



RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE | USALAMA PROJECT  
UNDERSTANDING CONGOLESE ARMED GROUPS

# RAIA MUTOMBOKI

THE FLAWED PEACE PROCESS  
IN THE DRC AND THE BIRTH  
OF AN ARMED FRANCHISE

RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE | USALAMA PROJECT

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Raia Mutomboki

The flawed peace process in the DRC  
and the birth of an armed franchise

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#### THE USALAMA PROJECT

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



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# Previous RVI Usalama Project publications

## Reports

*From CNDP to M23: The Evolution of an Armed Movement in Eastern Congo*

*North Kivu: The Background to Conflict in North Kivu Province of Eastern Congo*

*PARECO: Land, Local Strongmen, and the Roots of Militia Politics in North Kivu*

*UPC in Ituri: The External Militarization of Local Politics in North-Eastern Congo*

*Ituri: Gold, Land, and Ethnicity in North-eastern Congo*

All titles are also available in French

## Briefings

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

'Strongman of the Eastern DRC: A Profile of General Bosco Ntaganda'

# 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 Kinshasa 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 and policy considerations

In 2011, a new kind of mobilization emerged in rural areas of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Raia Mutomboki ('Outraged Citizens') was a grassroots response to rampant insecurity, in particular to the abuses perpetrated by the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR, Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), a largely Rwandan Hutu rebel group. Supported by customary chiefs, former militia members, and army deserters, young people rallied around the idea of *dawa*, magical medicines and amulets that they believe makes them invincible, and quickly drove the FDLR out of many of their former strongholds.

Their appearance was testimony to the flaws of various peace deals in eastern Congo, which, while solving some security problems, have created others. In 2009, a secretive deal between the Congolese and Rwandan governments succeeded in integrating some armed groups into the army, but was made conditional on a series of offensives against the FDLR, which in turn triggered massive displacement and revenge attacks by all sides against civilians. The restructuring of the army—the so-called 'regimentation process'—was launched in 2011 as a corrective to the favouring of certain former armed groups in the army, but ended up entrenching that favouritism, leading to a series of defections and additional tension.

The unintended consequences of these deals played a crucial role in transforming the Raia Mutomboki from a parochial militia to a series of groups deployed across an area the size of Belgium. Today, the name applies to a series of different armed groups, bound by the same name and broad ideology of self-defence. It is more a franchise than a unitary force, with each of its branches rooted in a particular set of dynamics driven by local politics, its leadership, and the interests of its allies.

The absence of the Congolese state has played an important role in this mobilization by neglecting and at times even exacerbating local conflicts. However, while the Raia Mutomboki began as self-defence

forces, they have in many places evolved into a brutal and abusive militia, killing hundreds of civilians and setting up illegal tax schemes. Demobilizing the groups will require addressing the security challenges posed by the FDLR, and crafting a militia demobilization programme that applies lessons learned from past mistakes. Perhaps the stiffest challenge—one common to dealing with all armed groups in the Kivu—will be improving local state capacity to prevent conflicts over customary power and land from seeping into armed mobilization, and to provide necessary protection and security for local populations.

### Building and decentralizing the state

To achieve peace, it is incumbent upon the Congolese government to implement key clauses of the 2006 constitution by holding local elections and by decentralizing financial and political power. Donors could contribute to this state-building process by providing the substantial resources needed for enhancing state capacity, based on clear benchmarks and a frank partnership with the Congolese government. The revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) provides a blueprint for a bottom-up approach to institutional reform—but will have to be linked to a new national strategy that is implemented with genuine commitment by the Congolese government. The Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework (‘Framework Agreement’) signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February 2013, while still vague on details, provides the possibility for a new national strategy.<sup>1</sup>

### Dealing with the FDLR

Both the Congolese and Rwandan governments should, as far as possible, favour peaceful avenues to dealing with the FDLR, based on the commitments of the 2007 Nairobi Communiqué, an agreement for dealing with

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1 UN News Service, ‘UN urges long-term commitment to today’s peace deal on DR Congo’, 24 February 2013.

cross-border threats signed between the two countries.<sup>2</sup> In particular, they should allow third country resettlement for officers with no known record of war crimes or crimes against humanity. Combatants could also be allowed to relocate within the DRC, on a case-by-case basis, with substantial safeguards, and in the context of a demobilization programme. If military operations need to be undertaken, these should be carried out with due respect for international humanitarian law and through joint planning and execution with the *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en RDC* (MONUSCO, UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC).

