



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information required on the Allied Democratic Forces.

An article published in *The Guardian* in July 2013 states:

“The ADF waged an insurgency against Kampala in the late 1990s from its bases in the Rwenzori Mountains and across the frontier in the eastern Congo jungle, including a 1998 attack in which 80 students were killed. A 2001 government offensive quelled the uprising and pushed its remnants deeper into eastern Congo. The group has kept a low profile since. But a UN report last year said the rebels expanded their military capacity and co-operated with Somalia's al-Shabab militants.” (The Guardian (15 July 2013) *Congo refugees pour into Uganda after attack by Islamist rebels*)

In May 2010 *Reuters* states:

“In the late 1990s, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) waged an insurgency from its bases in the Rwenzori Mountains and across the frontier in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo jungle. At its peak, it was blamed for a series of deadly blasts in the capital Kampala. A government offensive that ended in 2001 killed many of ADF's top commanders, quelled the uprising and pushed its remnants deeper into eastern Congo.” (Reuters (28 May 2010) *Former Uganda rebel group seen regrouping in Congo*)

A profile of the group published in an article released by *IRIN News* in June 2010 notes:

“Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU) Ugandan rebel leader Jamil Mukulu founded a Muslim militant group in the early 1990s, despite converting back and forth between Islam and Catholicism. Under pressure from the Ugandan army, he recruited officers from former dictator Idi Amin's regime and amalgamated the NALU, another Ugandan rebel group believed to harbour supporters of former president Milton Obote. The militia crossed into DRC in the mid-1990s and has remained in the Beni area of North Kivu. Analysts consider the group “dormant” with about 1,300 men. Peace negotiations between ADF/NALU, Uganda and the DRC began in 2009 with UN facilitation, but in April, the Congolese army blamed a deadly attack on a military training centre near Beni on a coalition of ADF/NALU and local Mai-Mai fighters.” (IRIN News (15 June 2010) *DRC: Who's who among armed groups in the east*)

A profile of the group, cited from another source, in a report released by the *United Kingdom Home Office* in March 2012 states:

“Type: Political.

Status: Active since being founded in 1989.

Leader: Sheikh Jamil Mukulu, alias David Steven alias Arilabaki alias Musezi Talengelanimiro alias Mzee Tutu alias Bruno alias Kafeero alias Kyagulanyi.

Summary: The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) is a small militant group based and operating in the border area between eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and southwestern Uganda. It was founded in Uganda in 1989 by its current leader, Sheikh Jamil Mukulu, a radical Islamist who aimed to overthrow the government of President Yoweri Museveni and replace it with a loosely defined Islamist administration. The ADF did not become operationally active until 1995, but over the following years it emerged as a significant if localised threat to government authority in southwestern Uganda. However, by 2002 the Ugandan army had successfully forced the group to retreat across the border into the DRC, and the ADF threat appeared to have been neutralised. Despite this setback, following Uganda's military withdrawal from the DRC in 2003, the ADF - along with its principle ally, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) - consolidated its position in the largely ungoverned eastern DRC, and become involved in lucrative illegal mining activities. Following renewed recruitment activities, the ADF today comprises a loose mix of freelance fighters from the DRC; exiled Hutu militiamen from Rwanda; and various rebels and dissidents from Uganda. As such, although nominally Islamist in character, the ADF lacks a coherent ideology and oscillates between an overtly religious agenda and a radical ethno-nationalist one, with its opposition to President Museveni the unifying factor that unites its disparate elements. Although militarily dormant in recent years, the group continues to pose a potential threat to stability in the DRC-Uganda border region, and a resumption of hostilities remains possible should the current status quo be disturbed. Such a scenario has become more likely following Uganda's discovery of commercial oil reserves in the border region, and subsequent efforts by DRC and Ugandan forces in mid-2010 to clear the area of ADF and other militant elements." (United Kingdom Home Office (9 March 2012) *The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, (pp.203-204)

In December 1999 *IRIN News* notes:

"The ADF, which decided to adopt Islam as its ideology, was born from a core group of puritanical Moslems from the Tabliq sect whose members portray themselves as "Moslem evangelists". In Uganda, the Tabliqs claimed Moslems were being marginalised by the government. Together with the obscure and largely defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the Tabliqs moved to western Uganda to start the rebellion under the ADF umbrella. They set up rear bases in neighbouring Congo where they began recruiting and training fighters with the promise of money and education. It was easier to recruit in Congo where the people were not hostile to the ADF. The ADF has few links with western Uganda - its leaders come from areas in central Uganda with strong Islamic ties such as Iganga, Masaka and Kampala itself. A former Catholic, Jamil Mukulu, is said to be the driving force of the ADF. The group also includes some ex-commanders of former president Idi Amin's army." (IRIN News (8 December 1999) *Uganda: IRIN Special Report on the ADF rebellion*)

Research released in January 2002 by the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* points out that:

