



## MONTHLY REPORT : JUNE 2018

Two main flashpoints of conflict stood out in June 2018 in North and South Kivu provinces. In Beni territory, the Congolese army (FARDC) pursued its operations against the ADF in the northeast of the territory, triggering violent counterattacks, while they faced a second front of Mai-Mai groups in the southern part of the Semuliki river valley. Meanwhile the fighting in the highlands of South Kivu in Bijombo *groupement* continued between local militias from different ethnic groups, and exacerbated by regional alliances, displacing around 76,000 people since April 2018.

Saying that there were two flashpoints, however, can be misleading. Violence continues to be widespread across the two provinces. The Kivu Security Tracker (KST) identified 23 armed groups responsible for violence in June, although a majority of the 152 incidents documented by the KST in June could not be attributed. There are around 140 armed groups active in the Kivus.

In **Beni** territory, the military operations carried out by the FARDC targeted armed groups based between the hills in the southeast of Beni town to the Semuliki valley. These operations dislodged Mai-Mai groups that had been carrying out attacks on the Butembo-Beni Road (at Kalunguta and Kabasha, for example). These groups then moved to the west of the Beni-Oicha road (to Mumbiri, Samboko, and Mamove), strengthening their alliances with the ADF. The military pressure has apparently led to a tactical shift, as well, as some of them began to infiltrate the urban areas of Oicha and Beni in small groups, dressed as civilians. Meanwhile, fighting between the FARDC and the ADF continued, in particular at Kasmani on June 1, Ngite on June 9, Mabakweli on June 14, and at Mamundioma on June 17. To add to the complexity, the Nduma Defence of Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) have arrived in the area south of Beni, apparently to help the FARDC prevent the return of rebels in the Kalau-Nyaleke-Mughalika triangle (and allegedly to also protect the president's ranch in Kabasha).

72 violent deaths (↓12% compared with May 2018)

59 abductions 58 kidnappings (↑54%)

62 clashes between belligerents (↑77%)

In **Butembo** town, after a lull of two months following the appointment of a new mayor, banditry known as "Kasuku" reappeared across the city despite the deployment of the FARDC.

The territory of **Lubero**, after months of fighting between the FARDC and Mai-Mai, saw a relative decrease in violence. The FARDC had succeeded in chasing away Mai-Mai groups that used to be based in the hills to the east of Lubero town and toward Lake Edward. The only remaining groups were the Mai-Mai Mazembe in the southern part of the territory, the Nduma Defense of Congo-Rénové in the southwest of Lubero, and the Mai-Mai Jackson

and Charles along the shores of Lake Edward. However, one of the Mai-Mai Mazembe commanders split away from the group, creating his own group called the Mai-Mai Yira based to the southwest of Bingi village.

In **Rutshuru** territory, clashes continued in the Bwito *chefferie* (one of two *chefferies* in Rutshuru) between the Mai-Mai Léopards and the Nyatura Domi, who are allied to the FDLR-RUD. The Léopards have existed for almost a year, but were affiliated with the Mai-Mai Mazembe until May 2018, when they split off after a conflict over leadership within the group. Meanwhile, around Lake Edward, park guards and the FARDC conducted joint operations against Mai-Mai Charles, who occupy the southern shores of the lake. The Ugandan army, patrolling in the waters, captured Congolese fishermen who had crossed the international border on several occasions. In July, these arrests would trigger clashes between the armies of the two countries.

In **Masisi** territory, brutal attacks on cattle continued. In the night of May 31 to June 1, 48 cows belonging to the Makabuza ranch in Katale were butchered by machete. Another, similar attack on June 13 killed 22 cows on the same ranch, and the following day 44 cows were slaughtered, 17 wounded and 34 stolen from the Mushwa ranch, bringing the total killed to over a hundred cattle. Although the ACOGENEKI ranchers association played down the political nature of the attacks, calling them “acts of banditry,” the scale and frequency of attacks suggest a new dynamic is afoot. It should be noted that most of the cows were killed, not stolen, implying that the objective was to punish the ranchers—this is different than cattle raids in South Kivu, when cattle are usually stolen to be sold or slaughtered for profit. Local testimonies suggest that Nyatura militias, who recruit within the Hutu community, were probably responsible, perhaps motivated by land conflicts between wealthy ranchers and poor peasants.

