

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	540
Land:	Den Demokratiske Republik Congo
Kilde:	Jamestown Foundation
Titel:	Has Islamic State Really Entered the Congo and is an IS Province There a Gamble?
Udgivet:	31. maj 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	15. august 2019

Document #2009753

Jamestown Foundation

Has Islamic State Really Entered the Congo and is an IS Province There a Gamble?, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 17 Issue: 11

As it lost control of key regions in Iraq and Syria, Islamic State (IS) may have found a foothold in the conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In April, IS claimed responsibility for two attacks on villages in eastern DRC, a region beset by rebel violence and the Ebola epidemic. On April 18, the militants claimed an attack on Kamango, a village near the town of Beni. Several soldiers were allegedly killed or wounded in the attack in the village near the Congo's border with Uganda. The group claimed responsibility for the attack through its propaganda channel, the Amaq news agency (Business Focus, (<https://businessfocus.co.ug/shock-isis-claims-first-drc-attack-as-two-soldiers-are-killed/>) April 19).

In another statement, the militant group claimed responsibility for another attack on an army base in the village of Bovata in the Beni area. Three soldiers were allegedly killed in the attack and scores of civilians injured. The group used the alleged gains to announce the formation of the new Central Africa Province of the Caliphate. The group reportedly planted its flag in the area (The East African (<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Islamic-State-claims-its-first-Congo-attack/4552902-5078826-r8por/index.html>) , April 19).

IS' claims have not been independently verified, but analysts say their presence cannot be ignored given the many local militias operating in the region. The region is devastated by years of rebel insurgencies, and some of the old rebel groups could be giving IS an opportunity to export and expand its conflict to Central Africa.

IS has already made in-roads into North, East, and West Africa through local affiliates. An insurgency, linked to its factions allied to the northern Nigeria Islamist militant group Boko Haram, has been unfolding around Lake Chad. Multiple IS-linked militant groups have spread around the Sahel region of West Africa, and now in Central Africa in the DRC. Recently, actions linked to IS factions have been recorded in Somalia, the base of al-Qaeda's affiliate in East Africa, al-Shabaab (Terrorism Monitor (<https://jamestown.org/program/briefs-297/>) , January 25).

When IS claimed the attack in the DRC, it appeared to have completed a circle of footprints over the vast African continent. However, some analysts have disputed IS claims. They see it as an attempt by the group to portray itself as an international jihadist group.

Some government officials said the attack on the villages exhibited features of those carried out earlier by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). ADF is a shadowy Islamist rebel group that has fought the DRC and Ugandan governments for decades (The East African (<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Understanding-the-resurgence-of-ADF-rebel-group-in-Uganda/4552908-4620038-not2vxz/index.html>) , June 19, 2018).

In early April while he was in Washington, DRC President Felix Tshisekendi said there were links between ADF and IS, and announced that he had joined the war against IS (The Nilewires (<https://thenilewires.com/news/regional/isis-claims-first-ever-attack-in-congo/>) , April 19).

According to reports, the group had also received financial support from at least one IS financier (The East African, (<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Islamic-State-claims-its-first-Congo-attack/4552902-5078826-r8por/index.html>) April 19).

Background

The ADF, which is viewed as a Ugandan Islamist militant group, was founded around 1995 with the aim of overthrowing the Ugandan government and replacing it with one led through Sharia (Islamic law). Since then, it has been entrenched in the North Kivu region of the DRC near the Ruwenzori Mountains close to the Ugandan border (Uganda Radio Network (<http://ugandaradionetwork.com.dedi3883.your-server.de/a/story.php?s=59455>) , December 26, 2013; Daily Monitor (<https://www.monitor.co.ug/artsculture/Reviews/UPDF-flashes-ADF-rebels-out-of-Kasese/-/691232/2821390/-/j5uq3oz/-/index.html>) , August 6, 2015).

Gradually, the group appears to have changed its interests to focus on the struggle for Islam. Until recently, its members included Muslim fighters who had been forced out of Uganda, but the membership appears to have shifted to include recruits from the wider East Africa region. Also, recent reports indicate that the group has been seeking attention from international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and IS.

According to the Congo Research Group (CRG), an independent research organization on the Congo, the ADF had been attempting to establish links with IS in recent years. ADF reportedly rebranded and acquired a new name—Medina wa Tawhid wal Muwahdeen (MTN) or the City of Monotheism and Monotheists. It had also adopted symbols similar to those of international jihadist groups (Congo Research Group, (<https://insidetheadf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Inside-the-ADF-Rebellion-14Nov18.pdf>) November 2018).

ADF was founded by Shaykh Jamil Mukulu, a Ugandan who converted from the Roman Catholic Church to Islam. Mukulu, born as David Staven, was known to be an ardent critic of Islam when he was a Christian. Converting to Islam, Mukulu quickly became a

hardline Islamist following his exposure to Tablighi Jamaat teachings. Tablighi Jamaat is a missionary movement of Islam that urges Muslims to return to a certain practice of Islam, focusing on dress ritual and behavior.

Mukulu is believed to have spent time in Khartoum, where he met Osama bin Laden, the former al-Qaeda leader, and other Islamist militant leaders who had sought refuge there.

