



MONTHLY REPORT: APRIL 2019

The new trends in the dynamics of violence in the Kivus in April 2019 can be summed up by a few major series of events: the Islamic State has begun to increasingly assert its ties to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel group that is one of the most important belligerents in the eastern Congo. At the same time and slightly to the south, armed groups intensified attacks on the staff and structures involved in the response to the Ebola outbreak in Butembo town. Finally, the Nduma Defense of Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) have continued to push south into Rutshuru and Masisi territories, while there was a renewed clash between security forces and the local population in the land dispute involving the family of former President Joseph Kabila in Mbobero, Kabare territory.

50 violent deaths (↓34% from March 2019)
151 people abducted or kidnapped (↑59%)
36 clashes between belligerents (↑12%)

Overall, killings declined, while abductions and clashes increased by 59% and 12%, respectively.

Beni

The territory and the town of Beni were once again affected by killings and looting. Most of the reported killings were committed by the ADF, but there were also some cases where the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) or Mai-Mai fighters were responsible. Controversially, the Islamic State has begun to claim attacks carried out by the ADF, beginning with a raid in the village of Bovata in Watalinga chiefdom on April 16.

Unidentified gunmen looted in Beni town at least eleven times.

Butembo

In Butembo town, violence continued to complicate the response to the Ebola epidemic. On April 2, an altercation broke out between the police and family members of a girl who was thought to have died of Ebola. The family had become impatient to obtain the girl's body from the Matanda Hospital morgue.

On April 19, a small group of Mai-Mai attacked the clinic of the Catholic University of Graben at

around 2 pm and shot Dr. Richard Valery Mouzoko Kiboung, a Cameroonian doctor working for the World Health Organization Ebola Response Team, at close range during a meeting. The previous day at 7pm, Mai-Mai rebels had vandalized the guest house of the Catholic University at Itav, where priests trained as medical doctors had come to sensitize members of the Catholic community to trust the methods advocated by the Ebola response team. On the night of April 20, a Mai-Mai group attacked the Katwa hospital, even though the hospital's security had been reinforced that same evening by a large deployment of police and FARDC soldiers.

In addition, the police broke up a sit-in by the youth movement *Lutte pour le changement* (LUCHA) in front of the central shop of the telecommunications company Airtel. The police brutally dispersed the activists and arrested nine, before releasing them.

Finally, on April 9, two drunken FARDC soldiers shot and killed a student, the son of Congolese National Police (PNC) officer. They were immediately arrested and sentenced three days later, respectively to the death penalty (for the main culprit) and two years in prison (for his companion) by the military garrison court of Beni-Butembo.

Lubero

The Mai-Mai Mazembe were the most active armed group in this territory: after looting Vusande village, in the central west Lubero, on April 6, they attacked the PNC commander there on April 9, burning down his house and stealing his weapon. The commander was reported missing.

On April 25, Mai-Mai Mazembe shot and wounded a man in Miriki in the far south of the territory. Two days later, they returned to kidnap a man before releasing him the next day. Other unidentified gunmen set fire to a house in Miriki on April 30.

Another unidentified group looted houses and shops in Mulo village on April 14. And on April 3, unidentified assailants killed a FARDC soldier in Lukanga.

The FARDC responded to alerts by the population of Vusande to stop the lootings perpetrated by Mai-Mai Mazembe on April 6. However, FARDC were also involved in abuses, looting Lukanga village on April 4 after a stranger killed one of their soldiers, and shooting and killing a man in Muhola village on April 19.

Rutshuru

In Rutshuru violence was largely concentrated in Bwito chiefdom in the northwestern part of the territory and was defined largely by two coalitions: the NDC-R allied with the FARDC and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) together with Nyatura militias (People's Protection Forces [FPP] and Nyatura Domi). The first camp has appointed a spokesperson who publishes regular press releases to convince the public that its offensive against the FDLR coalition is legitimate. The two sides clashed in Rebero on April 1, in Musayi on April 9, in Faringa on April 15.

At the same time, the FDLR (both RUD and FOCA wings) and their Nyatura allies were responsible for kidnappings and looting throughout the territory, including targeting NGOs—for example, an attack against Concern Worldwide in Katwiguru on April 9. There were more than ten occurrences of this type of incident for the month of April; they were often carried out by the FDLR-RUD, mainly in Bwisha chiefdom.

Masisi and Walikale

The NDC-R and FARDC coalition continued its offensive toward the south in Masisi territory, this time against the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) and residual Nyatura groups and the FDLR dissident faction, the National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD)-Ubwiyeunge. They attacked the Nyatura Jean-Marie Lwama on April 1 and an APCLS position in Showa on April 9. The Nyatura-APCLS coalition committed abuses in the western periphery (Walikale territory) of the main area of clashes.