In **Walikale** territory, internecine fighting pitted factions within the Kifuafua Mbaenda against each other. On June 9 or 10, those loyal to Delphin Mbaenda killed the commander Shalio. The latter had been allied with Mbaenda’s former deputy Limenzi “Katabilalo”, while Delphin joined forces with the Raia Mutomboki Ngoa. This conflict continued throughout the month of June, resulting in considerable instability in southern Walikale. In the north of the territory, a strange spectacle took place, as Guidon Shimiray, the notorious commander of the NDC-R, travelled with a heavy bodyguard to Kasugho in Lubero territory to defend his bachelor’s thesis (*travail de fin de cycle*) in development and environmental studies from the Université of Kasugho. The frequent visits made by instructors from Kasugho to his headquarters in Irameso, from where they were rumored to return with gold, probably helped in his academic pursuits. Meanwhile, in Uni, a mining site in northern Walikale, the FARDC attacked an NDC-R position. Around the same time, in eastern Walikale around Mutongo, the NDC-R joined up with a dissident wing of the APCLS armed group under its commander Mapenzi to fight against Mandaima (NDC-Sheka) and Janvier Karairi, who still leads the main APCLS group. This fighting has spilled over into Masisi territory, where the Nyatura Bavuga, a new armed group, is fighting on the side of the CNRD against the APCLS and FDLR-FOCA.

In **Kalehe**, **Mwenga**, and **Walungu** territories, most of the violence in June took the form of banditry, often carried out by unidentified armed men. However, in some areas, aggressive security operations have had an impact. In eastern Walungu, the Operation Tujikingo (Let’s Protect Ourselves) that had been launched by security forces in Bukavu, had a dissuasive

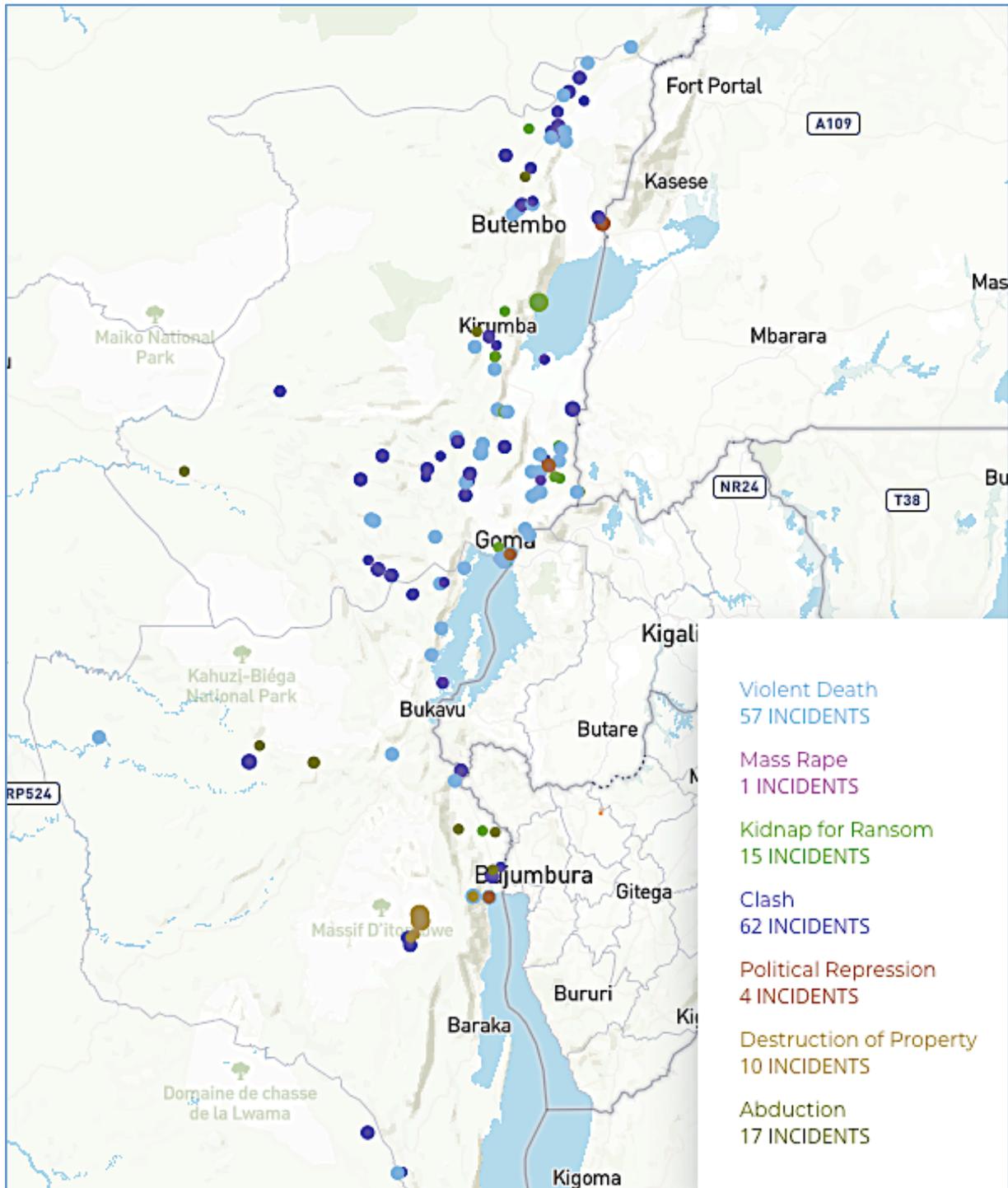
effect similar to Mwenga, where soldiers from the 3306<sup>th</sup> regiment arrested a gang of gold robbers.

