

## **Kasai - Kasai provinces videos: why do the soldiers film themselves?**

During military operations, the soldiers filmed themselves. Videos were most often made for personal use or they can be for the benefit of companions in arms. But for videos made in the Kasai region, elements suggest that these videos have another purpose...

Two videos shot on 12 August 2016 in the bloody assault against Chief Kamwina Nsapu help to understand what is going on. In the so-called "professional" video (<https://youtu.be/jqxS5yONcf8>), the soldier made a detailed report of the situation. He identified himself, specifies the place where he was and the events that took place there. And he sent several messages to the authorities to promote his unit or to obtain support. In the so-called "amateur" video, a video that was broadcast on social networks, the soldier commented on a situation, without any detail, on the 'justification' mode. He also insulted his opponents.

In eastern Congo, in 2015 and 2016, Congolese officers showed very similar videos to RFI. The goal of these videos was to prove to the top advisers that the troops were conducting the expected operations against the FDLR, the Rwandan Hutu rebels. Each unit was to film the dead, the wounded and the prisoners as well as show the seized weapons for documentary purposes. These officers said they felt their hierarchy had put them "under surveillance", because their superiors suspected the soldiers might not be following instructions. These Congolese military sources recalled that the government was regularly questioned by the international community for its lack of will to carry out the operations.

"The President of the Republic must know that he has his troops in Kananga. Because he is told that we're lying to him."- Extract from a video shot by a soldier in the mortal assault against Chief Kamwina Nsapu, on 12 August 2016, Kasai-Central.

The main difference with the East Congo videos is that those shot in the Kasai provinces do not show the wounded or prisoners. But in the video of Mwanza Lomba, the wounded are executed. In the "amateur" video, a voice mentions the dead or still living Kamwina Nsapu militiamen. In the video shot by a civilian in Kananga on 27 January 2017, when a dying little girl asks for help, she gets a kick in the head.

But some of these videos seem to fulfil the same criteria as the videos shot in the East: localization, identification, formal tone, documentary purpose, and messages to be addressed to the superiors. This is particularly the case of videos of the bloody assault against the leader Kamwina Nsapu and on Mwanza Lomba.

In the video filmed in Tshimbulu on 9 February 2017, a female voice questioned the author of the images' behaviour. In the midst of policemen and soldiers, he recounted the dead, filmed the bodies from all angles. After being given the order, he also reviewed the weapons, without commenting. In the other five videos shot by

soldiers – to which RFI had access – the soldiers reviewed the bodies in the same way.

“Since he’s counting, it means he’s filming.”

“Come and film this.”

Extract of a video shot by a soldier, 9 February 2017, Tshimbulu, Kasai-Central.

**Table 1: Compilation of videos available to RFI**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFI obtained seven videos of abuses committed by the Congolese security forces between August 2016 and February 2017 in Kasai-Central and Kasai-Oriental.</li> <li>• The security forces themselves shot six of the videos. The videos demonstrate excessive use of force and document killings of Chief Kamwina Nsapu’s followers, including children and women, most of the time unarmed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Three videos of the deadly assault against Kamwina Nsapu on 12 August 2016 in Kasai Central.</li> <li>⇒ Summary executions in Mwamza Lomba, on 21 December 2016 in the Kasai- Oriental.</li> <li>⇒ Excessive use of force against Kamwina Nsapu militiamen, mostly women and children on 4 January and 9 February in Tshimbulu in Kasai-Central.</li> <li>⇒</li> <li>⇒ A civilian shot the 7th video on 27 January 2017 in Kananga in Kasai-Central. A dying little girl is being interrogated and mistreated by agents of the State. A third party is filming the scene.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Table 2: Comparison of the two deadly assault videos against Kamwina Nsapu, 12 August 2016**

Watch the video	<p>“Amateur” video Deadly assault against the Kamwina Nsapu chief (1/2): facing the children <a href="https://youtu.be/iKETKFZ5RU8">https://youtu.be/iKETKFZ5RU8</a></p>	<p>“Professional” video Deadly assault against the Kamwina Nsapu chief (1/2): report of the situation <a href="https://youtu.be/jqxS5y0Ncf8">https://youtu.be/jqxS5y0Ncf8</a></p>
Localisation	No	“Here, we are at a crossroad...”

Identification through the narrator	No	"We are para-commandos of FARDC battalion, 5 <sup>th</sup> operational brigade."
Checking the bodies	Yes, with insults towards the victims	Yes, with comments
Tone of speech	Familiar	Formal
Will to explain	Personal justification	Documentary purpose
Message for a third party	"You, Kamwina Nsapu, you kill other people's children"  "We will go and fetch the fugitives, even into their houses."	"We will show them that force is above the law"  "I ask the authorities to dispatch intelligence services to all corners of the territory so that the agents will look for him"  "The President of the Republic must know that he has his troops in Kananga. Because he's been told we were lying to him."

- The video of Kamwina Nsapu's body meets some of the criteria above mentioned, but the comments show a certain vulgarity and insult toward Chief Jean-Prince Mpandi.

- The video of Mwamza Lomba fulfils the same criteria as the "formal" video of the deadly assault at Kamwina Nsapu.

- In Tshimbulu's video of 4 January 2016, the tone is familiar, but the other criteria are met.

- In the video of Tshimbulu of 9 February 2017, there are no comments from the author of the video. But a third party's voice suggests that he counted the bodies because he was filming. Another asked him to come and film. The author of the video reviewed the bodies as well as the weapons. This denotes will to produce a video with a documentary purpose.

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