



RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE | USALAMA PROJECT
UNDERSTANDING CONGOLESE ARMED GROUPS

UPC IN ITURI

THE EXTERNAL MILITARIZATION
OF LOCAL POLITICS IN
NORTH-EASTERN CONGO

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The external militarization of local
politics in north-eastern Congo

HENNING TAMM



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THE USALAMA PROJECT

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COVER: Child soldiers conscripted by the UPC await orders in Bule, Ituri district (2003). Photograph by Marcus Bleasdale.

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Map 1. The eastern DRC, showing area of detailed map on the following page



Map 2. Ituri, showing key UPC training centres

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Previous RVI Usalama Project publications

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'M23's Operational Commander: A Profile of Sultani Emmanuel Makenga'

Preface: The Usalama Project

The Rift Valley Institute's Usalama Project ('peace' or 'security' in Swahili) is a response to on-going violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The protracted suffering of the inhabitants of this region in the past two decades has resulted in the expenditure of billions of dollars on conflict resolution. Yet the Congolese armed groups at the heart of the conflict are still poorly understood by the international organisations that operate in the DRC—and even by the Congolese government itself. The Usalama Project examines the roots of violence, with the aim of providing a better understanding of all armed groups, including the national army, the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

The Usalama research programme is guided by a series of questions. What is the history of these armed groups? Who supports and controls them? What are the relations of particular groups to the state, to neighbouring states, to business interests and to the Congolese armed forces? Why have some groups been so difficult to demobilize, while others have disappeared? And are there patterns to be discerned in the ways that groups proliferate, negotiate with the state, and then vanish again?

The project takes a primarily qualitative approach. It analyses historical sources—and the small amount of quantitative data available—and traces the origins of armed groups through interviews with politicians, businessmen, representatives of civil society, and members of armed groups. The Project involves extended fieldwork by both international and Congolese researchers. The outcomes include reports on specific armed groups and wider geographical areas of conflict, and a series of seminars and workshops in the DRC.

Many of the interviews for this report were conducted on condition of anonymity. Where confidentiality was requested, identifying information in the report is limited to a number with a location and a date, e.g. Usalama Project Interviewee #105, Goma, 28 August 2012. In the course of the research, accounts of significant and potentially disputed events were confirmed by multiple sources with first-hand knowledge of the events under discussion.

Summary

The Ituri district in the DRC's north-eastern Orientale Province has been the scene of some of the worst violence of the Congo wars. Three leading figures from Ituri's armed groups have stood or are standing trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and a fourth has been indicted. Since 2007, however, Ituri has witnessed a sharp decline in violence and displacement. While several attempts have been made since then to launch new insurgencies—some in connection with the M23 rebellion in North Kivu, which emerged in April 2012—they have had only modest success.

This report examines the convergence of factors that helped create and then broke apart the *Union des patriotes congolais* (UPC, Union of Congolese Patriots), one of Ituri's most powerful armed groups. Created in the context of Ugandan occupation, which led to an increased militarization of politics, the UPC represented a local attempt to regain political and military control over the district. The movement was largely driven by elite interests from within the Hema community, the socio-economically dominant ethnic group in Ituri, and attracted external support first from Uganda, then from Rwanda.

The initial impetus behind the UPC was a bloody land conflict that erupted in 1999, the result of long-standing tensions born out of a history of economic and political inequality between landowning Hema and Lendu farmer communities. In July 2000, Hema officers of the armed group that controlled Ituri, the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie–Kisangani/Mouvement de libération* (RCD-K/ML, Congolese Rally for Democracy–Kisangani/Liberation Movement), mutinied in protest against what they saw as a pro-Lendu stance by their political leadership. Thomas Lubanga, who began his political career in an opposition party that advocated non-violent resistance, quickly positioned himself as a spokesman of the mutineers and then initiated the creation of the UPC in September 2000. In the following two years, Lubanga and his local allies were able to exploit tensions between the RCD-K/ML, Uganda, and

Rwanda, transforming the UPC into a fully-fledged rebellion in August 2002 and taking control of Bunia, Ituri's district capital.

Regional dynamics quickly overshadowed the UPC's local origins, initially strengthening the movement but subsequently destroying it almost entirely. At the end of 2002, Uganda's proxy war with Rwanda intensified as Kampala moved closer politically to the Kinshasa government; together, the countries managed to split the UPC into three groups and triggered a battle over the control of Bunia. In May 2003, when the UPC—emboldened by Uganda's withdrawal—retook Bunia with Rwandan support in a battle that left hundreds of civilians dead and UN peacekeepers caught in the middle, the UN Security Council authorized a multinational intervention force, led by the French army.¹

This military intervention marked the beginning of a protracted and fitful period of stabilization. Lubanga departed for Kinshasa to negotiate the UPC's political future but was eventually arrested in March 2005 and held in connection with the killings of nine Bangladeshi UN personnel. A year later, he was transferred to the custody of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face trial in The Hague.² Meanwhile, Kinshasa helped orchestrate another split in the UPC and, together with UN peacekeepers, launched robust operations against remaining militias, effectively dismantling the UPC's military wing.

Today the UPC exists only as a political party, although some of its military leaders remain active in other armed groups. Given Kinshasa's inability to build a cohesive military, it is likely that the ranks of Ituri's rebels will continue to be fed by army defectors. However, social and political shifts in Ituri make a wholesale resurgence of the UPC unlikely: businessmen have thrived in a relatively peaceful climate, the military

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 1 UN Security Council Resolution 1484 (2003), 30 May 2003; [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1484\(2003\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1484(2003)).

2 On 14 March 2012, Lubanga was found guilty of conscripting and enlisting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities; Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'The Lubanga Trial', <http://www.hrw.org/topic/international-justice/lubanga-trial>.

leadership of the Hema community has been fragmented, and regional power plays have somewhat abated. None of these developments are irreversible—but they do provide lessons and precedents for dealing with other Congolese armed groups. In particular, the case of the UPC suggests that a neighbour's interest in weakening rather than bolstering an armed group, coupled with robust international intervention and forceful government action, can tilt the balance in favour of peace. At the same time, the continuing instability in Ituri shows that real, sustainable peace will remain elusive in the absence of economic, military, and political reforms.

1. Introduction

Politically as well as geographically, Ituri lies on the Congolese margins. Located in the extreme north-eastern corner of the country, over a thousand miles from Kinshasa, the district has closer economic ties to Uganda and South Sudan than it does to much of the DRC. The region, which boasts expanses of highland pastures, gold mines, and precious tropical hardwoods, gained international notoriety during the Second Congo War. Between 1999 and 2003, at least 55,000 people were killed and more than 500,000 displaced in a conflict that involved local militias and armies from three countries.³ The violence began with land disputes between Hema landowners and Lendu farmers that spiralled out of control once the Ugandan army got involved. The conflict further escalated when it became part of a regional conflagration involving the Ugandan, Congolese, and Rwandan governments.

The UPC did not exist at the start of these hostilities. It emerged as a political party in September 2000 and then transformed into a politico-military movement, eventually forcing the RCD-K/ML out of Bunia in August 2002. While this metamorphosis is inextricably linked to leadership struggles at Ituri's political centre, the UPC's origins also lie in the Hema self-defence groups that were formed, village by village, at the start of the conflict. It is these links between political machinations in Ituri's capital and inter-ethnic fighting in the countryside that provide the key to understanding the UPC.

What, then, led to the initial outbreak of violence in 1999? Answering this question requires a brief historical outline of relations between

³ HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood": Ethnically Targeted Violence in Northeastern DR Congo', July 2003, p. 1. According to local and international human rights activists, the death rate up to 2005 was likely to be considerably higher than 60,000.

Ituri's communities.⁴ There are more than a dozen ethnic groups in Ituri. In late 2002, around 3.5 million people lived in the district, with Hema and Lendu probably accounting for 40 per cent of the population. Some consider the Alur to be the single biggest group, others the Lendu.⁵ Hema and Lendu leaders, however, were the main protagonists in the tragedy that ensued.

Scholars generally agree that the Lendu arrived in Ituri earlier than the Hema—the former around the sixteenth century, the latter in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.⁶ Both groups settled primarily in Djugu and Irumu territories, which were also the areas most seriously affected by the violence. Northern Hema (from Djugu) are also called Gegere, whereas southern Lendu (from Irumu) are also known as Ngiti. While the extent of inequality prior to colonization is contested, it is clear that Belgian administrators helped Hema to achieve social and political dominance over Lendu. Nonetheless, there are important differences between Djugu and Irumu territories in both the scale and origin of inter-ethnic conflict before 1999.

After Congolese independence, violence in Irumu flared up first in 1966 before becoming, in the words of one Lendu community leader, 'cyclical', with incidents in 1975, 1979, 1981, and 1992/93.⁷ The origins of these conflicts largely lay in disputes over administrative borders: the Hema incorporated certain Lendu villages into one of their *chefferies* (traditional chieftaincies), thus denying the Lendu access to Lake Albert.

4 See Dan Fahey, *Ituri: Gold, Land, and Ethnicity in North-eastern Congo* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2013).

5 IRIN, 'In-Depth: Ituri in Eastern DRC', 25 November 2002.

6 The following three paragraphs draw on Johan Pottier, 'Displacement and Ethnic Reintegration in Ituri, DR Congo: Challenges Ahead', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 46/3 (2008), pp. 1–24; Pottier, 'Representations of Ethnicity in the Search for Peace: Ituri, Democratic Republic of Congo', *African Affairs* 109/434 (2010), pp. 23–50; and Dan Fahey, 'Rethinking the Resource Curse: Natural Resources and Polywar in the Ituri District, Democratic Republic of the Congo' (PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2011), chapter 2.