In **Shabunda** territory, Raia Mutomboki Mabala, Walike and Vunja Vikwazo remained active in the Bakisi *chefferie*, where they are involved in gold digging and trading. Conflicts over the sharing of spoils from this lucrative business led to splits among the groups there. Two new groups emerged in this way: the Raia Mutomboki Habikuangaliye in Nduma and the Mai-Mai Napata in Kayumba-Abi.

In **Uvira** territory, the communal conflict in Bijombo *groupement* continued between the Fuliuro, Bembe, and Nyindu communities on one side and the Banyamulenge on the other. Between June 12 and 20, violent clashes took place between the Twiganeho and Ngumino militias, close to the Banyamulenge, and self-defense militias from the Bembe, Fuliuro and Nyindu communities. After a week of continuous fighting in the villages of Masango, Chanzovu, Rubarati, Kanono, Mukumba, Kakuku, Katanga, Mutara, Maheta, Mbundano, Rubibi, Mugogo, and Gatoki, there are at least 12 dead, four wounded and 20,000 displaced.

This crisis has been complicated by regional alliances, with Rwandan and Burundian armed groups reportedly also featuring in the fighting. There are reliable, albeit still preliminary reports of fighters linked to the Rwandan National Congress (RNC) of Rwandan dissident General Kayumba Nyamwasa allegedly supporting the Twiganeho and Ngumino, while the Burundian rebel *Forces populaires pour la libération du Burundi* (FPB) are reportedly supporting the Mai-Mai groups. The Mai-Mai also accused the FARDC of attacking their headquarters on June 24<sup>th</sup> in Rubarati, while the army was deployed in Banyamulenge villages without clashing with the Twiganeho militia.

In **Fizi** territory, the only incidents recorded were robberies of vehicles coming from mining quarries in the southwest of the territory.



**Website:** <https://kivusecurity.org>

**Twitter:** @kivusecurity

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/KivuTracker/>

**Email:** [info@kivusecurity.org](mailto:info@kivusecurity.org)