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BAROMÈTRE SÉCURITAIRE DU KIVU

NO IMPROVEMENTS IN THE KIVUS

MONTHLY REPORT N°32 - JUNE 2020

108 violent deaths (-13.6%)
118 abducted or kidnapped (+14.6%)
64 clashes (-1.5%)

Insecurity continued to be of concern in the Kivus in June 2020. The Kivu Security Tracker recorded the deaths of 108 civilians during incidents caused by armed actors. This is slightly less than the month

of May, yet remains higher than the historic average, established since KST started collecting such data in June 2017. As for the number of clashes, this has remained stable (64 compared with 65 the previous month) but also remains higher than the average (52).

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) remains the main perpetrator of violence. They have managed to adapt to the movements of the Congolese army (FARDC) and have continued to perpetrate many abuses.

In Lubero and Walikale territories, conflicts have intensified and seem to be shaped by the attitude (well-meaning or hostile) to the Kigali government.

The situation has also continued to worsen in the highlands of South Kivu. The conflict is showing signs of polarization between Banyamulenge militias, under the command of the former Congolese army officer Michel Rukunda, also known as "Makanika," and the FARDC, sometimes backed by Mai-Mai groups. This radicalization raises fear of new abuses against civilians.

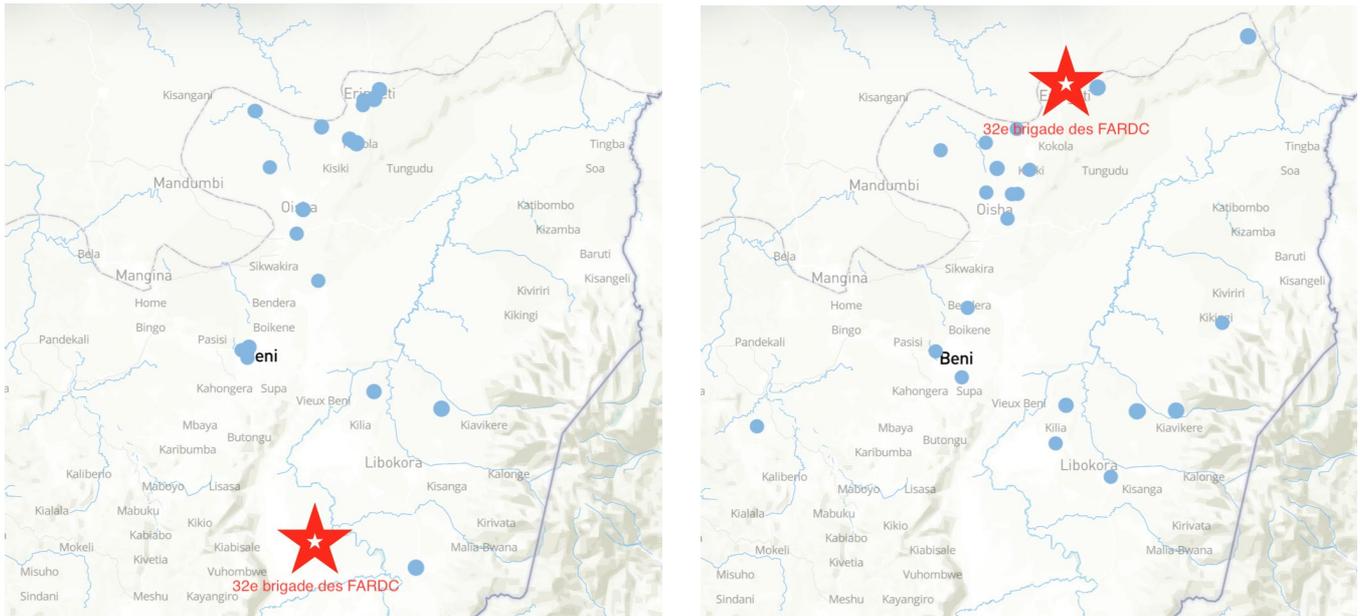
Beni: The ADF Adapts

KST has recorded the killing of 57 civilians by armed actors in the month of June. This death toll is slightly less than the previous month (64), however, it is still

extremely high. In comparison, KST has recorded an average of 33 civilian deaths per month in this territory since June 2017.