7 Usalama Project interview with Didi Angaika, Bunia, 9 August 2012.

In contrast, Djugu territory, where large parts of both Hema and Lendu live in enclaves, remained relatively peaceful up to the 1990s. The roots of conflict there lie in land disputes related to the General Property Law of 1973, which abolished, at least officially, customary tenure and declared all land to be state property. Some Hema elites took advantage of this law and their privileged access to the state bureaucracy, acquiring land that many Lendu considered to belong to their ancestors. The law stipulated that land titles would not enter into force until two years after they were bought, so buyers often kept their deeds secret until it was too late to challenge them. Hema leaders did not deny that members of their community had used this practice; indeed, some of them showed empathy for Lendu grievances. ‘Imagine the Lendu,’ said one, ‘they lose their hill, they go to the judicial authorities to complain, and the Hema always win.’⁸

Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, RCD-K/ML president in 1999, regarded this ‘injustice’ as ‘the real source of the conflict’ in Ituri.⁹ Likewise, the anthropologist Johan Pottier suggests that class, not ethnicity as such, triggered the crisis.¹⁰ Whereas Lendu leaders, when asked about the origins of conflict, typically begin with this history of inequality, Hema leaders highlight a more proximate factor, namely the absence of the state, a critical problem that they associate primarily with the late Congolese president Laurent Kabila, who forced Mobutu out of office in May 1997.

While Ituri experienced several incidents of gang rape and lootings by Mobutu’s retreating soldiers during the First Congo War between December 1996 and March 1997, it initially remained peaceful when the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy), together with Rwandan and Ugandan troops, arrived in the

8 Usalama Project Interviewee #54, Kinshasa, August 2012.

9 Interview with Wamba dia Wamba, Kinshasa, 4 July 2011.

10 Pottier, ‘Displacement and Ethnic Reintegration’, p. 433.

early phase of the Second Congo War in late 1998.¹¹ But when the land conflict erupted in 1999, Hema leaders argued, the Ugandan army began to exploit ethnic tensions, selling weapons to both sides in order to make money.¹² This allegation, which masks the fact that the Hema profited from Ugandan support to a far greater extent than the Lendu, points to the immediate outbreak of hostilities between April and June 1999 and the subsequent creation of self-defence groups.

The formation of Hema self-defence groups

The Ituri conflict began in April 1999 at the Leyna concession in Walendu Pitsi, a *chefferie* in Djugu territory. Lendu villagers accused Singa Kodjo, the Hema owner of Leyna, of illegally expanding his concession into Lendu land. The exact chain of events that followed remains contested, but it appears that Kodjo sought to involve local police in his expansion plans, triggering a Lendu attack. Similar events occurred in localities nearby, one involving the murder of a Hema concession owner.¹³ At the end of May, Singa Kodjo and other influential Hema paid Captain Anthony Kyakabale, the sector commander of the Ugandan army (UPDF, Uganda People's Defence Force) to expel Lendu occupying their concessions, further militarizing the cycle of violence.¹⁴

In this context of insecurity, Hema began to form *autodéfense* (self-defence) groups. While the Lendu community reciprocated with its own militias, the Hema groups were generally better organized. As these were initially formed on a village-by-village or even farm-by-farm basis, accounts of their creation and structure differ slightly. Nonetheless,

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11 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003' (June 2010), p. 129.

12 Usalama Project Interviewees #4, #19, and #54, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012.

13 Fahey, 'Rethinking the Resource Curse', chapter 5.

14 UN Security Council S/2004/573, 'Special Report on the Events in Ituri, Jan 2002–Dec 2003', 16 July 2004, para. 19; Usalama Project Interviewee #58, Bunia, August 2012.

one can distil some broad common factors.¹⁵ The groups were typically led either by Hema farm owners or their sons, while village elders, customary chiefs, and local youth committees all played key roles in mobilizing communities. Material support came from several sources. Wealthy businessmen made large donations, while in town markets such as Fataki, tax collections often went directly to self-defence groups. Meanwhile, in villages close to mines, the population dug gold that could then be sold in exchange for weapons. Finally, door-to-door collections provided both money and food.

According to one former member, each Hema self-defence group may have had around three or four assault rifles, often bought from the UPDF, which sold weapons left behind by Mobutu's and Kabila's armies. The UPDF also deployed some of its own soldiers—usually around a dozen—to each farm, often in the pay of landowners. Once the fighting spread, engulfing all of Djugu in the second half of 1999, the groups intensified their recruitment efforts; members with army backgrounds provided hasty military training to new recruits. Then, according to one former RCD-K/ML army commander on duty in Djugu from 1999 to 2000: 'For efficiency reasons, committees were created in each big centre—Fataki, Iga Barrière, Largu, Katoto, Mongbwalu, and a representation in Bunia—and were charged with collecting funds, organizing private vehicles to transport combatants, and buying weapons and ammunition.'

The 'self-defence' label was somewhat misleading, as both Hema and Lendu mounted offensive operations. While the Hema were fewer in number, they enjoyed superiority in weaponry, thanks both to their wealth and to the support from the UPDF. Just as heavy fighting broke out in June 1999, the Ugandan commander of operations in the Congo, Brigadier James Kazini, announced the creation of Kibali-Ituri Province, combining the districts of Ituri and Haut-Uélé. He appointed the Hema politician Adèle Lotsove as its governor, a move seen as a clear signal

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 15 Unless other sources are cited, the following paragraphs and quotations in this section draw on Usalama Project Interviewees #65, #66, and #67, Ituri, October 2012.

that the Ugandans favoured the Hema. Although Lotsove organized a pacification commission in August, she was soon criticized for exacerbating the conflict in Djugu.

After the August 1999 fighting between the Rwandan and Ugandan armies in Kisangani, capital of Orientale Province, RCD-K/ML president Wamba dia Wamba moved his headquarters to Bunia. In October, the RCD-K/ML set up its own Commission for Security and Peace in Djugu territory. Two months later, as a result of this process, Wamba dismissed Lotsove as governor and replaced her with Ernest Uringi Padolo, an Alur who was considered more neutral. Around the same time, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni invited representatives from Ituri to Kampala for discussions and replaced his Bunia commander.¹⁶

The Ugandan army's involvement in Ituri was full of contradictions. While a number of senior UPDF officers favoured Hema self-defence groups and reaped financial benefits from protecting Hema landowners, other officers—most notably Colonel Peter Kerim—at times intervened to protect Lendu villages. In at least one incident, UPDF units that supported opposing camps even exchanged fire.¹⁷

Wamba, a former history professor at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, was quickly side-lined by more ruthless politicians who made use of both the Hema-Lendu conflict and UPDF factionalism in their attempts to seize control of Ituri. In the process, they helped create the UPC.

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16 HRW, 'Uganda in Eastern DRC: Fueling Political and Ethnic Strife', March 2001, pp. 35–40.

17 UN Security Council S/2001/357, 'Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo', 12 April 2001, para. 180.

2. Creation of the UPC

The early years of the UPC are arguably the most opaque period of its existence; indeed, many accounts even misreport the date of its creation by a year or two.¹⁸ Any complete picture of the UPC's creation must focus on the leadership struggle at Ituri's political centre, as well as on the fighting in Djugu's countryside. Between July 2000 and September 2002, Thomas Lubanga and his local allies exploited three political developments: a leadership struggle within the RCD-K/ML that led to a mutiny by Hema officers; a subsequent conflict over the control of north-eastern Congo between the RCD-K/ML and the *Mouvement de libération du Congo* (MLC, Movement for the Liberation of the Congo); and finally tensions that emerged between the RCD-K/ML and Uganda after the former moved closer to the government in Kinshasa. With each development, Lubanga came to play a more important role in Ituri's politics. Within two years, he thus managed to transform the UPC from a small political party into one of the most powerful politico-military movements the district has seen.

RCD-K/ML power struggles and the CMF mutiny

The RCD-K/ML was never an internally coherent movement: like most Congolese rebellions, it was riven by factionalism, outside meddling, and a lack of agreement over its goals. Soon after arriving in Bunia, Wamba's authority was challenged by his party's commissioner-general, Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, and by the latter's deputy, John Tibasima. A native of Bas-Congo province, Wamba was considered an outsider in Ituri, making it easier for Mbusa, a Nande from North Kivu, and Tibasima, a local Hema, to oust him. These two communities represented the two

18 For instance, in International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Congo Crisis: Military Intervention in Ituri', 14 June 2003, p. 5, June 2002 is suggested as the UPC's date of creation.

economically most influential ethnic groups in the area under RCD-K/ML control.

The contrasts between the three protagonists were striking: a leftist history professor who had spent much of his life in the United States and Tanzania versus two well-connected local businessmen. Tibasima, who was in charge of the group's budget, finance, and mining portfolios, had previously been chief executive of the state-owned mining company *Office des Mines d'Or de Kilo-Moto* (OKIMO, Office of the Gold Mines of Kilo-Moto), while Mbusa came from a politically influential family and had been one of the founding members of the RCD in 1998.¹⁹

From late 1999 onwards, Wamba's rivals began to stake out their areas of influence. Tibasima began recruiting youth for military training at the Rwampara camp near Bunia, while Mbusa did the same at the Nyaleke camp close to Beni. Both recruited largely along ethnic lines, although Mbusa's soldiers primarily included both Nande and Lendu.²⁰ In both camps, recruits were trained by UPDF officers. Like Lotsove, Mbusa and Tibasima secured Ugandan support by forging business relationships with Brigadier Kazini and with General Salim Saleh, influential half-brother of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, thus helping them to benefit from Congo's natural resources. Both were later reprimanded by the so-called Porter Commission, set up by Museveni to investigate allegations made by the UN Panel of Experts.²¹ Mbusa also managed to buy favour with several Ugandan officers stationed in the area.

Although the two training camps were officially used for the RCD-K/ML army, the *Armée populaire congolaise* (APC, Popular Congolese Army),

19 HRW, 'The Curse of Gold: Democratic Republic of Congo', 2 June 2005, p. 14; Jean Omasombo and Erik Kennes, *République démocratique du Congo: Biographies des acteurs de la Transition (juin 2003-juin 2006)* (Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2006), pp. 153–154, 237–238, and 250–251.

20 HRW, 'Uganda in Eastern DRC', pp. 16, 44.

21 Republic of Uganda, 'Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations into Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of Congo 2001 (May 2001–November 2002): Final Report', November 2002, section 44.2.