Some reports suggest Mukulu received extensive training in Sudan and Afghanistan following his encounter with Bin Laden, although this has not been confirmed. Regardless, this prepared him to form and lead an Islamist outfit that has remained resilient despite continued operations by the Congolese army and UN forces in the DRC.

Mukulu is now in prison in Kampala after he was extradited to Uganda following his arrest in Tanzania in 2015. He faces several charges including terrorism, murder, crimes against humanity, aiding and abetting terrorism, among others (New Vision, (https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1324970/confirmed-adf-chief-jamil-mukulu-arrested) April 30, 2015; Uganda Radio Network (<https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/dpp-amends-jamil-mukulus-charge-sheet>) , July 20, 2018).

Circumstances around the ADF's formation can be traced to the actions of Ugandan Muslims in the 1990s. At that time, Ugandan Muslim groups were fighting for control of the powerful Nakasero Mosque in Kampala.

Both the Tablighi sect, which Mukulu belonged to, and Uganda's national Muslims umbrella organization, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), wanted to be given the control of the mosque. After a struggle in the courts, the Supreme Court handed the institution to the UMSC, an action that left the sect's members disgruntled. The sect leaders felt the government had favored the UMSC and launched a series of protests, violently occupying mosques.

In 1991, the group attacked UMSC headquarters at the Aghan Khan Mosque, killing a number of people including policemen and dogs who came to restore order. Mukulu was at the forefront of the violence and was arrested with other members of the Tablighi sect in the ensuing government operation.

While in prison, Mukulu continued to spread radical Islam while mobilizing for a rebellion. As a result of his actions, a radical group named Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters (UMFF) was formed in prison. One by one, as the members were set free, they would sneak to a training in a camp in a valley in the Buseruka area in western Uganda.

In 1994, the army raided their camps after a series of attacks, robberies, and kidnappings in Uganda. Hundreds of the Islamists were arrested in the operation, but a large number escaped into the DRC, where they took refuge in the Beni area and in the eastern parts of the DRC.

With UMFF's arrival, then DRC President Mobutu Sese Seko advised all anti-Uganda groups to form a united front that he could support. This gave rise to the ADF (Daily Monitor (<https://www.monitor.co.ug/artsculture/Reviews/ADF-series--The-rebel-group-becomes-active/-/691232/2820096/-/107qj43z/-/index.html>) , August 5, 2015). Mobutu, as well as the Sudanese Islamist, Hassan al-Turabi, allegedly provided support to the group during its early stages. Another key supporter was deposed Sudanese President Hassan Omar al-Bashir (Daily Monitor, (<https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Museveni-Bashir-From-enemies-friends-/688334-5082098-aep1scz/index.html>) April 22, 2019)

In 1995, the ADF joined with the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), an armed Ugandan movement in the DRC. NALU was fighting for the autonomy of a region known as Rwenzururu near the Congo. Around this time Mukulu was released from prison and snuck into the DRC, becoming the ADF-NALU's spiritual leader and top military commander.

With Mukulu at the helm, the militants were blamed for increased attacks in eastern DRC and Uganda. There were reports indicating that the group had gained more strength after aligning itself with al-Shabaab, the Somalia-based al-Qaeda affiliate in East Africa. Observers had mentioned seeing al-Shabaab fighters among ADF-NALU militants. They also served as organizers of the attacks (New Vision, (https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1312150/adf-recruiting-mayuge-iganga-army) January 3, 2013).

Violence has escalated since 2014, with several high-profile attacks. On December 7, 2014, ADF-NALU was blamed for the killing of 36 people in the village of Oicha near Beni in North Kivu Province. The group also allegedly massacred more than 250 people in North Kivu Province over 16 separate incidents between October 2 and December 7, 2014. The attacks followed similar unsophisticated patterns that continue to this day, with assailants arriving at night slaughtering women and children.

Conclusion

Although IS' claims that it executed an attack in the DRC and established the Central Africa Province in the Congo has not been independently verified, its claims cannot be ignored given the many local militias operating in the war-torn country.

While existing rebel groups could provide IS an opportunity to expand its presence in Africa, its growth in the DRC is likely to be limited in the short term due to a variety of factors.

The chances that the ADF, IS' alleged affiliate, would take control of the region are quite slim. The ADF is largely a poorly equipped and formless militia operating in a region where many other armed actors hold control over the country's territory and immense mineral wealth. It has also been a key focus of both the Ugandan and Congolese forces. Given these factors, it is likely that IS may just be trying to boost its ego and project strength after losing its territory in Iraq and Syria.

ecoi.net summary:

Article on increased influence of Islamic State group (IS); the group claims to have organised at least 3 attacks in the country's east



Country:

Congo, Democratic Republic

Source:

[Jamestown Foundation](#) [\(/en/source/11281.html\)](#)

Original link:

<https://jamestown.org/program/has-islamic-state-really-entered-the-congo-and-is-an-is-pr-ovince-there-a-gamble/> (<https://jamestown.org/program/has-islamic-state-really-entered-t-he-congo-and-is-an-is-province-there-a-gamble/>)

Document type:

Special or Analytical Report

Language:

English

Published:

31 May 2019

Document ID:

2009753

Austrian Red Cross

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien

[T \(Telefon\)](#) +43 1 589 00 583

[F \(Fax\)](#) +43 1 589 00 589

info@ecoi.net

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

