



MONTHLY REPORT: APRIL 2018

In April 2018, violence perpetrated by armed groups increased dramatically in the northern part of North Kivu province, while military operations led by the Congolese army (*Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo*, FARDC) killed leaders of two armed groups in South Kivu province. There was a renewed uptick in robberies in Bukavu, as well as frequent incidents of looting in Shabunda and Walungu territories, as well as in Rutshuru territory, where the incidents often coincided with kidnappings. The following analysis draws on these general trends, highlighting the specificity of each area.

In the territory and city of **Beni**, there has been a resurgence of killings in the context of the military offensive against the Allied Defense Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel group, not dissimilar to the cycle of massacres during the earlier phase of Sukola 1 operations: Twenty

84 killings (↑14% compared to March 2018)

91 abductions and 23 kidnappings (↓31%)

49 clashes between belligerents (↑14%)

people were killed here in April alone. As in the previous massacres in Beni territory, the perpetrators of these latest attacks are difficult to identify, but it is probably a combination of different armed groups, including the ADF but also Mai-Mai groups and other local militias.

Among the victims are also those who were killed by the FARDC: this is the case of a 40-year-old man, killed in Beni town on April 14 when the FARDC dispersed a crowd that wanted to go and search for farmers who disappeared after a clash in the Ngadi neighborhood; a soldier was also killed by his colleague in Boikene on April 22.

This violence is set to a tense political backdrop. Security forces arrested and later released 42 activists in Beni on April 25 during a protest against the growing insecurity there. In addition to accusations about the security services' failure to protect civilians – which are often linked to broader concerns about President Joseph Kabila's lack of legitimacy as elections have been delayed repeatedly – a new political controversy has emerged this month. In April, several statements written by organizations perceived as being affiliated with Hutu elites made the case for dividing the province of North Kivu, provoking strong opposition from Nande leaders. Another statement also made waves: In a private meeting on April 16, 2018, President Kabila allegedly criticized the Nande community as a whole for the attacks on his residence in Musienene (Lubero territory) and the looting of his cows at his Kabasha ranch (Beni territory) by Mai-Mai groups.

In the extreme southwest and southeast of **Lubero** territory, clashes between Mai-Mai Mazembe and the FARDC and between Mai-Mai Mazembe and Nduma Defense of Congo-

Renové (NDC-R) resumed after a two-month lull, brought about by a voluntary disarmament campaign that persuaded more than 120 combatants to surrender, regroup, and go to the Mubambiro training camp in Sake.

In **Rutshuru** territory, kidnappings (more than 9 cases) and looting (at least 6 cases) continued and probably benefitted from failures of the security precautions taken by the FARDC, which usually escorts civilian convoys on the dangerous road between Kanyabayonga and Kiwanja. In addition, the assassination of a priest on April 8, 2018 in Kyahemba (western Rutshuru territory) confirmed the vulnerability of religious leaders, who are often kidnapped or disappeared in North Kivu.