Wamba was unhappy with Mbusa's and Tibasima's efforts. When he tried to curtail his rivals' influence in April 2000, they launched their first coup attempt. President Museveni quickly intervened, bringing the three together in Kampala and forcing them to reconcile their differences.²² The truce, however, did not last. In July, Hema APC commanders launched a mutiny in protest against what they perceived as a pro-Lendu stance by Wamba, calling themselves the *Chui* ('Leopard') Mobile Force (CMF). Wamba swiftly blamed this revolt on Tibasima. Since the CMF was not only the precursor of the UPC but also brought Thomas Lubanga to prominence, it deserves further discussion.

Commander Bagonza was the first to mutiny with his troops, attacking APC positions in Nyankunde and Marabo. Other Hema commanders, including Tchaligonza Nduru and Floribert Kisémbó, joined Bagonza in the bush. So did several Congolese Tutsi APC commanders, including Bosco Ntaganda. They worked together with Yves Kahwa, customary chief of the Bahema Banywagi *chefferie* in Djugu. For a short period, the CMF was based in that *chefferie*'s chief town, Mandro, which later became the UPC's headquarters and main training centre. While their goal was to depose Wamba, the CMF did not have a clear organizational structure or a single leader.²³

President Museveni was once again forced to step in to contain the violence. He ordered the deployment of UPDF reinforcements, prompting the Hema community to dispatch a delegation to plea with Museveni not to attack its 'sons who are demonstrating against injustice'.²⁴ One of the delegates was Thomas Lubanga, who had studied psychology at the University of Kisangani and who, at 40, was no stranger to politics. In the 1990s, he had been an active member of Etienne Tshisekedi's *Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social* (UDPS, Union for Democracy and Social

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22 HRW, 'Uganda in Eastern DRC', pp. 16–18.

23 Usalama Project Interviewees #54, #60, #61, #62, and #63, Kinshasa and Bunia, August–September 2012.

24 *New Vision* (Kampala), 'Bunia team makes contact', 7 August 2000.

Progress). He also served Bunia as a member of the provincial parliament during Adèle Lotsove's short-lived governorship—a position that may explain the oft-repeated but false claim that he is Lotsove's nephew. Before Tibasima asked him to join the delegation to Kampala, Lubanga was a trader in Bunia's main market.²⁵

Accompanied by a group of high-ranking Ugandan officials, the delegation travelled back to Bunia to negotiate the CMF's peaceful surrender; in return, the Ugandans agreed to provide military training to the mutineers. Seizing the opportunity, Hema community leaders in Djugu and Irumu quickly launched a recruitment drive, inflating the number of mutineers from around 300 to nearly 700. Among these recruits were 163 children, aged between nine and seventeen.²⁶ Before being flown from Bunia airport to Uganda at the end of August, some mutiny leaders stayed in Lubanga's house and, acknowledging his courage and political acumen, chose him as their spokesman.²⁷ Following their departure, he assembled a group of educated Iturians, many but not all of whom were Hema. On 15 September 2000, they created the UPC and named Lubanga as president.²⁸

Some of its co-founders argued that the UPC began as a 'purely political movement' with the aim of developing ways to end the inter-ethnic violence in Ituri.²⁹ But Lubanga's involvement with the CMF immediately prior to the founding of the UPC suggests that the group had military aims from the outset. Lubanga, who spent some time in Uganda between

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25 Usalama Project interviews with Richard Lonema, 11 August 2012; Daniel Litsha (former UPC secretary-general), 27 August 2012; and John Tinanzabo (current UPC interim president and former UDPS section leader), 7 October 2012 (all three in Bunia).

26 BBC News, 'UN finds Congo child soldiers', 21 February 2001; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1181593.stm>.

27 Usalama Project Interviewees #54, #60, #61, #62, and #63; HRW, 'Uganda in Eastern DRC', p. 19.

28 ICC, ICC-01/04-01/06, 'Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Case of the Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo', 14 March 2012, para. 81.

29 Usalama Project interviews with John Tinanzabo, Bunia, 7 October 2012, and Daniel Litsha, Bunia, 8 August 2012.

2000 and 2001, maintained links to the former mutineers while the Ugandans trained them in Kyankwanzi and Jinja.³⁰ The UPC co-founder Richard Lonema in fact already saw them as UPC's armed wing at the time.³¹

Meanwhile, the political crisis at the heart of the RCD-K/ML continued. During the CMF mutiny, Wamba dia Wamba tried to suspend Mbusa and Tibasima, accusing them of treason. Another round of negotiations between the three followed, this time not only facilitated by Uganda but also by Mozambique and Tanzania. Back in Bunia, however, Mbusa—known for his political guile—quickly scuppered the Kampala deal. He used remnants of his battalion trained at Nyaleke camp to attack Wamba's residence. While the roles of Tibasima and Lubanga in this *putsch* are not entirely clear, UPDF officers were openly divided, with those backing Mbusa seen as Kazini's men.³² Once again, the Ugandan government ordered all the protagonists back to Kampala. This would be Wamba's farewell to Bunia: embattled and tired of the endless plotting against him, he left the region.

The failure of the FLC merger

Exasperated by the constant infighting in Ituri—for which its own army was largely responsible—the Ugandan government invited all three of the Congolese rebel groups that it supported to talks in Kampala at the end of 2000: Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC, the RCD-K/ML, and Roger Lumbala's *RCD-National* (RCD-N). The result of these deliberations was the merger of all three groups under the banner of the short-lived *Front de libération du Congo* (FLC, Front for the Liberation of Congo) in January 2001.

30 ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', paras. 1031–1036.

31 Usalama Project interview with Richard Lonema, 11 August 2012, Bunia.

32 See HRW, 'Uganda in Eastern DRC', pp. 20–22; Alphonse Maindo Monga Ngonga, '«La républiquette de l'Ituri» en République démocratique du Congo: Un Far West ougandais', *Politique africaine* 89 (2003), p. 190.

As the most successful rebel chief, Bemba—whose troops controlled Equateur Province in the northern DRC—was chosen as FLC leader. Mbusa was given the title Executive Coordinator, while Tibasima became National Secretary in charge of mining. In other words, they ended up with positions almost identical to those that they had when the RCD-K/ML first moved to Bunia. For Mbusa, this proved that the Ugandan government would no longer accept his ‘autonomist spirit’, and he left for exile in South Africa.³³

Lubanga, however, effectively won promotion, becoming FLC deputy National Secretary of youth, sports, and leisure. The UPC was invited to the signing of the FLC accord but not allowed the right to sign, as the MLC and RCD-K/ML wanted to avoid a new competitor. Some months later, the UPC’s office in Bunia was vandalized, its flag burned, and all its documents destroyed. UPC as a party then stopped having official meetings and entered an underground phase.³⁴

The FLC was only a brief interlude in what was becoming an increasingly factionalized conflict. In June 2001, troops loyal to Mbusa, who was scheming from afar, launched an attack against Bemba in Beni, forcing him to flee. Once again, individual Ugandan officers supported Mbusa, undermining the very compromise that their own government had tried to foster.³⁵ Having chased Bemba from Beni, Mbusa now also wanted to force him out of Bunia. To do so, he sought an alliance with Lubanga. Tibasima’s role in these developments is contested; indeed, he soon left Bunia to focus on the peace negotiations in South Africa, eventually obtaining the ministry of urban planning in the transitional government.³⁶

Bemba’s troops retreated from Ituri in November 2001. Around that time, Mbusa named Lubanga as the new RCD-K/ML minister of defence.

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33 Interview with Mbusa Nyamwisi, Kinshasa, 14 July 2011.

34 Usalama Project interview with Daniel Litsha, Bunia, 22 August 2012.

35 *The Monitor* (Kampala), ‘Mayombo Wants UPDF to Quit Congo’, 2 August 2002.

36 Usalama Project Interviewees #3 and #34, Bunia, August 2012.

For UPC co-founder Lonema, this appointment represented the ‘recognition of our strength’—but Mbusa did not want Lubanga to use the UPC label and refused to allow him to formally register as a political party.³⁷ When it became clear that he envisioned Lubanga as a mere figurehead without any real power, their relationship quickly deteriorated. Having benefited from conflicts first within the RCD-K/ML and then within the FLC, Lubanga was now ready to exploit the growing tensions between the RCD-K/ML and the Ugandan government.

From political party to armed movement

While such squabbling among political elites became an important feature of the Ituri conflict, armed violence remained a key tool for them to settle scores and outmanoeuvre rivals. As the major Congolese belligerents entered peace talks in South Africa in 2002, and as the regional rivalry between Rwanda and Uganda intensified, Ituri became caught up in the cross-currents, with deadly effect.

Mbusa was perhaps the most inveterate schemer, demoting Lubanga from his ministerial position and naming Jean-Pierre Molondo Lompondo, an ‘outsider’ from Kasai in the south-western DRC, as the new Governor of Ituri and commander of the APC, the RCD-K/ML’s armed wing. Lompondo was viewed with suspicion by the Hema, who accused him of plotting massacres in Irumu with Lendu self-defence groups.³⁸ Then, in early April, Hema Bishop Léonard Dhejju was forced to resign for supporting Hema militias. When the Catholic Church temporarily appointed a Nande, Janvier Kataka, to replace him, the Hema community rallied protesters against Mbusa.³⁹

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37 Usalama Project interviews with Lonema, 11 August 2012, and Daniel Litsha, 8 August 2012.

38 From April 2002 onwards, Lompondo negotiated with Lendu militias from Walendu Bindi. For further details, see the forthcoming Usalama Project report on the FNI and FRPI.

39 UN Security Council, ‘Special Report on the Events in Ituri’, para. 22.

On 17 April 2002, the situation in Bunia escalated. Lubanga accused Mbusa of selling out Ituri to the Congolese government, planning a Nande takeover of Bunia, and siding with the Lendu in the inter-ethnic conflict. Shortly afterwards, troops loyal to Lubanga staged another mutiny within the APC. They managed to cut Bunia into two parts, with one area controlled by Lubanga, the other by Mbusa.⁴⁰ This stalemate persisted from April to August 2002.

