

TRACKING: 816 Document: CCX-234

DEADLINE :

ORIGIN: SIDIKOU, MONUSCO, KINSHASA

SUBJECT: Local and national implications of the violence in Kasai Central province

Date: 08 Nov. 16	For Info	For Attention	For Action	For Consultation
SRSR	✓			
DSRSG (RoL)/Ops East	✓			
DSRSG (RC/HC)	✓			
Chief of Staff	✓			
Spec. Assistant O/SRSG	✓			
O/DSRSG (RoL)/Ops East	✓			
IO/DSRSG (RC/HC)	✓			
Force Commander/Deputy FC	✓			
Police Commissioner	✓			
DMS	✓			
Political Affairs Division	✓			
JMAC	✓			
JOC				
Justice and Corrections Section				
Chief Supply Chain				
Chief Service Delivery				
Chief Resident Auditor				
Child Protection				
Civil Affairs				
Conduct & Discipline Unit				
Contract Management				
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Other				

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FROM: SIDIKOU, MONUSCO, KINSHASA

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DATE: 2 November 2016

NUMBER: CCX- **234**

SUBJECT: Local and national implications of the violence in Kasai Central province

Summary: In response to further violence in Kasai Central, MONUSCO has deployed an initial fact-finding mission to Kananga followed by a Joint Assessment Mission to evaluate human rights violations and security risks in the province with a further human rights specific investigation also to be undertaken. The DSRSG Operations and RoL has visited the area and held a follow-up meeting with the government ministers in Kinshasa. The Mission has increased both police and conflict resolution capacities in Kananga. While still unclear, the links between the Kasais and dynamics in Kinshasa will require further analysis and engagement with local and national stakeholders.

Main points

Background

1. Further to our CCX-173 of 27 August 2016, more violence has ensued in Kasai Central, with significant casualties and potential repercussions far beyond the province. Attacks on the airport in Kananga on 22 and 23 September, where militia



allegedly loyal to the deceased Chief Mpandi clashed with security forces, resulted in the death of at least 50 militia, 16 FARDC and PNC agents, and six civilians. MONUSCO received consistent but unconfirmed reports of the local authorities using mass graves to quickly bury the dead. More than 200 people were arrested in the Kananga town area under the authority of an extra-legal special commission, which we understand comprised the PNC and other state security agents. Approximately 140 suspects were released after one week, while the remainder are still in custody.

2. In response, on 26 September, militia attacked and burned government buildings in Dimbelenge and erected over 40 checkpoints. On 26 September, heavily armed FARDC reinforcements from Mbuji Mayi dismantled the checkpoints, during which significant numbers of militia, FARDC and another local customary chief were killed. There were unconfirmed reports of summary executions by state security elements during this incident.

Difficulties in gathering information

3. An initial MONUSCO fact-finding team deployed to Kananga from 26 September to 1 October collected information on much of the above; however, the team was routinely ignored by the security services and the special commission. Nor did the provincial authorities request MONUSCO's assistance in resolving the underlying conflict related to the chieftaincy (our CXC-178 refers). Similarly, security agents from Kinshasa's Conseil National de Sécurité (CNS) dispatched to Kananga informed MONUSCO they too were blocked from investigating on the ground by local security services. CNS sources claim that the overall death toll since August is well over 200 people, evenly split between security forces on one

side and militia and civilians on the other.

MONUSCO response

4. DSRSG Gressly and Police Commissioner Awale visited Kananga on 4 October, to meet with provincial authorities, civil society, religious leaders and political parties. A Joint Assessment Mission also recently concluded its mission to evaluate what additional capacities may be needed to deepen our understanding of the situation and support conflict resolution as necessary. An additional specific Human Rights investigation will also be undertaken. UNPOL have already reinforced the Kananga office with additional police officers and are working with the PNC to determine how to provide support. The Mission will also deploy additional staff to Kananga, especially Civil Affairs staff for conflict resolution support, on a rotational basis.