The ADF, a Ugandan Islamist rebel group, remains the main perpetrator of these abuses (they are responsible for 44 of the 57 civilian deaths).

However, the geographical distribution of their abuses has changed considerably in June. Whereas in May they committed abuses in the areas surrounding Eringeti, in June this town was left untouched.



Movement of the 32nd Brigade of the FARDC and change in the killings of civilians in Beni territory: in the right-hand map the month of May, in the left-hand map the month of June

This change can largely be explained by the FARDC's 32nd Brigade move from Isale to Eringeti at the start of June. This Brigade is one of the Congolese army units and is the least affected by the recurring problem of low troop count. This suggests that about eight months after the start of a major FARDC-led operation aimed at removing them, the ADF were able to adapt to the movements of their enemies and find new areas insufficiently protected by government forces to carry out massacres.

Between the start of these operations at the end of October 2019 and June 2020, the ADF have killed at least 482 civilians in the Beni territory alone. However, the killings began well before then. KST has recorded the deaths of 812 civilians in attacks attributed to the ADF in the Beni territory since it started collecting such data in June 2017.

In fact, the killing of civilians started in October 2014. Between this date and March 2016, more than 500 civilians were killed. Several groups were involved in this,

including FARDC soldiers and local militias, probably in the context of a local power struggle.

It remains difficult to identify the actors and their motives. It is clear that the ADF is the main actor of such killings in Beni, but in the absence of in-depth investigations, it is impossible to point the blame for such abuses solely at the ADF.

Lubero and Walikale: Conflicts Rage between Pro-Kigali and Anti-Kigali Groups

There has been a notable upsurge in the number of clashes in June with 11 such incidents, compared to four in May, in the territories of Lubero and Walikale.

This can largely be explained by an intensification of conflict between the Popular Patriotic Forces, People's Army (FPP-AP) of Kabidon and the Union of Patriots for the Defense of the Innocents (UPDI-Mazembe) of Kitete, backed by the Nduma Defense of Congo-Renovated.

Control of the territory seems to be a critical reason for this clash. However, attitude towards Rwanda also seems to be a determining factor. Kabidon and Kitete both participated in the creation of the Mazembe self-defense movement. This was created in 2016 to drive out the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a Rwandan uprising opposed to the Kigali government, from the Lubero territory. The Mazembe movement later also opposed the arrival of the NDC-R in Lubero.

However since October 2019, Kitete has allied himself with the NDC-R. Kabidon suspects the NDC-R collaborates with the Kigali government ([for more information on the nature of this support and the history of the conflict, please see the latest report by the Congo Research Group](#)). For the NDC-R, and by extension Kitete, the official priority remains fighting the FDLR.

Masisi: APCLS and NDC-R Still Fighting

Clashes between the NDC-R and the People's Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) and their allies, the Nyatura Patriotic Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy in Congo (APRDC), dominated the security landscape of the Masisi territory in June. As a reminder, the NDC-R has been waging an offensive in Masisi since January 2019, at first with the support of the FARDC. In all, KST recorded 13 clashes (compared to sixteen the previous month) and the deaths of 18 civilians (compared to 31 in May).

In the Masisi and neighboring Rutshuru territories, some NDC-R fighters left their bases to travel to the Walikale territory, the place where the movement began. This was particularly the case for NDC-R fighters who come from Walikale.

A serious incident also affected the mine in Rubaya: four miners from the Cooperamma Cooperative were killed by a policeman in a bar. This cooperative is regularly in conflict with the Bisunzu Mining Company (SMB), the owner of a coltan mine, and frequently accuses the company of police brutality against miners.

Rutshuru and Nyiragongo: Emergence of New Armed Groups

There was a very slight drop in the number of incidents recorded in the Rutshuru territory in June (28 compared to 32). However, after Beni, Rutshuru remains the second most affected territory.

The area was impacted by 11 cases of looting, which is a record high since the start of the year.