The mutiny marked the return to prominence of the commanders who had been behind the earlier CMF mutiny. Following their training in Kyankwanzi (for new recruits) and Jinja (for officers), most of them had been sent to Equateur Province to join the MLC's armed wing. After some months of fighting for Bemba, the soldiers had grown increasingly frustrated. They knew that fellow Hema were still dying in Ituri's inter-ethnic clashes, and they felt that the MLC used them 'like dogs'.⁴¹ When the FLC fell apart in north-eastern Congo, these soldiers—led by Floribert Kisembo—rebelled in Equateur, demanding to be sent back to Ituri. Bemba gave in and let them return to Bunia, where they rallied to Lubanga's side.⁴²

Meanwhile, the government in Kinshasa began to eye Ituri. In April and May 2001, Mbusa had travelled twice to Angola's capital, Luanda, first to talk to the Angolans, who sided with the Congolese government, then to meet with Joseph Kabila, who had become President of the DRC in January 2001, after the assassination of his father.⁴³ By the time Mbusa's troops attacked Bemba in Beni in June 2001, he had thus

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 40 See ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 1089; Usalama Project Interviewee #51, Kinshasa, August 2012.

41 Usalama Project interview with Floribert Kisembo's former *aide de camp* (ADC), Bunia, 15 August 2012.

42 ICC, ICC-01/04-01/06, 'Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Case of the Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo: Decision on the confirmation of charges (Public Redacted Version with Annex I)', 29 January 2007, para. 173.

43 Usalama Project interview with Mbusa, Kinshasa, July 2011.

already begun switching sides, hoping to become ‘Kinshasa’s man in the north-east’ as the peace process picked up speed.⁴⁴

Lubanga’s declaration on 17 April 2002 came just two days before Mbusa gave his backing to the Sun City Agreement, which opened the way for a transitional government. Furthermore, in mid-2002, President Museveni tried to improve relations with the Congolese government, not least due to Uganda’s increasingly hostile relations with Rwanda. In this context, Mbusa appeared useful as a facilitator between the Ugandan and the Congolese governments.

In June 2002, Uganda invited Lubanga to Kampala for negotiations about the impasse in Bunia. Perhaps in an attempt to demonstrate its good will toward the Congolese government, the Ugandans then surprisingly detained Lubanga as well as several members of his delegation and put them on a plane to Kinshasa.⁴⁵ These arrests would prove to have dire consequences. Suspicious of Uganda’s intentions, Chief Kahwa and Lubanga’s security advisor Richard Beiza had already fled Kampala to go to Kigali, where they asked the Rwandan government for support in their struggle against Mbusa’s troops and the Lendu militias. The Rwandans agreed, seizing the opportunity to gain influence in Ituri, their Ugandan rival’s backyard. Initially without the latter’s knowledge, Rwanda began to supply the mutineers through airdrops to their training centre in Mandro.⁴⁶

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44 Gérard Prunier, ‘The “Ethnic” Conflict in Ituri District: Overlapping of Local and International in Congo-Kinshasa’, in *The Recurring Great Lakes Crisis: Identity, Violence and Power* (eds. Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Richard Banégas) (London: Hurst & Co., 2008), p. 192.

45 Associated Press (AP), ‘In sign of improving relations with Congo, Uganda hands over detained militia leader’, 21 June 2002.

46 See UN Security Council, ‘Special Report on the Events in Ituri’, para. 29; interview with Kahwa cited in HRW, ‘Ituri: “Covered in Blood”’, p. 17. The fact that Rwanda began to support the UPC *before* it took Bunia in August 2002 has been confirmed by Usalama Project interviews with Lonema, 11 August 2012, and Dieudonné Mbuna, 22 August 2012, as well as by Interviewee #7, August 2012 (all three in Bunia).

Ever contradicting themselves, Ugandan troops eventually helped the pro-Lubanga mutineers chase out Governor Lompondo and take control of Bunia on 9 August 2002.⁴⁷ Whether or not it was the UPC that was behind this operation was a contested issue in the Lubanga trial at the ICC, which opened in January 2009. The prosecution argued that Lubanga orchestrated the attack by phone, whereas the defence—highlighting that he was still under house arrest in Kinshasa at the time—suggested that he later simply ‘took political advantage of a rebellion which he did not lead’.⁴⁸ In fact, Lubanga only returned to Bunia at the end of August, arriving with Congolese Human Rights Minister Ntumba Luaba, who wanted to convince Ituri’s traditional leaders to participate in a peace conference. Chief Kahwa seized the opportunity, taking Luaba hostage and exchanging him for Lubanga’s delegates, who were still detained in Kinshasa following their arrest in June.⁴⁹

It is likely that Lubanga continued to manage the mutiny from prison. When he returned, he appointed Floribert Kisembo and Bosco Ntaganda, the architects of the CMF rebellion, to lead the armed wing of the UPC, the *Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo* (FPLC, Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo), a clear sign that the mutineers had been working for Lubanga all along. Having taken control of Bunia, the UPC now turned its sights on the rest of Ituri.

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47 Agence France Presse (AFP), ‘Ugandan troops take control of Bunia, northeastern DR Congo’, 11 August 2002.

48 ICC, ‘Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga’, para. 90, fn. 217.

49 See UN Security Council, ‘Special Report on the Events in Ituri’, p. 58; IRIN, ‘DRC: Human rights minister taken hostage near Bunia’, 30 August 2002, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/34073/>.

3. Six months in power

In its heyday, the UPC was a powerful politico-military movement, far better organized than the Lendu-dominated armed groups that it fought. This period, however, lasted just six months, from September 2002, when it took control of Bunia, to the Ugandan-led attack on the city in March 2003. This chapter analyses the armed groups' political and military organization, and chronicles key events that took place during this period.

While the UPC's political leadership came from several ethnic groups, many of its key supporters had been involved in the creation of Hema self-defence groups in Djugu since June 1999. Moreover, the violence that its troops unleashed after coming to power leaves little doubt that the UPC's actions were driven by what its commanders perceived to be the interests of the Hema community in its struggle against the Lendu and their allies.

Political organization

At the beginning of September 2002, Thomas Lubanga announced the UPC executive, which briefly administered much of Ituri. As UPC members were keen to highlight, the executive included all the main ethnic groups from Ituri. Only six out of 25 national secretaries and assistant national secretaries were Hema (see Appendix 1). The most prominent of them was former governor Adèle Lotsove, who was put in charge of finances. She was later dismissed for embezzling money and replaced by Clément Ondia (a Lugbara from Aru territory). On 10 December 2002, a general reshuffle of the executive took place. The UPC also had a secretary-general; this position was occupied first by Daniel Litsha (Hema), then Faustin Lola Lapi (Logo), and later Victor Ngona (Hema).⁵⁰

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50 Usalama Project interview with Daniel Litsha, 27 August 2012.

While the national secretaries, also referred to as ministers, represented a broad spectrum of ethnic groups, the inner circle of decision makers remained mostly Hema, including Lubanga's chief of staff Dieudonné Mbuna, his private secretary Michel Angaika, and economy minister Lonema.⁵¹ The extent to which Hema businessmen and intellectuals were able to affect the course of the UPC remains somewhat unclear. In any case, it is sometimes argued that the civilian leaders were less influential vis-à-vis Lubanga than the military ones, especially Floribert Kisembo (FPLC chief of staff), Bosco Ntaganda (FPLC deputy chief of staff), and Aimable Rafiki Saba (chief of security), who had all already been involved in the CMF mutiny. While Kisembo was a Hema, Ntaganda and Rafiki were both Congolese Tutsi. Many Hema think of Tutsi as fellow *nilotiques*—a value-laden and historically problematic term—and thus consider them natural allies.⁵²

The UPC's executive has to be largely seen as a multi-ethnic façade: some of the non-Hema executive members were coerced into joining the movement, while some traditional chiefs and administrators from other ethnic groups were killed when their loyalty to the UPC was questioned.⁵³ This included Joseph Eneko, an Alur community leader from Aru whom Lubanga appointed as Governor of Ituri in September, probably to gain wider acceptance for his movement. Eneko delayed his departure in order to reach out to other communities, including Lendu leaders in Kpandroma. The UPC then sent a delegation, led by Floribert Kisembo, to bring Eneko to Bunia. When he instead decided to go to

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51 Like Lonema and Lubanga, Angaika had studied psychology in Kisangani; see his testimony in the Lubanga trial on 7 April 2011: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc1053174.pdf>.

52 Usalama Project Interviewees #34, #39, #50, #52, and #53, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012.

53 Usalama Project Interviewee #20, Bunia, August 2012; HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', p. 21.

Mahagi first, he was assassinated in a plot widely considered to have been organized by the UPC.⁵⁴

Overall, the UPC's political organization failed to match its military strength. Ministers did not receive regular salaries, receiving arbitrary sums from Lubanga now and then, and some abused their offices to make a living, leading to internal conflicts within the executive. In addition, some ministers received financial support from wealthy Hema businessmen.⁵⁵ This is one of the reasons why it is sometimes argued that the Hema business community was the real force behind the UPC.⁵⁶

Military organization

The UPC's armed wing, the FPLC, was formally created in September 2002, with a structure much like that of a conventional army. At its height, it controlled large parts of four of Ituri's five territories. Led by Kisembo and his deputy Ntaganda, it had a general headquarters and three sectors, which were organized hierarchically down to the team level.⁵⁷

While the exact geographical areas assigned to the three sectors varied slightly from one account to another, one sector was broadly responsible for the Aru and Mahagi territories, led by Jérôme Kakwavu, and a second for Djugu territory, led by Salongo (aka 'Tiger One'). Both leaders are Congolese Tutsi. The third sector covered Irumu territory and was commanded first by Bagonza and then, following the latter's death, by Alex Munyalizi (both Hema).⁵⁸ Especially in Djugu and Irumu, there

54 HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', pp. 38–39; UN Security Council, 'Special Report on the Events in Ituri', paras. 121–127.

55 Usalama Project Interviewees #20, #35, and #50, Bunia, August 2012.

56 Usalama Project Interviewees #6, #20, and #58, Bunia, August–September 2012.

57 Usalama Project interview with Kisembo's former ADC, Bunia, 15 August 2012; see also ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', paras. 1177–1190.