In Walikale territory, the KST documented the abduction of a man by the Nyatura Domi in Ihula on April 11 and the kidnapping of three workers for Doctors Without Borders-Netherlands in Luvungi on April 24. The kidnappers have not been identified. The NDC-R also kidnapped a man suspected of collaborating with Nyatura Jean-Marie during the April 1 clash in Lwama.

Goma and Nyiragongo

In Goma, the violence that dominated the months of February and March in the west and north of the city has calmed down since April 5. In Nyiragongo territory, however, unidentified gunmen continued to kill people: there were two victims in Kibati on April 4, another on April 5 in Buhombo, and two others in Buvira on April 7. The FARDC attacked the FDLR-FOCA in Mutaho and Kahande on April 28.

Kalehe

The FARDC led offensives against a CNRD-Ubwiyeunge position in the Rutara mines on April 1, against the Raia Mutomboki Shukuru and Butachibera militias who were in the process of looting the village of Kambegeti on April 11, and against a position held by the Raia Mutomboki Shukuru, Shabani, Hamakombo, and Mungoro groups in Kamananga on April 24. In their attempts to form a coalition with a strong command, these armed groups, which control the area around Bunyakiri, reportedly held two meetings during the month of April.

Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed colonel Lance Muteya, who was presumed dead for the past three months, unexpectedly reappeared in Kalonge chiefdom. He and his bodyguards had been ambushed on their way back from the Nduma market that they had just looted on January 3, 2019; no survivor had been reported and Muteya had remained silent ever since. He was spotted earlier this month in a village in Kalonge, coming from Shabunda. The population and state administrator in Kalonge recognized him and confirmed his presence there, along with three of his guards. He is

reportedly rebuilding his group, which was responsible for the kidnapping of six men near Mushingi on April 13 and the looting of Nguliro village on April 24. In this area, increasing tension between pygmy populations, park rangers in Kahuzi-Biega National Park and the Rongeronge community is likely to fuel further violence.

Kabare

The land dispute in Mbobero between the local population and the family of ex-president Joseph Kabila sparked a new outbreak of violence when the FARDC soldiers accompanying former First Lady Olive Lembe shot at a crowd seeking to meet her on April 30. The FARDC injured one person and arrested three others.

Bukavu-Walungu-Mwenga

Banditry remains rife in this area. Six out of seven incidents reported in Bukavu town consisted of unidentified gunmen looting businesses, residence, or health centers, sometimes extorting goods and money from passersby at the same time. In some cases, killed victims who were trying to resist (e.g. April 30 in Nkafu). They also raped girls and women (for example, in Cikonyi on April 25 and in Dendere on April 8).

In Walungu territory, the Raia Mutomboki Maheshe kidnapped two men in Mirhumba on April 14 and unidentified men stabbed a 40-year-old woman in Mwendo village on April 28.

In Mwenga territory, the epicenter of the violence was the village of Magunda. The FARDC attacked the FNL-Nzabampema positions in Magunda, Maheta, Kakuku, and Miminjo on April 2; the Ngumino also attacked the FARDC in the villages of Magunda, Lubumba and Mashojo on April 19 after having killed a man in Magunda on April 16.

Shabunda

Despite a slight decrease in violence, armed groups (mainly Raia Mutomboki Walike, Donat, Ngandu and Mabala), continued to abuse the civilian population. This included the looting of Tchankindo village on April 20 and Kibilu village the following day, the abduction and rape of a minor in Nyombe on April 29 and looting of the same village the next day. FARDC soldiers attempted to prevent looting of Tchankindo on April 20, but they themselves looted Kitindi village on April 28 and abducted 20 people to transport the looted goods.

