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COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Teke and Yaka intercommunal conflict in Kinshasa

1. Background

The intercommunal conflict between the Teke and Yaka ethnic groups, beginning in February 2022, originated from disputes over land rights and tax collection¹ in Mai-Ndombe province, which intensified and expanded into neighboring provinces,² including Kinshasa.³ According to sources, the Teke people have owned much of the land and customary titles in Kwamouth territory, in the western province of Mai-Ndombe.⁴ Tensions increased in February 2022 when Teke chiefs announced a tax increase for the Yaka community, which was refused.⁵

The intercommunal violence between the Teke and Yaka ethnic groups has ‘caused a deterioration’ in the humanitarian and security situation in several provinces near the capital city of Kinshasa.⁶ Sources dated from January and February 2024 illustrated that 160,000 people remained displaced due to the conflict,⁷ while hundreds of deaths have been reported because of violence,⁸ although ‘numbers are likely much higher, as the violence and crimes remained significantly underreported, and attribution of responsibility difficult owing to lack of access to conflict areas’.⁹ In addition, several villages, schools and medical facilities have been destroyed due to the conflict.¹⁰

¹ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 45-46; HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

² GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 45-46

³ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#); HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

⁵ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#); HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

⁶ Reuters, Ethnic conflict kills 11 people in western Congo, 31 January 2024, [url](#); Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire; du Mai-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), p.1

⁷ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2024 – Democratic Republic of Congo, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

⁸ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 45-46; GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 10

¹⁰ GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#); HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

According to the UN Security Council, ‘serious human rights violations, including sexual violence, kidnappings for ransom, and torture’, were reported during the conflict.¹¹ Sources added that violence continued and tensions amongst the communities remained high,¹² despite the presence of government armed forces ‘sent to reestablish security in the region and the steady efforts to reduce tensions from senior officials and prominent politicians’.¹³ Moreover, the UN Security Council noted that ‘in Kwamouth territory and Maluku commune of Kinshasa, nearly half of all villages were destroyed’ due to the conflict.¹⁴

2. Latest developments in the conflict, particularly in the Bumbu Commune, Kinshasa

Information on developments in the conflict specifically in the Bumbu Commune, Kinshasa, could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

Sources reported that on 13 July 2024, at least 70 people, including soldiers, were killed in an attack on the village of Kinsele in Kwamouth territory by gunmen of the Mobondo militia, a group presenting itself as defenders of the Yaka people.¹⁵ According to sources, a ceasefire agreement was concluded in April 2024 between leaders from the Teke and Yaka communities in the presence of Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi.¹⁶ However, clashes between the two communities continued.¹⁷ According to a local news source, Radio Okapi, at least five people were killed during an incursion by the Mobondo militia in the village of Engawu, in Kwamouth territory, hours after the April 2024 agreement was signed.¹⁸

Concerning the situation in the city of Kinshasa, the UN Security Council affirmed that the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) was deployed to prevent the conflict from reaching Kinshasa city.¹⁹

Sources described that the violence has reached the city of Kinshasa.²⁰ The UN Security Council further added that the communes Maluku, Kimbaseke, Masina and Ndjili of Kinshasa

¹¹ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 9

¹² USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 45-46; GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#)

¹³ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 45-46

¹⁴ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 9

¹⁵ AP, At least 72 people are killed in a militia attack near Congo’s capital in a conflict over land, 16 July 2024, [url](#); Geopolitical Monitor, Teke-Yaka Tensions See Violence Spread to Western DRC, 18 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶ Africa News, DRC: At least 70 dead in militia attack in Kinsele, 13 August 2024, [url](#); New York Times (The), Congo’s ‘Other’ Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷ Africa News, DRC: At least 70 dead in militia attack in Kinsele, 13 August 2024, [url](#); New York Times (The), Congo’s ‘Other’ Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸ Radio Okapi, Les Teke et Yaka signent un acte d’engagement pour la paix, 8 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 31

²⁰ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#); UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 7

province were particularly affected, ‘where members of both Teke and Yaka communities live, including thousands of civilians displaced by the conflict’.²¹

However, a July 2024 article by the New York Times, noted that at that time ‘the violence is not directly threatening Kinshasa’.²² According to the same source, quoting Liliane Bitong Ambassa, the head of the Congo mission for Caritas International Belgium, people fleeing the violence have gone to Kinshasa.²³ Similarly, the UN Security Council, citing external sources, further noted that many fleeing the conflict have taken refuge with host families in larger cities, including Kinshasa.²⁴

In December 2023, Deutsche Welle (DW) reported that around 30 internally displaced families who fled due to land conflicts between the Teke and Yaka groups had been living since August 2022 in Nzamu camp located in Maluku, Kinshasa province.²⁵ According to a July 2024 report by Global Cluster Protection, a network of non-governmental organizations engaged in humanitarian protection work, despite conflict-related violence having ‘significantly declined’ in Maluku, the Teke population continued to live in fear of frequent kidnappings ambushes, theft of property, and murder.²⁶

Further information on the Teke and Yaka intercommunal conflict in Kinshasa city could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

3. The Mobondo militia

The Mobondo militia was formed in the western region of the DRC in late June 2022,²⁷ in the wake of inter-communal violence between the Yaka and Teke people.²⁸ The militia was comprised of community members of the Yaka people,²⁹ with the objective to drive the Teke and their perceived allies from their villages.³⁰ Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that the group calls themselves ‘Mobondo’ after mystical amulets.³¹

²¹ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 7

²² New York Times (The), Congo’s ‘Other’ Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