58 Usalama Project Interviewees #11, #43, and #52, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012. However, according to Anneke Van Woudenberg (senior HRW researcher), Kakwavu himself denied in an interview that he was a formal member of the FPLC; email communication, 22 January 2013.

were several areas that remained under the control of Lendu militias; some of them were heavily contested during this period. In Ituri's fifth territory, Mambasa, the MLC and RCD-N fought against APC units that were still under Lompondo and Mbusa's control.⁵⁹

The FPLC had at least three training camps in this period: Mandro (the main centre), Bule, and Rwampara.⁶⁰ Other towns named as training centres by former UPC members and supporters include Blukwa, Dhego, and Tchomia.⁶¹

The question of whether the UPC had a cohesive command structure became crucial during the ICC proceedings. In its judgment of Thomas Lubanga, the ICC describes his role in overseeing FPLC recruitment and operations:

Thomas Lubanga was the President of the UPC/FPLC, and the evidence demonstrates that he was simultaneously the Commander-in-Chief of the army and its political leader. He exercised an overall coordinating role over the activities of the UPC/FPLC. He was informed, on a substantive and continuous basis, of the operations of the FPLC. He was involved in planning military operations, and he played a critical role in providing logistical support, including as regards weapons, ammunition, food, uniforms, military rations and other general supplies for the FPLC troops. He was closely involved in making decisions on recruitment policy and he actively supported recruitment initiatives, for instance by giving speeches to the local population and the recruits.⁶²

59 See HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', pp. 21 and 36–38.

60 Usalama Project Interviewee #52, Kinshasa, August 2012; ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 41.

61 Usalama Project Interviewees #20, #60, #61, #62, and #63, Bunia, August–September 2012.

62 ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 1356.

Given that Hema self-defence groups already existed across Djugu and Irumu when the UPC came to power in Bunia, there has been much disagreement about whether attacks against Lendu militias after September 2002 were directed by the UPC/FPLC or by local Hema groups operating autonomously. While some self-defence groups were integrated into the UPC's armed wing, the ICC found that others in fact 'remained independent of the FPLC'.⁶³ The judges' assessment was in part based on a UPC security report from February 2003 that referred to instructions from October 2002 and January 2003 asking FPLC commanders to demobilize these groups.⁶⁴

A former UPC intelligence officer suggested that some of these groups refused to join the FPLC because they did not want to be stationed away from their villages. Although they were a good source of information, it was not always easy to work with them, he explained, comparing them to Mai-Mai self-defence militias in the Kivus.

Due to the complex relations with Hema self-defence groups, it is difficult to ascertain the FPLC's exact numerical strength. Kisembo's former assistant suggested that the troops that seized Bunia in August 2002 already numbered 18,000. In an interview from February 2003, Lubanga claimed to preside over 15,000 soldiers. Finally, the former intelligence officer estimated that the FPLC had around 20–23,000 fighters before it began to splinter in March 2003.⁶⁵ In contrast, estimates from the UN-assisted disarmament programme suggest that the three groups into which the UPC fragmented had together only around 10,500 troops, which appears to be a much more realistic figure.⁶⁶

63 ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 906.

64 See ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', paras. 903–904.

65 Usalama Project interview with Kisembo's former ADC, Bunia, 15 August 2012; Lubanga cited in HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', p. 46; Usalama Project Interviewee #52, Kinshasa, August 2012.

66 Tsjeard Bouta, 'Assessment of the Ituri Disarmament and Community Reinsertion Program (DCR)', May 2005, p. 13; http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050500_cru_other_bouta.pdf.

Escalating violence and new alliances

Between July 2002 and March 2003, violence escalated dramatically, with at least 5,000 civilians killed in Ituri as competition between regional actors and local armed groups intensified, fuelling a downward spiral of vicious propaganda and reciprocal massacres.⁶⁷ Even before Lubanga announced the new government, the troops who had taken control of Bunia launched attacks on Lendu villages. On 31 August, Commander Bagonza was allegedly in charge of a massacre in Songolo, in which he was reportedly assisted by ethnic Bira: estimates put the fatalities between 140 and 787 people. In response, Lendu militiamen led by Colonel Kandro and APC soldiers led by a certain Major Faustin attacked what were considered UPC troops in Nyankunde on 5 September. Over a period of ten days, an estimated 2–3,000 Hema and Bira civilians were systematically slaughtered.⁶⁸

These two massacres were harbingers of things to come. Around that time, Mbusa's RCD-K/ML and the Congolese army together set up the *État-Major Opérationnel Intégré* (EMOI, Integrated Operational Headquarters) in Beni. The EMOI began to send assault rifles and other supplies by air to Lendu militias in Irumu territory, who up to then had often relied on crude weapons. In other words, Mbusa provided the Kinshasa government with an entry point into the north-eastern DRC, by then still largely under the control of armed groups allied to Rwanda or Uganda. This proxy war fuelled Ituri's inter-ethnic violence even further.⁶⁹

After taking control of Bunia in August, the UPC also began to plan an attack on Mongbwalu, an important gold mining town in Djugu that was still held by APC and Lendu militias. Human Rights Watch reports that even 'before a shot was fired, UPC President Lubanga asked the then general director of OKIMO, Etienne Kiza Ingani, who was himself Hema,

67 This paragraph draws from HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', pp. 1, 22–3, and 30–35.

68 Email communication with Anneke van Woudenberg (senior HRW researcher), 22 January 2013.

69 Usalama Project interviews, Bunia, August 2012.

to prepare a memo on how mining operations could be managed under UPC control'.⁷⁰ It was the battle for Mongbwalu that convinced APC commander Jérôme Kakwavu to join forces with the UPC, an important milestone for the group. At the time, Kakwavu was in charge of the gold mining region of Durba (Haut-Uélé) but had been forced to retreat to Aru territory due to attacks from the MLC and RCD-N. In a six-day battle from 18 to 24 November, Mongbwalu finally fell into the UPC's hands.

In the case of Mongbwalu, it was only Rwandan—and not Ugandan—troops who helped the UPC.⁷¹ A former UPC member believed that the Ugandans had in fact already been made aware of the UPC's links to Rwanda in August and had only helped the UPC take Bunia in order to 'infiltrate' them and learn more about Rwanda's exact role.⁷² While it is unclear when precisely the Ugandans found out about these links, Ugandan newspapers reported rumours about still more links between the UPC and the anti-Museveni People's Redemption Army (PRA)—led, among others, by former UPDF sector commander Kyakabale—as early as mid-October 2002.⁷³

Lubanga did in fact help the Rwandan government provide weapons to the PRA, which was based in Lendu-controlled Kpandroma.⁷⁴ On the other hand, more than 100 UPC fighters received training in Rwanda between September and December 2002, especially in how to handle the heavy weaponry provided by Rwanda to the UPC.⁷⁵ On 6 January 2003, the UPC made this alliance official by signing a formal agreement with the Rwandan-backed RCD-Goma, which in contrast to the UPC was party to the national peace negotiations.

70 HRW, 'The Curse of Gold', p. 24.

71 HRW, 'The Curse of Gold', pp. 25–27.

72 Usalama Project Interviewee #60, Bunia, September 2012.

73 *New Vision*, 'UPDF deploys in Ituri', 21 October 2002.

74 Usalama Project Interviewees #7 and #54, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012; UN Security Council, 'Special Report on the Events in Ituri', para. 29.

75 Usalama Project Interviewee #7, Bunia, August 2012; HRW, 'The Curse of Gold', p. 24; ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 554.

The new partners ‘stressed the urgency and necessity of integrating’ the UPC in the Global and Inclusive Agreement that concluded the Congolese peace process.⁷⁶ According to one analysis, this agreement demonstrated that ‘Kampala, after years of manipulating the local ethno-political situation [in Ituri], had finally lost control of its proxies’.⁷⁷ As the next chapter will show, the Ugandans nonetheless soon found a way to force the UPC out of Bunia, thus ending its six months in power.

76 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ‘DR Congo: Goma, Bunia rebels sign alliance agreement’ (quoting RNA, the Rwandan News Agency in Kigali), 7 January 2003.

77 Prunier, ‘The “Ethnic” Conflict in Ituri District’, p. 198.

4. Things fall apart

Between March and December 2003, the UPC fragmented twice. First it broke up into three groups: the UPC, the *Parti pour l'unité et la sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo* (PUSIC, Party for Unity and Safeguarding of the Integrity of the Congo), and the *Forces armées du peuple congolais* (FAPC, Armed Forces of the Congolese People). Then the remainder of the UPC further split into two wings, one led by Lubanga, the other by Floribert Kisembo. During the same period, the group also lost control over Bunia twice—first temporarily in March, then permanently in June when a French-led multinational intervention force was deployed in the city. This chapter analyses the developments that led to the end of the UPC reign in Ituri, highlighting how the Congolese and the Ugandan government exploited tensions within the UPC to break it apart.

Fragmentation and the struggle for Bunia

Divisions within the UPC emerged in late 2002. In early December, deputy Minister of Defence Chief Kahwa fled to Kampala. He had become disillusioned by the fact that the Rwandans, while supporting the UPC, were indirectly cooperating with Lendu groups by supporting the PRA in Kpandroma. Former UPC members also suggest that Kahwa thought he deserved a more important position within the movement, given that he had secured Rwandan backing and that the UPC's main power base, Mandro, was in his chieftaincy. When he proposed to negotiate with the government in Kinshasa, some UPC elements reportedly plotted his assassination.⁷⁸

Ugandan President Museveni seized the opportunity, inviting Kahwa to Kampala. On 6 September 2002, Museveni and his Congolese counterpart, Joseph Kabila, had signed the Luanda Agreement, in which the two

78 Usalama Project Interviewees #7, #34, #50, and #54, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012. See also the interview with Kahwa cited in HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', p. 17.

governments agreed to put in place, with UN assistance, an Ituri Pacification Commission (IPC). Uganda also agreed to withdraw its troops from Bunia within 80 days of the inauguration of the IPC.⁷⁹ In this new context, Museveni facilitated contacts between Kahwa and Kabila, which led to the idea of creating a new armed group in order to weaken the UPC. The PUSIC, led by Kahwa, first existed only on paper.