"The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) is reportedly "a coalition force of an Islamist sect known as Tabliqs and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, [it] has operated out of the Rwenzori Mountains, which straddle the DRC, since 1996 and aims to overthrow the government of President Yoweri Museveni...The information which follows was reportedly provided by a former ADF Chief of Staff, Commander Benz, "who surrendered recently and has been helping the UPDF to finally rout out

the remnants of his former rebel army...ADF was formed from three groups-the Buseruka intake who were Tabliqs then calling themselves the Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) and the former Rwenzururu. We met in Beni, Zaire in 1995, agreed to unite and formed the Allied Democratic Forces...we were 6,500 fighters. The former President of Zaire called Mobutu Sese Seko was our uniting factor. He gave us finance and logistics...we elected Abdallah Kabanda as our leader. His deputies were Kyagulanyi Jamil Mukulu and Hosea...after Kabila launched his war, Hosea was cut off in Goma, so we replaced Hosea with Mzee Fenahasi Kisokeranio...According to this source, other leaders included Henry Matovu, Army Commander, Benz, Chief of Staff; the late Kasangaki Kiwewa Swaib Kigozi, 'Commander Tiger, Chief of Combat Operations" (ibid.)." (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (25 January 2002) *Uganda: The Allied Defence Forces (ADF) in Uganda*)

A report issued in April 2002 by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

"The Allied Democratic Forces are reckoned to have 200 to 300 fighters, mainly in the Ruwenzori Mountains close to the border with Uganda. Unlike some of the other foreign armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ADF are not known to have external allies. Like most other armed groups, ADF are believed to be only lightly armed." (United Nations Security Council (5 April 2002) *First Assessment of the armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p.4)

In December 2012 a report issued by the *International Crisis Group* states:

"In the absence of a popular support base, the ADF-NALU's history against the Ugandan regime has been one of repeated failure." (International Crisis Group (19 December 2012) *Eastern Congo: the ADF-Nalu's Lost Rebellion*, p.4)

A report issued in December 2001 by *IRIN News* states:

"The ADF, which has adopted radical Islam as an ideology, was born from a core group of puritanical Muslims from the Tabliq sect, whose members portray themselves as "Muslim evangelists". In Uganda, the Tabliqs claimed Muslims were being marginalised by the government. It emerged as a security threat in western and southwestern Uganda in November 1996, according to security and human rights sources. Together with the obscure and largely defunct NALU, the Tabliqs moved to western Uganda to start a rebellion against the government under the ADF umbrella. They set up rear bases in neighbouring Congo where they began recruiting and training fighters with the promise of money and education. The ADF has few links and little support in western Uganda, and its leaders come from areas in central Uganda with strong Islamic ties, such as Iganga, Masaka and Kampala itself. It also links up with the ex-Forces Armees Rwandaises (ex-FAR) and Rwandan Hutu Interahamwe militias operating from eastern DRC, and also cited in Wednesday's US terrorist listing, and is particularly active in the Bundibugyo area of western Uganda. The ADF, in common with the LRA, has frequently committed atrocities against civilian populations, driving them from their homes and farms in the mountains into lowland towns, as well as attacking camps for these internally-displaced people (IDPs), and abducting men, women and children. The group significantly heightened its activities in 1998 - repeatedly attacking civilian targets, trading centers and Ugandan army forces, and causing hundreds of deaths." (IRIN News (7 December 2001) *UGANDA: LRA, ADF on American terrorist list*)

In August 2012 a report issued by *Think Security Africa* points out that:

“The ADF was created in 1996 and is the product of a merger between several anti-Nationalist Resistance Movement (NRM) forces, including Islamists from the Salaf Tabliq group, and remnants of armed groups loyal to ex-presidents Obote and Idi Amin. The group operated from western Uganda and also from its rear bases in the DRC. Originally the group obtained support and funding from the DRC’s ex-President Laurent Kabila through Hutu groups and also from the government of Sudan in Khartoum, which sponsored a number of anti-Kampala groups because of Kampala’s support for Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). The group reached its peak in 1999 when it allegedly unleashed a deadly bombing campaign in Kampala. The group was driven out of Uganda by the army in 2002, after a six-year terrorist campaign. Prior to that their main areas of operation were Bundibugyo, Bushenyi, Kasese, Kabarole, and Kamwenge in Southwest Uganda. Currently the group operates from bases in Orientale and North Kivu provinces, DRC.” (Think Security Africa (August 2012) *Factsheet on: The Allied Democratic Forces*, pp.1-2)

An undated profile from *United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo* notes:

“The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) is a Ugandan rebel group based along the Rwenzori Mountains of eastern DR Congo. Most of its members are Islamists who want to establish Shari’a law in Uganda. The ADF was formed around 1998 by a merger of various streams of discontented sectors of Ugandan society which felt alienated after the overthrow of Idi Amin. The group appears to be receiving external funding from unknown sources. In June 2010, the FARDC launched an attack called “operation Ruwenzori” against the ADF. The ADF currently number approximately 500 combatants but the high level of secrecy in the organization and its compartmentalized structure make it difficult to ascertain its overall strength.” (United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo (Undated) *The Foreign Armed Groups*)

A document released in November 2005 by the *Institute for War & Peace Reporting* notes:

“The ADF’s base in the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, places it among the many cross-border security problems facing the Great Lakes region.” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting (17 November 2005) *New Danger From Ugandan Rebel Group?*)

This report also states:

“From 1996 onwards, the ADF grew into an increasingly potent rebel force – assisted by the Sudanese government - but in 1999 the Ugandan armed forces began to gain the upper hand and by 2001, they had effectively defeated the group.” (ibid)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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