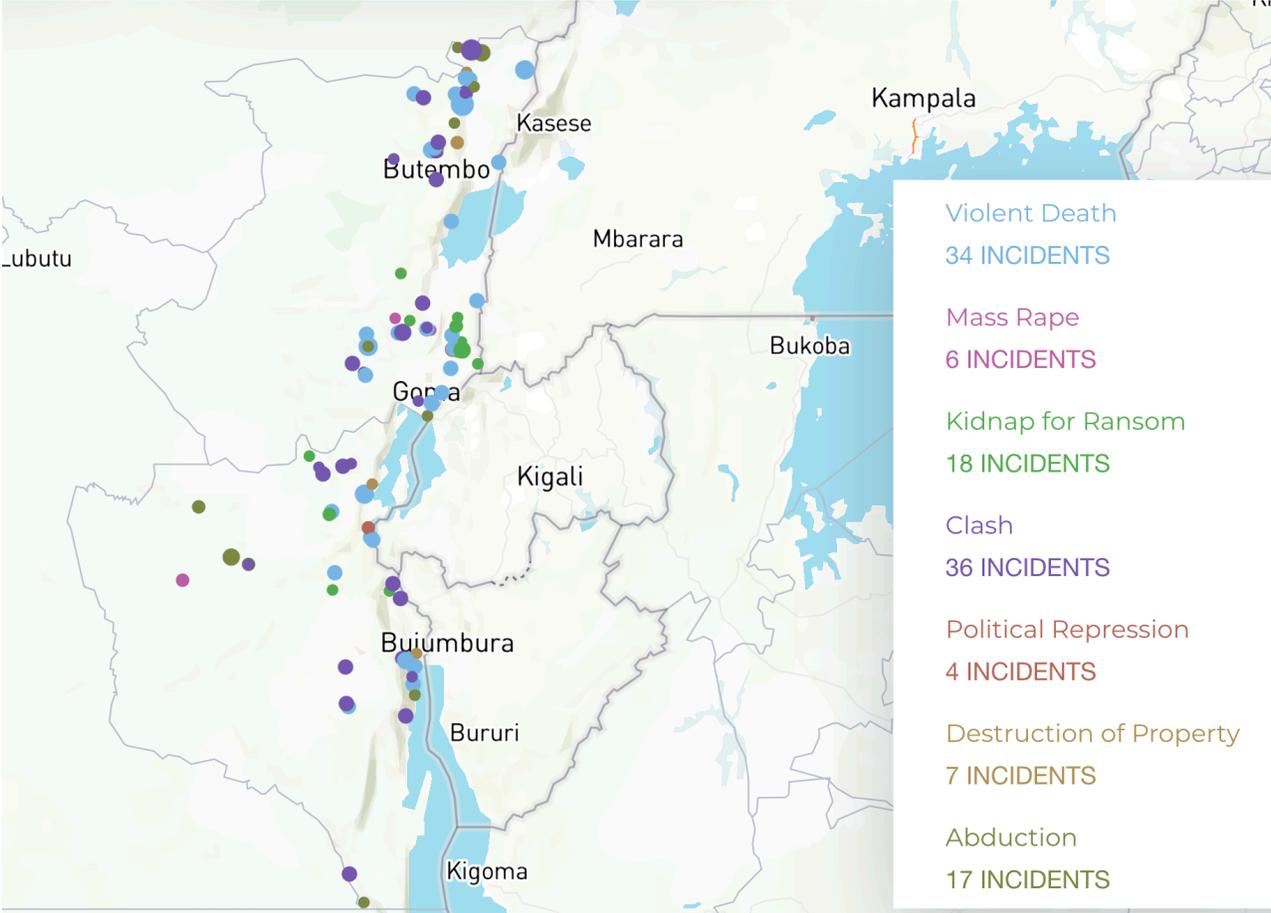
Uvira

Armed groups remained active in Uvira territory, mainly in the Ruzizi plain and on the Uvira-Bijombo road. The FARDC attacked the Mai-Mai CNPSC in Bijombo on April 7 as well as an unknown armed group trying to infiltrate Katogota on April 5 from Burundi. This was likely the RED-Tabara, which had tried to attack the FARDC in Kitoga on April 4.

The Mai-Mai Kashumba engaged in heavy fighting with the FNL-Nzabampema in Kashingo on April 14, when they were trying to loot the village. Other armed groups remain active there; for example, they looted and burned a bus and bicycle in Kawizi on April 22.

Fizi

In Fizi territory, it was mainly the member groups of the National Coalition of the People for the Sovereignty of Congo (CNPSC), in this case the Mai-Mai Ebuela and Réunion, which fought and challenged the FARDC. The Mai-Mai Ebuela attacked in Kakamba April 22 and Réunion hit several villages around Makyaka on April 13. The Mai-Mai Réunion looted and kidnapped civilians in Munene on April 15; other armed groups looted houses and abducted civilians in Nyange on April 15 and looted a mini-bus near Ilakala on April 22. The FARDC infiltrated and looted the homes of displaced civilians in Kakamba on April 22 following fighting between FARDC and Mai-Mai Ebuela.



Website: <https://kivusecurity.org>
 Twitter: @kivusecurity
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KivuTracker/>
 Email: info@kivusecurity.org