In late 2002 and early 2003, the Ugandans organized negotiations among all of Ituri's armed groups. When the UPC refused to sign any agreement with Lendu groups, Uganda helped create the *Front pour l'intégration et la paix en Ituri* (FIPI, Front for Integration and Peace in Ituri), an alliance that brought together Kahwa's PUSIC, the Lendu-dominated *Front des nationalistes intégrationnistes* (FNI, Front of Integrationist Nationalists) and *Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri* (FRPI, Ituri Patriotic Resistance Force) as well as the *Force populaire pour la démocratie du Congo* (FPDC, Popular Force for Democracy in the Congo), which was launched by Alur and Lugbara from Aru and Mahagi in late 2002.⁸⁰ At the same time, the UPC concluded its alliance with the RCD-Goma. These deals thus paved the way for more regional conflict, now pitting the UPC, supported by Kigali, against various armed groups assisted by both Kampala and Kinshasa.

In January and February 2003, tensions were high in Bunia. Ugandan army officials openly threatened the UPC, while Lubanga accused the UPDF of reigniting the Hema-Lendu conflict.⁸¹ On 4 March, Uganda convinced—or perhaps forced—Kakwavu to break away from the UPC and create his own armed group, the FAPC, in Aru and Mahagi. Not only did the UPC lose an entire sector and most of the troops under

79 Luanda Agreement, Luanda, 6 September 2002: http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/drc_uganda_09062002.pdf.

80 *The Monitor*, 'Hema, Lendu peace deal flops in Arua', 1 January 2003; HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', pp. 15–17. On the evolution of these and other relevant groups, see Appendix 2.

81 *New Vision*, 'UPDF on high alert in Bunia', 30 January 2002; *The East African* (Nairobi), 'Fears of war in Bunia town', 17 February 2003.

Kakwavu's command that day but its stronghold in Mandro also suffered an attack by Lendu militias.⁸² Two days later, the UPDF attacked the UPC in Bunia, forcing them to retreat to the countryside. Rwanda evacuated Lubanga and others to Kigali.⁸³ The same alliances that had made the UPC such a formidable force now proved their undoing.

The FIPI had effectively ceased to exist shortly after its creation, not least due to the Lendu attack on Bogoro on 24 February 2003, for which FRPI leader Germain Katanga is currently still on trial at the ICC. Nonetheless, Chief Kahwa helped the Ugandans defeat the UPC during the struggle for Bunia on 6 March by calling troops loyal to him—mostly those from his own Bahema Banywagi and Kisembo Bitamara's Bahema Sud communities—and telling them not to join the fighting. It was on this day that the PUSIC turned from a paper tiger into an actual armed group, with Kahwa as president and Bitamara as spokesman, as these troops split off from the UPC and remained in Bunia. The FNI and FRPI also supported the Ugandan takeover.⁸⁴

On 18 March, a ceasefire was signed by the DRC, Uganda, and Ituri's armed groups, with the notable exception of the UPC. The UN mission MONUC (*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo*, UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) then helped bring together 177 delegates representing all the main ethnic groups to set up the IPC, which in turn established an interim administration. Shortly afterwards, on 25 April, the Ugandan army began to withdraw its troops. To replace them, MONUC sent in 720 Uruguayan peacekeepers to secure the airport and protect UN personnel and facilities, as well as the IPC meeting sites. The Uruguayans were faced with

82 Usalama Project Interviewee #7, Bunia, August 2012; UN Security Council, 'Special Report on the Events in Ituri', paras. 71–72 and p. 70. On the FAPC's subsequent history, see Kristof Titeca, 'Access to Resources and Predictability in Armed Rebellion: The FAPC's Short-lived "Monaco" in Eastern Congo', *Africa Spectrum* 62/2 (2011), pp. 43–70.

83 See ICC, 'Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga', para. 554.

84 Usalama Project Interviewees #7, #30, #50, and #54, Bunia and Kinshasa, August 2012.

a chaotic situation, as the UPDF's withdrawal, completed by 6 May, led to heavy clashes in Bunia among Ituri's armed groups.⁸⁵

In the meantime, the UPC's troops regrouped and—with PUSIC support—retook Bunia on 12 May. According to former PUSIC members, this renewed changing of sides came about when they realized that they could not contain the massacres perpetrated by Lendu militias in Bunia. Prior to the attack, Rwanda had supplied the UPC with weapons and brought back Lubanga and Ntaganda from Kigali. Rwanda reportedly told the UPC that, in order to improve their bargaining position, they had to take back Bunia before the arrival of additional peacekeeping contingents.⁸⁶

During the fighting for Bunia, thousands of civilians sought shelter near MONUC's headquarters and thousands more fled the city. These events, coupled with reports about other massacres in Djugu and Irumu territories, finally propelled the international community into more forceful action. On 6 June, the UN-authorized and French-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) began to deploy in Bunia. It swiftly took over control of the city, on a few occasions clashing with both Hema and Lendu groups. However, given the IEMF mandate, which was limited to Bunia, violence continued in Ituri's countryside.⁸⁷

By the time the IEMF left in mid-September, MONUC had deployed 2,400 soldiers to Bunia. This number increased steadily in the following months and MONUC also began to deploy outside the city. It thus became clear that taking Bunia was now out of reach for any of Ituri's armed groups. While fighting continued across Ituri, the groups' leaders

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85 See UN Security Council S/2003/566, 'Second special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', 27 May 2003, paras. 13–16.

86 Usalama Project interviews; *New Vision*, 'Hema retake Bunia', 13 May 2003.

87 UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit (Military Division), 'Operation Artemis: The Lessons of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force' October 2004: <http://pbpu.unlb.org/PBPS/Library/Artemis.pdf>.

began to negotiate with MONUC and the Congolese government. It was in this new context that the UPC would disintegrate even further.

Split into two: Lubanga versus Kisembo

In August 2003, the leaders of Ituri's armed groups arrived in Kinshasa for negotiations. They signed a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to work with the new transitional government in Kinshasa, even though none of them was represented there. They also pledged to cease hostilities in Ituri and to bring an end to uncontrolled groups that continued to commit massacres.

The UPC's fragmentation, however, continued. Lubanga's own army chief of staff, Floribert Kisembo, staged a coup in December 2003, splitting the group into two factions: UPC-Lubanga (UPC-L) and UPC-Kisembo (UPC-K). While most of the other Ituri leaders had gone back after the talks, Lubanga had stayed in Kinshasa, hoping to use his contacts with the RCD-G to establish himself as a national politician. From October onwards, he had no choice but to stay, as the transitional government effectively kept him under house arrest in Kinshasa's Grand Hotel.⁸⁸

In the meantime, MONUC exerted pressure on the UPC's military leadership in Ituri to disarm or be integrated into the new Congolese army, the FARDC. In September, Kisembo, Rafiki, and others were briefly put under house arrest in Bunia. On 9 November, MONUC arrested Rafiki, who was accused of being responsible for many of the UPC's human rights abuses.⁸⁹

Several people interviewed for this report highlighted the role of Dominique MacAdams, Head of MONUC's Bunia office, in pushing Kisembo to defect. It was also suggested that Kinshasa promised Kisembo that he would not be prosecuted for his involvement in abuses

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88 HRW, 'The Curse of Gold', p. 36; internal MONUC documents, on file with the Usalama Project.

89 See UN Security Council, 'Special Report on the Events in Ituri', p. 62; internal MONUC document, June 2005, on file with the Usalama Project.

if he were to defect from the UPC. In addition, there was a leadership conflict between Lubanga and Kisémbó. According to people close to him, Kisémbó wanted to disarm the FPLC and integrate it into the army. He was also open to removing Congolese Tutsi—such as Bosco Ntaganda and Innocent ‘India Queen’ Kaina—from its ranks, which the international community allegedly demanded, likely due to concerns that they were cooperating with Rwanda. Lubanga disagreed on both issues.⁹⁰

When Kisémbó defected, Lubanga promoted Ntaganda to the position of chief of staff of the UPC-L’s armed wing. The troops that remained loyal to Kisémbó went to areas controlled by Chief Kahwa’s PUSIC, waiting for negotiations with the Congolese government and their integration into the army.⁹¹ Estimates of the UPC-K’s strength differed widely, ranging from 500 to 4,500.⁹² In early 2005, Kisémbó was eventually appointed a general in the FARDC and most of his combatants were integrated. Ntaganda’s rebellion on behalf of Lubanga, however, continued.

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90 Usalama Project Interviewees #16, #29, #43, #52, and #70, Bunia and Kinshasa, August–October 2012.

91 Usalama Project Interviewee #70, Bunia, October 2012.

92 The higher estimate comes from the Usalama Project interview with Kisémbó’s former ADC, Bunia, 15 August 2012; the lower estimate from ICG, ‘Maintaining Momentum in the Congo: The Ituri Problem’, 26 August 2004, p. 9, fn. 51.