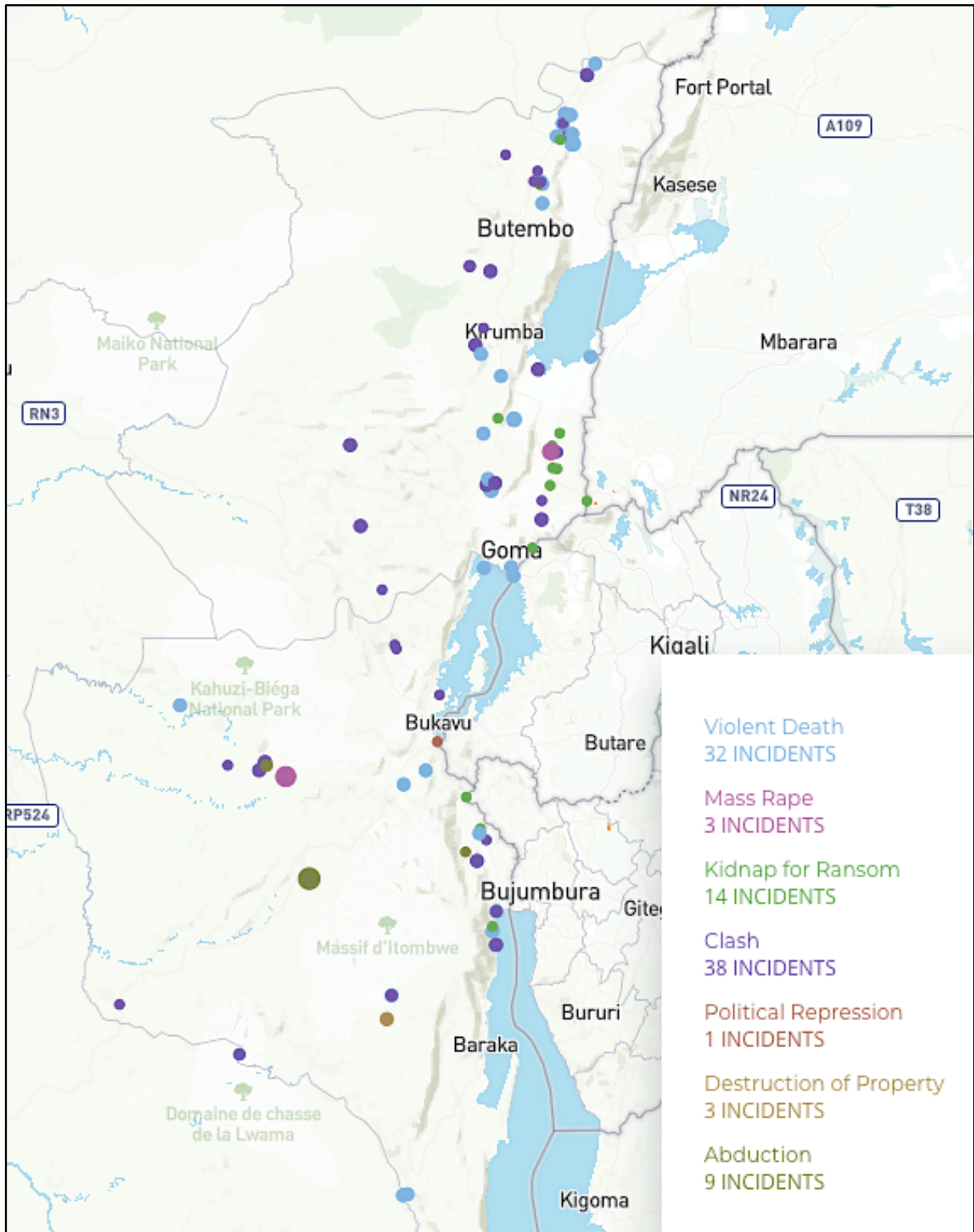
In the territories of **Masisi**, **Walikale**, and **Kalehe**, the month of April was characterized by skirmishes over the boundaries between armed groups' areas of control, as well as a few small clashes between the FARDC and armed groups such as the NDC-R in Basombe in Walikale territory (April 18), or with another, unidentified group at Kinene in Masisi territory (April 12).

In South Kivu, in **Walungu** territory, unidentified gunmen carried out a string of robberies. A similar attack was narrowly prevented by police and FARDC intervention in Luhihi village in Kabare territory on the night of April 20 to 21. These kinds of crimes also resurfaced in Bukavu town after two months of relative calm due to significant police and army patrols organized in February and March. Here, robbers often operated in Ndendere (Ibanda commune) and Mosala (Kadutu commune), targeting the shops of mobile phone and money vendors, as well as some private residences.

In **Shabunda** territory, various Raia Mutomboki factions, as well as the Mai-Mai Malaika She Assani, looted mining sites, convoys of traders, and villages. There were two dramatic attacks: the mass rape of at least 12 women – and possibly many more – by the Raia Mutomboki close to Mulungu on April 24, and the kidnapping on 5 April by Raia Mutomboki Wemba of 37 people on a pilgrimage near Lubila. Later in April, the leader of that group, Kikukala Wemba, was killed by the FARDC.

In **Fizi** territory, apart from a single clash between the FARDC and the Mai-Mai Malaika She Assani, all the incidents targeted civilians (killings, rape, and looting). Here, too, the FARDC was one of the perpetrators, as demonstrated by the case of a taxi driver who was shot at close range by a FARDC soldier in Misisi on April 15, just after having transported him.

In **Uvira** territory, violence persisted in the Ruzizi plain and in the adjacent highlands to the west. Livestock theft has remained recurrent (at least six cases) and has sometimes led to the slaughter of animals when it is too difficult to take them away (for example, on April 25, 2018 in Tahiro). This is despite the fact that FARDC operations killed the leader of the group most involved in cattle rustling, the Mai-Mai Karakara, in Rugeje on April 10.



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