²³ New York Times (The), Congo’s ‘Other’ Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

²⁴ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 31

²⁵ DW, RDC : les déplacés de Kwamouth ne veulent pas être oubliés, 29 December 2023, [url](#)

²⁶ Global Cluster Protection, République Démocratique du Congo, July 2024, [url](#), p. 12

²⁷ HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#); Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire du Maï-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), p.1

²⁸ AI, Amnesty International Report 2023/24, The State of the World’s Human Rights: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#); Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire du Maï-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), p. 1

²⁹ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#); HRW, Intercommunal Violence in Western Congo Kills Scores, 29 June 2023, [url](#)

³⁰ New Humanitarian (The), Conflict in western DRC simmers unnoticed amid rebel gains in the east, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

³¹ HRW, Intercommunal Violence in Western Congo Kills Scores, 29 June 2023, [url](#); HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

The UN Security Council illustrated that the militia was organized around the self-proclaimed Yaka king, Odon Nkumbu, who carries the title of 'Kiamvu'.³² Further, the same source stated that search warrants have been issued by the police for Odon Nkumbu and against five other suspects, including two individuals known as 'Cobra' and 'Saddam', for their 'alleged leadership' of the militia.³³

According to several external sources cited by the UN Security Council, 'the Mobondo continued to grow in numbers and expand geographically' throughout 2023.³⁴ More specifically, as of August 2023, 'the Mobondo controlled a vast territory, including over half of Kwamouth territory and Bandundu territory in the north, westwards to the periphery of Maluku commune of Kinshasa, and southwards to the vicinity of Kimvula and Popokabaka in Kongo Central'.³⁵ Corroborating information on areas of control of the Mobondo militia could not be found.

A March 2023 report by HRW on the offenses of the Mobondo militia described that 'the scale of the attacks [...] demonstrated some degree of planning and included the organized participation of hundreds of people, mainly recruited among the Yaka, Suku, Mbala, Ndinga, and Songo communities', and that the most prominent farmers often led assailant groups.³⁶ In July 2024, the New York Times added that 'Mobondo fighters now control large swathes of land, making aid access difficult' as well as they 'ambush traders and seize crops to feed their fighters or finance their war effort'.³⁷

Furthermore, sources noted that the government have sent formerly surrendered Mobondo militants to army enrollment and training centers,³⁸ without being properly vetted for possible involvement in abuses.³⁹

A September 2024 update by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), an international organization for human rights advocacy, illustrated that 'although the conflict has decreased in intensity, sporadic violence and heightened tensions remain'.⁴⁰ The 2023 annual report by Amnesty International (AI), citing the United Nations (UN) Joint Human Rights Office, stated that the Mobondo militia killed at least 100 people between January and October

³² UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 30

³³ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 30

³⁴ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 31

³⁵ UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), p. 31

³⁶ HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

³⁷ New York Times (The), Congo's 'Other' Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

³⁸ HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#); GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#); New York Times (The), Congo's 'Other' Conflict Kills Thousands in West Near the Capital, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

³⁹ HRW, DR Congo: Rampant Intercommunal Violence in West, 30 March 2023, [url](#); GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#);

⁴⁰ GCR2P, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1 September 2024, [url](#)

2023.⁴¹ Sources added that the Mobondo militia have committed serious abuses,⁴² including forced recruitment of minors, violence, kidnapping and raping women, and looting villages.⁴³ Furthermore, serious abuses by members of the government security forces in areas affected by the conflict have also been reported.⁴⁴

Recent attacks from the Mobondo militia related to the conflict include:

- On 29 July 2024, four members of the Teke community including three women were robbed and killed by the Mobondo militia, near Kinsele in Kwamouth territory.⁴⁵
- In February 2024, at least seven people were reportedly killed by the Mobondo militia in the province of Kwango.⁴⁶
- On 23 January 2024, an attack by the Mobondo militia left at least 11 people dead and properties were either looted or destroyed in Fadiaka locality, in Kwamouth Territory.⁴⁷
- On 7 January 2024, the Mobondo militia attacked the village of Mbuntie in Kwamouth territory, killing 'several' villagers and burning down homes and schools.⁴⁸
- On 26 June 2023, Mobondo gunmen killed at least 20 people in an ambush on a truck carrying mostly Teke traders in the village of Mulunu in Kwamouth territory.⁴⁹

For additional information on the general security situation in Kinshasa and incidents related to the Mobondo militia, see EUAA query response on the [Security Situation in Kinshasa](#), published on 22 February 2024.

⁴¹ AI, Amnesty International Report 2023/24, The State of the World's Human Rights: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁴² AI, Amnesty International Report 2023/24, The State of the World's Human Rights: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#); Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire du Mai-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), p.6; UN Security Council, Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 December 2023, [url](#), para. 9

⁴³ Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire du Mai-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁴⁴ Caritas International, 2ème synthèse sur la situation sécuritaire et humanitaire du conflit foncier intercommunautaire du Mai-Ndombe, October 2023, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁴⁵ Global Cluster Protection, République Démocratique du Congo, July 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁶ Radio Okapi, Kwango : 7 morts à la suite d'une nouvelle incursion des Mobondo dans le secteur de Bukangalonzo, 3 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷ Crisis 24, DRC: Further violence possible following militia attack in Kwamouth Territory, Mai-Ndombe Province, Jan. 23, 24 January 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Radio Okapi, Mai-Ndombe : le village Mbuntie attaqué par des miliciens Mobondo, 8 January 2024, [url](#)

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