5. Political transformation and armed resistance

On 12 November 2003, the UPC passed a new statute, in which its constituent assembly approved ‘the conversion of our politico-military movement ... into a political party’. Indicative of the UPC’s attempts to portray itself as a national party, neither the statute’s preamble nor its objectives refer specifically to Ituri.⁹³

On the military front, however, Ntaganda continued to recruit and train new fighters for the UPC-L’s armed wing. Several times, his troops attacked UN soldiers. Nonetheless, in May 2004, Lubanga as well as representatives from the UPC-K, FAPC, PUSIC, FNI, FRPI, and FPDC signed a peace deal with the transitional government in Kinshasa, agreeing to cease hostilities and to support the UN-led Disarmament and Community Reinsertion (DCR) programme for Ituri. At the same time, the UPC-L continued to demand ministerial positions in the transitional government. While the Congolese authorities made it clear that this would not happen, Lubanga’s UPC became the first of Ituri’s groups to be officially recognized as political party—most likely ‘to placate him, at least temporarily’, according to the International Crisis Group.⁹⁴

Continued fighting, arrests, and the birth of the MRC

Despite the agreement, most of Ituri’s armed groups kept fighting both each other, as well as the FARDC and MONUC. In fact, as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported at the end of 2004, the security situation ‘deteriorated sharply’ after the start of the DCR programme in September.⁹⁵

93 Copy of the statute, on file with the Usalama Project (author’s translation).

94 ICG, ‘Maintaining Momentum’, p. 9, fn. 49, and 10–11.

95 UN Security Council S/2004/1034, ‘Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’, 31 December 2004, para. 11.

During that period, the dynamics of violence in Ituri began to shift from an inter-ethnic conflict to one that pitted MONUC and the Congolese army against groups resisting disarmament, fighting for continued control over key mining areas and trading routes, and increasingly preying on their own communities. Former enemies began to cooperate, some of them reportedly still receiving supplies from Rwanda and Uganda. At the time, the UPC-L's strength was estimated at around 3,000 fighters.⁹⁶

The killing of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in an ambush near Kafe (Djugu) on 25 February 2005 reinforced this shift of the conflict. At the beginning of that year, MONUC had begun to implement a more robust approach in Ituri, attacking armed groups and cutting off their supply routes.⁹⁷ In response to the Kafe ambush, MONUC chief William Swing issued an ultimatum to all of Ituri's armed groups. Once it had passed, he exerted pressure on the transitional government to issue arrest warrants for the leaders of the groups. Between March and April, many of them were arrested, including Lubanga in Kinshasa and Chief Kahwa in Ituri. After Lubanga's arrest, UPC interim president Bede Djokaba Lambi and secretary-general John Tinanzabo were also temporarily jailed. Lubanga was then transferred to the ICC on 16 March 2006, whereas Chief Kahwa remains in prison in Kinshasa.⁹⁸

This new, aggressive approach spurred the creation of an alliance that brought together many—but not all—of Ituri's remaining rebel leaders: the *Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais* (MRC, Congolese Revolutionary Movement). According to Lubanga's former chief of staff Dieudonné Mbuna, the MRC was conceived by former RCD-K/ML commander Frank Kakolele Bwambale, an ethnic Nande.⁹⁹ Kakolele spent some time

96 See ICG, 'Maintaining Momentum', pp. 8–9; Fahey, 'Rethinking the Resource Curse', chapter 6.

97 Dan Fahey, 'How Ituri was Won: MONUC in DR Congo's Ituri District, 2000–2007' (unpublished manuscript), April 2012.

98 ICG, 'Congo: Four Priorities for a Sustainable Peace in Ituri', 13 May 2008, p. 31.

99 Usalama Project interview with Mbuna, Bunia, 22 August 2012.

in Makala prison, where he was in contact with FNI leader Mathieu Ngudjolo, who was detained there between September 2004 and March 2005. Kakolele, Ngudjolo, Mbuna, and several FNI, FRPI, PUSIC, and UPC combatants met in Jinja (Uganda) in June 2005, where the MRC was officially created.¹⁰⁰ Given the fluidity of this alliance, its exact composition is somewhat contested.

Ngudjolo became the MRC president and military commander, whereas Mbuna was named secretary-general, in charge of representing the movement on the political stage. Mbuna claims that Ntaganda refused to join the MRC, since he disagreed with the movement's objective to be integrated into the Congolese army if the government agreed to award its combatants the ranks that they believed to deserve.¹⁰¹ In late 2005, Ntaganda eventually left Ituri to join Laurent Nkunda's *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP, National Congress for the Defence of the people) in North Kivu.¹⁰²

Heavy fighting in Ituri continued throughout much of 2005 and 2006. In mid-2006, however, MONUC began to intensify its attempts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict. In November, it facilitated three separate peace deals between the Congolese army and the FNI, FRPI, and MRC. Negotiations about the specifics of their integration into the FARDC continued for another year, but in November 2007 their three main leaders—Peter 'Karim' Udaga, Cobra Matata, and Mathieu Ngudjolo (all Lendu)—finally boarded a plane at Bunia airport that took them to Kinshasa.¹⁰³

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100 According to other versions, they first met in North Kivu or Kigali, where Laurent Nkunda convinced them to join forces; ICG, 'Congo: Four Priorities', p. 32, fn. 170; Usalama Project Interviewees #70 and #71, Bunia, October 2012.

101 Usalama Project interview with Mbuna, Bunia, 22 August 2012.

102 Jason Stearns, *From CNDP to M23: The Evolution of an Armed Group in Eastern Congo* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2012), p. 26.

103 See Dan Fahey, 'How Ituri was Won'.

Violent legacies

While the UPC effectively ceased to exist as an armed group with the creation of the MRC in June 2005, and Ntaganda's departure to North Kivu at the end of that year, some of its former combatants continued their fight even after the conclusion of the peace deals in November 2007. The main Hema commander who chose not to integrate into the FARDC was Jean-Claude Baraka. In 2008, he reappeared as one of the leaders of the *Front Populaire pour la Justice au Congo* (FPJC, Popular Front for Justice in the Congo), a group that included FNI, FRPI, PUSIC, and UPC remnants. Like most of the FPJC's leadership, however, Baraka was arrested in 2010.¹⁰⁴

In May 2012, other former UPC combatants re-emerged as members of the *Coalition des groupes armés de l'Ituri* (COGAI, Coalition of Ituri's Armed Groups), an attempt to unite several smaller militias with the mostly Ngiti FRPI of Cobra Matata, who had defected from the army and returned to Ituri in mid-2010. According to a COGAI representative, the idea of the coalition was born when Charité Semire and other Hema heard rumours that Cobra had been asked to form an alliance with the M23, which is based in North Kivu. Afraid that Cobra would then grow powerful enough to threaten their villages, they decided to act swiftly and proposed to Cobra that he become the head of the new coalition, which he accepted.¹⁰⁵

However, COGAI never gained any real momentum. It began to recruit former UPC combatants in Djugu but failed to obtain broader support from the Hema community there. As a result of this failure, several COGAI members launched another group in August: the *Mouvement de Résistance Populaire au Congo* (MRPC, Popular Resistance Movement in the Congo). When the Congolese army dislodged the MRPC from

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104 Usalama Project Interviewees #8 and #70, Bunia, August–October 2012. See also the UN Group of Experts reports, 2008-11: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1533/egroup.shtml>.

105 Usalama Project Interviewee #17, August 2012, Bunia.

Djugu and arrested two of its leaders one month later, the movement split into at least two factions—one opposed, the other very close to the M23. The pro-M23 faction is led by army defectors Papy Maki and John Bebwa, both former officers in the UPC’s armed wing. According to the latest report of the UN Group of Experts, this faction is in contact with Ntaganda, Kaina, and Rafiki, who are now all with the M23.¹⁰⁶ The MRPC also received support from members of the Savo family, influential Hema landowners who had previously been key to the creation of self-defence groups in 1999.

Despite these links to former UPC military leaders and supporters, the MRPC to date remains a minor force, limited to the border area between Irumu and North Kivu, and neither COGAI nor the MRPC should be seen as direct successors of the UPC.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, its legacy clearly continues to play a role in the destabilization of the district.

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106 See UN Security Council S/2012/843, ‘Final report of the Group of Experts on the DRC submitted in accordance with paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2021’, 15 November 2012, paras. 82–88.

107 Usalama Project Interviewees #71 and #72, Bunia, December 2012.

6. Analysis and conclusions

The UPC still exists as a political party. In the 2011 national elections, it managed to win two of the 12 seats for Djugu and Irumu territories. Compared to the national role that the group demanded at the peak of its power in 2002, however, it has fallen far short. What are the factors that explain how a political party described by some of its early members as merely a discussion group could turn into one of the most powerful politico-military movements in the region's recent past, only then to fall as rapidly as it had risen?¹⁰⁸ And why did the Hema community as a whole largely demobilize in the end?

The history of the UPC is characterized by a complex interplay of local, national, and international factors. There is no doubt that the UPC would not have risen in such a dramatic fashion had it not received external support from Uganda and Rwanda. Yet it would be a grave mistake to conceive of it merely—or even primarily—as a foreign creation. It was Lubanga's skilful exploitation of opportunities that catapulted him into Ituri's political centre. At the same time, the fact that the former CMF mutineers seized Bunia in his absence illustrates that the UPC's deeper source of power did not just lie in Lubanga's political skills but in the support provided by the ethnic group that was socio-economically the most powerful in Ituri: the Hema.

It is this support that also explains why the UPC, at least in its heyday, was much more coherent and organized than the various Lendu armed groups. Due to the history of ethnic inequality in Ituri, there were few Lendu leaders in Bunia that were in a position to forge alliances with the Ugandans, as Lotsove and Tibasima did, or manipulate tensions within and between other armed groups, like Lubanga. Perhaps more importantly, there was no Lendu business community with the same clout

¹⁰⁸ Usalama Project interview with Daniel Litsha, Bunia, 8 August 2012; Interviewee #19, Bunia, August 2012.

and connections that the Savo family and other major Hema business people had.¹⁰⁹

The UPC was born in a highly militarized and exceptionally violent environment, for which the Ugandan army was partly responsible by its arming of Hema self-defence groups. While many of the Hema farm owners that started these groups were supporters of the UPC, there were no official organizational links, and it is difficult to obtain information on the degree of influence these supporters had on the UPC's actions. What is clear is that the self-defence groups and the UPC were united by a virulent anti-Lendu discourse propagated by Hema university professors as well as other intellectuals, which fuelled the inter-ethnic violence.¹¹⁰ The intensity and magnitude of this violence was one of the factors that led to the UPC's downfall by provoking a humanitarian intervention in the form of the IEMF in June 2003.

The other, more important factor was the UPC's dangerous game of alliances that initially provided crucial external support but soon embroiled it in a Rwandan-Ugandan proxy war. The decision to seek Rwandan support was grounded in the perception that Uganda, by arming both sides, had played a nefarious role in the Hema-Lendu violence. Betraying the occupation force, however, proved to be a strategic mistake. Together with the Congolese government, Uganda responded by dealing a critical blow to the UPC. While it may have absorbed the loss of Jérôme Kakwavu, the UPC never recovered from the fact that Kinshasa and Kampala managed to divide its three most powerful Hema leaders—Lubanga, Chief Kahwa, and later Floribert Kisembo. In other words, it was the external exploitation of internal rivalries that contributed to the UPC's demise.

