

She Kasikila against the Rwandophones

The 5th integrated FARDC brigade was born in September 2005. Colonel She Kasikila was in charge of 1200 men, at least on paper. They were supposed to have come from all the parties to the conflict: ex-FAZ, Mobutu's army, RCD rebels, MLC and other armed groups. Colonel Kasikila came from this last component. Since the creation of the FARDC in 2003, in the aftermath of the two Congo wars, issues of "mixing" and the security sector reform have remained sensitive. The units remain marked by history.

She Kasikila is a Mai-Mai chief. These self-defence militias were born in reaction to the entry on Congolese territory of foreign armies and especially the Rwandan and Ugandan armies. For the Mai-Mai, the country experienced an outright invasion that lasted more than six years and was facilitated by what they considered to be the "treachery" of some Congolese. The Kamwina Nsapu's rhetoric is very close to this; with a background history of racism towards communities that speak the languages of those they call "invaders."

Some officers of the former RCD, such as Laurent Nkunda and Eric Ruhorimbere, refused the "mixing". Others who have accepted it held key posts. The commander of the 5th Brigade, She Kasikila, was accused at the time of committing abuses against the Rwandan-speaking civilian community and favouring other communities. But She Kasikila has also attacked the economic interests of resisting officers.

"On 12 December 2005, Colonel Kasikila, commander of the 5th FARDC Brigade, chased 33 men from General Laurent Nkunda's group at the Lueshe mine." - Excerpt from the report of the panel of experts, 2006, section 104

In 2006, one year after his deployment, Colonel Kasikila lost command of the 5th Brigade. According to the International Crisis Group, he was allegedly dismissed for denouncing the existence of mass graves in the territory of Rutshuru, the mass graves he attributed to Rwandophones of the AFDL, which, according to him, were dug during massacres of Hutu refugees between 1996 and 1997. By accusing his rival Laurent Nkunda's RCD of being responsible for these massacres, Colonel Kasikila touched one of the taboos in the Democratic Republic of Congo: the role in the East of the Alliance Of the Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL), to which Kabila, the key figures of his government and security forces had once reportedly belonged.

After dropping Mobutu, some AFDL rebels turned against their former leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila to form the RCD then the CNDP against his son Joseph Kabila, the current president. Ultimately, there remained very few to engage in a final rebellion, the M23. Most of these officers and personalities are now among the best-known figures in Joseph Kabila's regime.

On 7 January 2006, Joseph Kabila's convoy was attacked on the road from Goma to Rutshuru. According to information gathered by Amnesty International at the time,

the assailants were members of a former RCD-Goma brigade, opposed to integration within the FARDC, of which Laurent Nkunda was a military leader.

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/60000/afr620012007fr.pdf>

After the mass graves episode in 2006, Colonel Kasikila disappeared, laid off in Kinshasa. He reappeared publicly only early September in Beni, where he would be deployed today, according to the Congolese news agency. Some say he was in Kananga before he was given his new assignment on 30 August 2016. RFI is not in a position to confirm this information.

<http://acpcongo.com/acp/le-colonel-kasikila-mwendapeke-de-nouveau-affecte-au-nord-kivu-a-la-traque-des-adf-nalu/>

To read or re-read the testimonies of MSF: "Tracking and massacres of Rwandese refugees in Zaire-Congo (1996-1997)":

<http://www.msf.fr/actualite/publications/traque-et-massacres-refugies-rwandais-au-zaire-congo-1996-1997>

Extract from the 2006 ICG report on elections, which details this period, page 18 and 19

© Sonia Rolley