This insecurity can be explained by the emergence of new armed groups in the area, such as the "Amka Jeshi" ("army wake up" in Swahili) around Kinyandoni, a town located about fifteen kilometers from the border with Uganda in the chiefdom of Bwisha. This group, mostly comprising young Nande, was first created in March as a self-defense militia to fight against [kidnappings](#), which are very frequent in the Rutshuru territory. The group was later formally banned by the Rutshuru police, which triggered their transformation into an armed group. They were involved in two incidents harming two victims in June.

At the same time, the Nyatura Mamba group emerged in the Rugari region. Its members are former members of the Nyatura Niyonzima group who decided to travel to Goma in September 2019. In the absence of any effective management – as is often the case since Félix Tshisekedi became president in January 2019 – they returned to the Rugari region in January. They re-formed as a group over fear of retaliation by the Niyonzima. Most of its fighters come from the Rera clan of the Hutu community.

Nyiragongo territory was also affected by insecurity: seven incidents were recorded, compared to three the previous month. All such incidents were committed by unidentified armed groups.

Uvira: Insecurity in the Plain

There were 15 recorded incidents in the Uvira territory in June, including 11 people who were kidnapped. This is an increase compared to 11 in May.

All these incidents took place on or nearby the Ruzizi Plain. The uptick in attacks on this trunk road connecting Bukavu with Uvira can be partly explained by the inaccessibility of the alternative route, due to the closure of the borders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which passes through Burundi, and is often preferred as it is safer.

New armed groups have emerged in the plain in recent weeks, such as the Mai-Mai Rasta, comprising of many fighters who come from the ranks of the Mai-Mai Aigle, a former group which surrendered.

Fizi and Mwenga: Makanika, Public Enemy Number 1

The security situation continued to worsen in June in the highlands of South Kivu. KST recorded ten clashes in the territories of Fizi and Mwenga - a record since November 2017.

The main conflict continues to oppose militias from the Banyamulenge community with Mai-Mai groups from the other communities present in the highlands (mostly Babembe, Bafuliru and Banyindu). Since at least the 1990s, the Congolese nationality of the Banyamulenge (a minority who speak a language similar to that of Rwanda and Burundi) is regularly challenged by the leaders of other communities. Moreover, some Banyamulenge have taken part in armed uprisings. Many of them denounce their marginalization and call for more autonomy.

Civilians from all these communities, including many who have been forced to find shelter in displaced persons' camps, regularly fall victim to abuses. Yuda Kayembe, the Fuliiru chief of Kitavi village (Mwenga), was abducted on June 8 and KST has since received no news about him.