The heavy military pressure that the FARDC and MONUC began to put on remaining armed groups in 2005 changed the equation in Ituri.

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109 Alex Veit, *Intervention as Indirect Rule: Civil War and Statebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010), pp. 126–128.

110 HRW, 'Ituri: "Covered in Blood"', p 18.

At the same time, the international community also exerted pressure on Rwanda and Uganda to stop meddling in the region. Demobilization now seemed the most sensible option to large parts of the Hema community, especially once the threat from Lendu militias started to diminish. In this period, local self-defence groups initially focused on the more limited objective of protecting their farms. Under increasing pressure, they then officially demobilized, although most farmers are rumoured to have kept stocks of weapons for self-protection.

The notion that peace is better for business thus slowly but surely gained traction. Hema leaders today refer to this idea when explaining why the majority of their community is opposed to renewed conflict: not only have many Hema businessmen switched from cattle herding to investments in hotels and other buildings, they have also effectively retained their socio-economically dominant position.

While the wounds from inter-ethnic violence remain far from healed, the most pressing issue today is the government's lack of legitimacy. Across ethnic groups, Iturians are united by an immense frustration with Kinshasa. Even if the government were able to negotiate the reintegration of the FRPI and other groups into the FARDC, which currently seems improbable, long-term stability would likely remain elusive.¹¹¹ If there is any lesson to be drawn from the fitful and incomplete pacification of Ituri, it is perhaps that robust international intervention can tilt the balance in favour of peace, but that it is eventually up to the government to reap the dividends.

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111 Henning Tamm, 'Coalitions and Defections in a Context of Uncertainty – A Report from Ituri', 24 and 27 August 2012, <http://congosiasa.blogspot.com/search?q=Ituri>.

Appendix 1: UPC executive in September 2002

President and Commander-in-Chief: Thomas Lubanga (Hema)

NATIONAL SECRETARIES

Interior (and coordinator of the executive): Jéconie Djalum (Alur)

Finance and budget: Adèle Lotsove (Hema)

Justice: Placide Cibengabo (Luba)

Foreign affairs: Prof. Jean-Baptiste Dhetchuvi (Hema)

Economy, commerce, and industry: Richard Lonema (Hema)

Portfolio: Mateso Tsoz (Lendu)

Environment, agriculture, and rural development: Aliegera Kwonke (Hema)

Energy: Faustin Lola Lapi (Logo)

Health: Dr. Jacques Sezabo (Bira)

Pacification and reconciliation: John Tinanzabo (Bira)

Communication and media: Jacques Nobirabo (Bira)

Real estate, town planning, and housing: César Chuma (Ndo-Okebo)

Education, youth, and sports: Adubango Biri (Alur)

Transport: Denis Akobi (Ngiti)

Post, telephone, and telecommunications: Madame Mbula (Luba)

Culture and tourism: Amboko Bebetu (Budu)

Public service, labour, and social insurance: Shatchu Lilo (Lendu)

Social affairs: Melanie Lumbulumbu (Nande)

ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARIES

Interior: Bede Djokaba Lambi (Bisa)

Defence: Yves Kahwa (Hema)

Justice: Maître Pele Kaswara (Hema)

Environment, agriculture, and rural development: Combe Ngabu (Bisa)

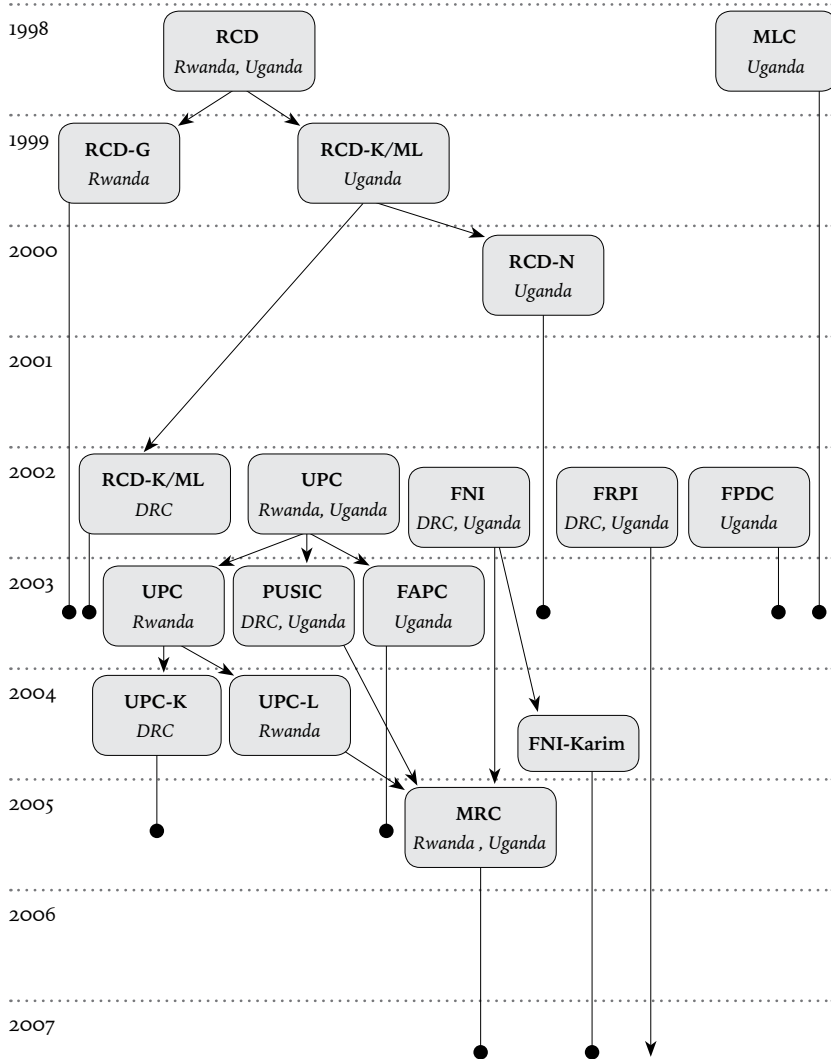
Communication and media: Mbomo Saga (Boa)

Education, youth, and sports: Ali Fundi Mana (Lokele)

Transport: Willy Itendey (Nyali)

Appendix 2: Evolution of Congolese armed groups linked to Ituri, 1998–2007

(supporters in italics)



Glossary of acronyms, words, and phrases

ADC	<i>aide de camp</i> (q.v.)
<i>aide de camp</i>	Military assistant
APC	<i>Armée populaire congolaise</i> /Popular Congolese Army
<i>autodéfense</i>	self-defence
<i>chefferie</i>	chiefdom; the largest customary structure of government
<i>chui</i>	leopard (Kiswahili)
CMF	Chui Mobile Force
CNDP	<i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i> /National Congress for the Defence of the People
COGAI	<i>Coalition des groupes armés de l'Ituri</i> /Coalition of Ituri's Armed Groups
DCR	Disarmament and Community Reinsertion
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EMOI	<i>État-Major Opérationnel Intégré</i> /Integrated Operational Headquarters
FAPC	<i>Forces armées du peuple congolais</i> /People's Armed Forces of Congo
FARDC	<i>Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo</i> /Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FIPI	<i>Front pour l'intégration et paix en Ituri</i> /Front for Integration and Peace in Ituri
FLC	<i>Front de libération du Congo</i> /Front for the Liberation of Congo
FNI	<i>Front des nationalistes intégrationnistes</i> /Front of Integrationist Nationalists
FPDC	<i>Force populaire pour la démocratie du Congo</i> /Popular Force for Democracy in Congo
FPJC	<i>Front populaire pour la justice au Congo</i> /Popular Front for Justice in the Congo
FPLC	<i>Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo</i> /Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo

FRPI	<i>Force de résistance patriotique d'Ituri/Ituri</i> Patriotic Resistance Force
Hema	Traditionally pastoralists. Northern Hema or Gegere adopted Lendu (q.v.) lifestyles and language, while the southern Hema assimilated less
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
IEMF	Interim Emergency Multinational Force
IPC	Ituri Pacification Commission
Lendu	Traditionally farmers, later acquired livestock from Hema (q.v.) pastoralists who moved into Lendu territory
<i>Mai-Mai</i>	community-based self-defence militias; from <i>maji</i> , 'water' (Kiswahili)
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of Congo
MONUC	<i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo</i> (UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
MRPC	<i>Mouvement de résistance populaire au Congo</i> /Popular Resistance Movement in the Congo
MRC	<i>Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais</i> /Congoese Revolutionary Movement
<i>nilotiques</i>	Value-laden and historically problematic term, carrying the connotation of belonging to a group of African peoples that is racially superior to Bantu peoples
OKIMO	<i>Office des mines d'or de Kilo-Moto</i> /Office of the Gold Mines of Kilo-Moto
PRA	People's Redemption Army
PUSIC	<i>Parti pour l'unité et la sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo</i> /Party for Unity and Safeguarding of the Integrity of the Congo
RCD	<i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie</i> /Congoese Rally for Democracy
RCD-K/ML	<i>RCD-Kisangani/Mouvement de libération</i> (RCD-Kisangani/Liberation Movement)
RCD-N	<i>RCD-National</i> /RCD-National

RNA	Rwandan News Agency
UPC	<i>Union des patriotes congolais</i> /Union of Congolese Patriots
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UDPS	<i>Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social</i> /Union for Democracy and Social Progress
<i>usalama</i>	peace, security (Kiswahili)

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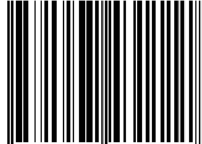
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UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE ARMED GROUPS IN ITURI IS CRITICAL TO ENDING THE VIOLENCE AND THE ONGOING CONFLICT THAT CONTINUES TO WRACK EASTERN CONGO TODAY. THIS REPORT ON THE UNION OF CONGOLESE PATRIOTS (UPC) IS AN EXCELLENT CONTRIBUTION TO THAT UNDERSTANDING. IT SHOULD BE ESSENTIAL READING FOR POLICY MAKERS AND OTHERS WORKING TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO CONGO'S CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.

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