5. DSRSG Gressly and Police Commissioner Awale also met with Vice-Prime Minister Boshab, the PNC Commissioner, ANR deputy head and others on 5 October in Kinshasa to discuss the situation in Kananga. The DSRSG provided an overview of his visit to Kananga and outlined the key messages and conclusions from the various interlocutors, including: 1) the area around Kananga should be demilitarised 2) lifting on the restrictions on the freedom of movement 3) the need for humanitarian assistance 4) the return of the body of the chief by the authorities for burial 5) the governor should be withdrawn temporarily as he was widely believed to have mismanaged the situation 6) the need for conflict resolution support 7) the desire for an investigation into HRVs by all parties 8) the PNC should be providing security and not the FARDC. The DSRSG also highlighted the issue of the need to make progress on outstanding decisions on local chiefs for which a number of

decisions had been pending. The DSRSG noted this was particularly important as appointments come with financial and other benefits and hence can be contentious.

6. The Vice-Prime Minister accepted the offer of support to the PNC and had no objection to the conflict resolution support. He also noted the HRV investigation and emphasised that given the level of violence used against state security forces; in his view, the GoDRC response had been justified. He noted the GoDRC were moving to rebuild some of the schools that were damaged and were focussed on ensuring the freedom of movement of the local population. The Vice-Prime Minister also noted he would be interested in the outcomes of the assessment mission.

Provincial and national implications

7. The Kasai region, which now covers five separate provinces following the 2015 *découpage*, has approximately 40 ongoing unresolved chieftaincy disputes. Chapters of the *Kananga Majorité Présidentiel* and the *Rassemblement* both denounce Governor Alexis Kande for neglecting to resolve many such disputes. Interior Minister Boshab is yet to sign off on 26 chieftaincy disputes that were preliminarily resolved by the Decentralization Ministry in March 2016, leaving them in limbo and ripe for political manipulation. Many of the interlocutors in Kananga were deeply suspicious of Boshab's role, and saw him attempting to leverage his position in Kinshasa through the conflicts in Kasai.

8. This stalemate with regard to chieftaincies has kept tensions high and allowed for allegations of meddling by foreign entities. For example, several chiefs in Kasai Central, a political stronghold of the opposition UDPS, allege that Rwandan interests are behind unfair actions of the state,

echoing Chief Mpandi's core complaints (our CCX-178 refers). Indeed, the backbone of the FARDC contingent in Kananga is made up of ex-CNDP fighters who were moved to Kananga from North Kivu in 2012 during the M23 mutiny. On 8 September, the self-styled prophet Joseph Mukungubila (allegedly involved in a coup attempt in 2013) publicly accused President Kabila of killing four chiefs from the Kasai region. In his statement, he called for the international community to "end Rwandan occupation" of the DRC. In this context, anti Rwandaphone sentiment could become another fault line for conflict as we move forward.

9. The anti-Rwandaphone narrative may also be being driven forward by mainstream opposition figures who have the capacity to polarize the political environment further. For their part, sources claim that Mukungubila has connections to former national deputy Roger Lumbala, a native of the former province of Kasai Occidental who once led the RCD-N rebel group and is a founder of the "Soutien Etienne Tshisekedi" party platform. These officials are also investigating John Tshibangu, a native of Dimbelenge and former RCD-K/ML rebel commander integrated into the FARDC with ties to opposition leader Tshisekedi, as well as to Mbusa Nyamwisi, a key figure in regards to the conflict in Beni territory. According to them, Tshibangu has spent significant time recently in Kampala, and MONUSCO has received credible reports that he has ties with some actors in Angola. Regardless of the truth of these allegations, increasingly the dynamics in Kasai are driving broader opposition/majority tensions, drawing in accusations of foreign meddling by both sides.

Conclusion

10. As of now, it is unclear the extent to which the situation in Kananga and the broader Kasai province may impact or relate to the dynamics in Kinshasa and vice versa. However, it is of concern that both majority and opposition leaders are clearly instrumentalizing the tensions for their respective political benefit, and it is particularly worrying that both sides are pointing to possible regional involvement in the conflicts there.

11. In this context, and given the likely links between actors in Kasai and the broader electoral process, it is important to maintain situational awareness and engage at both the Kinshasa and the Kananga levels to identify avenues for reconciliation and de-escalation. Deploying additional capacities to Kananga is an important first step in an area where the Mission has very limited capacities.

Kind regards.

[Drafted by ODSRSG Ops and RoL with inputs from PAD]