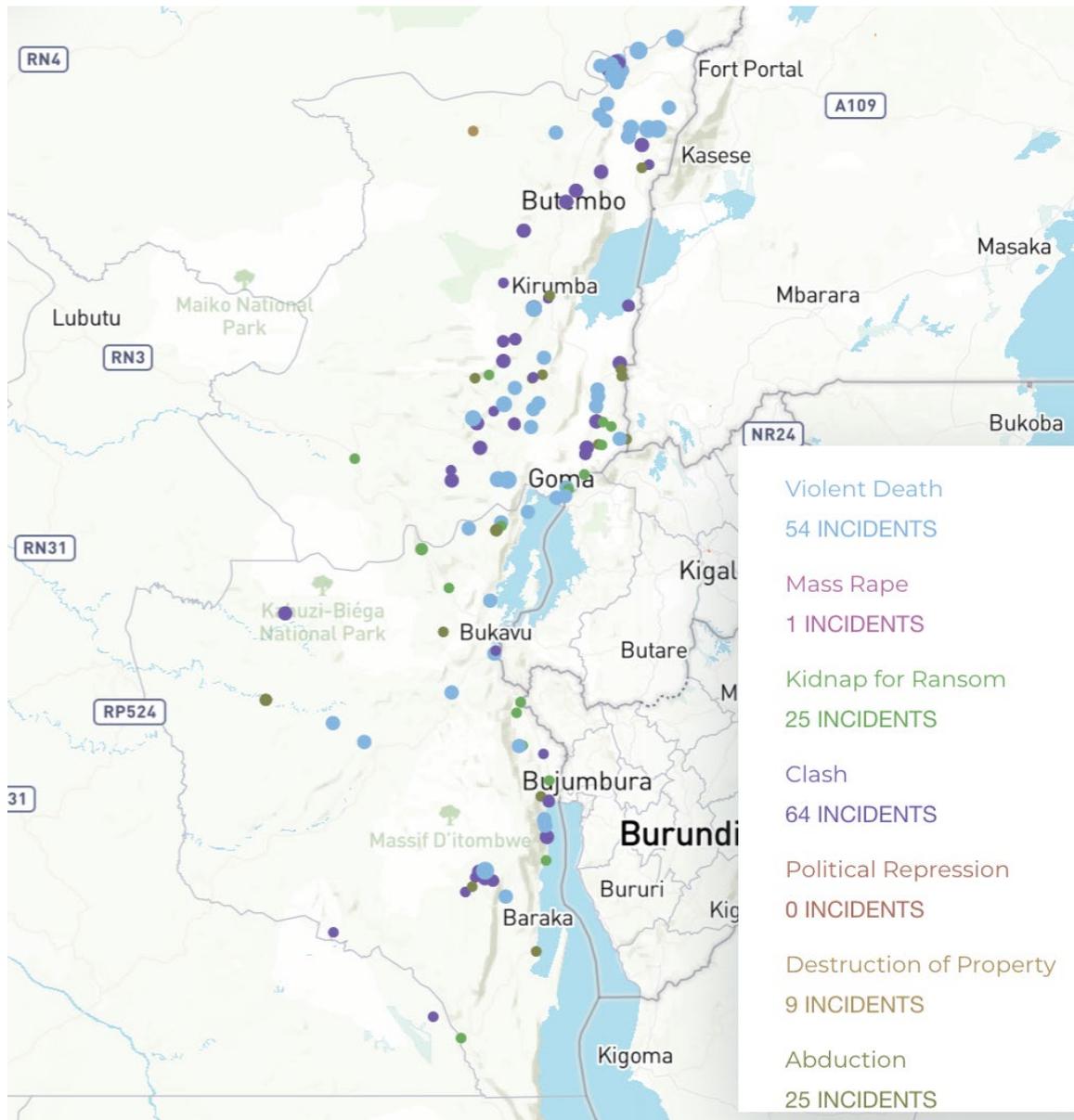
The FARDC now seem to consider their former friend, Colonel Michel Rukunda, also known as Makanika, who is now residing in Kamombo, as their main enemy in the area. This Banyamulenge officer defected last January to take part in the "self-defense" of his community.

The FARDC's spokesperson in the area, Captain Dieudonné Kasereka, [claimed that Makanika attempted to "create an airfield" to enable him to "receive reinforcements to keep the population in a state of insecurity"](#) (in French). However, several local Banyamulenge leaders told KST that this was in fact a civilian project, which had been reactivated to deliver assistance to displaced persons, isolated due to the clashes, and that the airfield had never been used.

[After the FARDC's heavy losses in May](#), FARDC's leadership arranged a rotation of troops in the highlands. According to military sources, their aim was to exclude commanders suspected of complicity from Banyamulenge militias. This did not prevent the FARDC from [losing six soldiers during clashes with Makanika fighters](#).

The Mai-Mai also intervened several times to fight the Makanika, sometimes alongside the FARDC. On June 1, a clash between militias caused the death of seven civilians and 22 combatants. According to sources within these groups, the Mai-Mai are reported to have benefited from a transfer of arms and ammunition from the FARDC as well as from Burundian uprisings in the area, such as the Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi (RED-Tabara).

Lastly, in Lulimba, in the far south of Fizi territory, an expatriate worker for the NGO, Doctors Without Borders (MSF), was kidnapped on June 28.



Website: <https://kivusecurity.org>

Twitter: [@kivusecurity](https://twitter.com/kivusecurity)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KivuTracker/>

Email: info@kivusecurity.org

The Kivu Security Tracker (KST) is a joint project of the Congo Research Group, based at New York University's Center on International Cooperation, and Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch provides training and other support to KST researchers but does not independently verify all incidents reported on the KST and does not necessarily support all the views expressed by the KST.