successful fight for independence felt disappointed or worse at the direction Eritrea took once the war of liberation was completed' (p. 154).

Crisis in the Horn of Africa is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on the Horn of Africa by one of the leading authorities on the region.

REFERENCE

Cliffe, L. 1999. 'Regional dimensions of conflict in the Horn of Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 20, 1: 89–111.

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The Democratic Republic of Congo: Between Hope and Despair by

MICHAEL DEIBERT

London: Zed Books, 2013. Pp. 280. £12.99 (pbk)

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The two decade long war and conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is of such complexity and with ever-changing alliances that one book is never enough. American journalist Michael Deibert has written a convincing re-run of the dramatic events leading up to the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda and the consequential two wars in the DRC resulting in ongoing rebellions by armed groups in the eastern part of the country. The book serves as an up-to-date history of the recent wars and the political dynamics in the DRC and the region to students, journalists and researchers interested in learning more about the 'Congo crisis', to borrow an expression from the early days of Congolese independence. However, it does not necessarily provide much new substance to those who already hold significant knowledge on this history and follow the political events in the country on an everyday basis. Nevertheless, Deibert manages to represent and highlight the most important political events in a detailed manner.

An important part of the picture in this history, as Deibert shows, is the difficult positioning of the United Nations represented with one of the largest peacekeeping missions in the world. The UN operation formerly (and still by many) known as MONUC and today MONUSCO has become deeply entangled with the Congolese armed forces and the current regime headed by President Joseph Kabila. Deibert shows (pp. 152–4) how military operations such as Kimia II in 2009, where MONUC supported an aggressive Congolese army to fight the Hutu militia known as FDLR, significantly impaired the image of the UN in the eyes of many Congolese civilians and human rights observers.

Deibert explains several important and potentially destabilising incidents such as the death of one of Kabila's closest advisors in 2012 – Augustin Katumba

Mwanke – and the believed *éminence grise* of the regime (p. 189). However, he is less able to provide new analytical insights into these events other than establishing the facts.

It is to some frustration that Deibert presents ‘the Congolese people’ as a group of passive victims to the realpolitik in DRC and abroad. Indeed, the average citizen in the DRC does not hold much power to influence top politicians, as is not uncommon in most parts of the world. However, it is worth noting that it is the ‘Congolese people’ who have started several self-defence groups such as Mayi-Mayi alliances and the increasingly influential Raia Mutomboki groups in the eastern regions with various sympathy or frustration from unarmed civilians. In many cases, having protection provided by armed groups through local taxation is far better than relying on the arbitrary state army. Survival in the DRC relates largely to the ability to make your own living and create your own protection together with family, friends and enemies unrelated to the big events in Kinshasa and other central parts of the country. It is also incorrect to argue that it is only political and military elites that make money out of artisanal mining (pp. 109–10), as this attracts thousands of Congolese men, women and youth every year who earn more in this business relative to subsistent farming.

In conclusion, Deibert’s book provides both a good overview and a detailed account of some of the core political events in the recent history of the country. However, for more political analysis to these events, readers should turn to other sources such as the blog ‘Congo Siasa’ by Jason Stearns.

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Criminal Resistance: The Politics of Kidnapping Oil Workers by TEMITOPE ORIOLA.

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Criminal Resistance is a curious book. On the one hand it claims to ‘investigate the phenomenon of kidnapping of oil workers in the Niger delta’ (p. 191), while on the other there is precious little about the composition, character or trends of kidnapping in the region and a great deal (most of the book in fact) on the rise and character of one non-state armed group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a complex, shadowy and heterogeneous insurgent group (or groups) that emerged from the western delta in and around the oil city of Warri in late 2005. One might have plausibly anticipated in a book on kidnapping an account of the numbers and composition of those kidnapped (the changing proportion of Nigerian and expatriate workers), the trends in kidnapping over time, the relation between kidnapping and such phenomena as electoral cycles, the price of oil and the proliferation of clearly criminal groups who see kidnapping as a lucrative business. But these issues are never raised. There is very little effort to theorise kidnapping and draw conceptually upon studies of other parts of the world (Somalia, Colombia) with, dare I say it, ‘traditions’ of kidnapping. Oriola does attempt to enrol Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of social banditry to provide