## Negotiations and a demobilization programme

The Congolese government will need to set up peace commissions to engage separately with the various Raia Mutomboki groups, in conjunction with local civil society. These peace processes should seek to empower communities and not merely reward commanders for rebelling. They should include community development projects, security committees that allow local leaders to hold the army and police accountable, and the possibility for Raia Mutomboki commanders to integrate into the FARDC. The government should also consider launching a new demobilization programme, involving both rigorous follow-up and safeguards against the recycling of formerly demobilized soldiers.

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2    UN Security Council, S/2007/679, 'Joint communiqué of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda on a common approach to ending the threat posed to peace and stability in both countries and the Great Lakes region' (Nairobi Communiqué), 21 November 2007. See also African Rights, 'Congo-Kinshasa: A Welcome Expression of Intent- The Nairobi Communiqué and the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe', 11 December 2007.

# 1. Introduction

Beginning in the second half of 2011, a new grassroots militia spread rapidly through the lowland jungle of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While the group barely registered in the national and international media, it had a dramatic impact on these rural areas. Formed as a spontaneous self-defence force against abuses carried out by FDLR rebels, the movement spread in a wholly decentralized, even frenzied fashion. At the core of its appeal was an ideology of self-defence and a belief in a *dawa* that supposedly made its users invincible.

The Raia Mutomboki had begun six years earlier as a small, parochial militia in the remote forests of southern Shabunda, in South Kivu province. After enjoying military successes and chasing abusive FDLR elements out of the area, the group largely disappeared between 2007 and 2011, although other small factions adopted the name to benefit from its popularity and reputation. What effectively became a franchise—a network of small groups linked by the name and by a common anti-FDLR ideology—then grew in size and influence during 2011. A restructuring of the Congolese national army, combined with renewed FDLR ravages through rural parts of the Kivus, produced a large wave of mobilization that has continued into 2013.

By mid-2012, the Raia Mutomboki spanned an area of approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>, although it was split into at least four main factions with no clear chains of command. It often succeeded in doing what the Congolese army had failed to do: chasing out the FDLR. But as the Raia Mutomboki became increasingly involved in local conflicts and taxation rackets, what had started as a self-defence movement evolved into an abusive rebellion, and in some areas these mutually uncoordinated militias were responsible for horrific massacres of largely Hutu civilian populations.

## 2. From self-defence to liberation movement

### The beginnings (2005–07)

The first appearance of the Raia Mutomboki in the mineral-rich Shabunda forest in 2005 went almost unnoticed, and for several years the group remained weak and disorganized, only reaching national attention with their participation in the 2008 Goma Conference, which tried to broker a peace deal embracing 22 different armed groups. Despite its remote beginnings, the group's initial emergence was closely tied to flaws in the 2002 *Accord Global et Inclusif* (Global and Inclusive Agreement), which ended the Second Congo War, unified the country under a transitional government, and set out a process leading to elections in 2006. From the Raia Mutomboki's perspective, the agreement's most serious deficits were its failures either to root out the threat posed by the FDLR or address shifts in militia alliances, and the lack of protection provided by the Congolese security forces.

The events that led to the first small group using the name Raia Mutomboki now form part of the militia's folklore. On 29 March 2005, a group of local traders was on its way to sell food to gold miners in Kyoka, a jungle village in the far south of Shabunda territory. The group was ambushed by FDLR soldiers; four traders escaped and alerted a nearby Congolese army patrol. When together they finally tracked down the kidnapped party, they discovered that all their 12 colleagues, including two women and four children, had been killed with machetes.

These murders were part of a pattern of abuses perpetrated by the FDLR in the area since it had set up bases there in 1998. Just as important as these abuses, however, was a shift in local power structures, resulting from the 2002 peace deal, which exacerbated the violence. Since 1998, the FDLR had maintained several thousand troops integrated in the government's army. Under pressure from the international community in the

run-up to the peace deal, President Joseph Kabila pushed these troops out of the area under his control in 2001–2002, forcing them to merge with the eastern wing of the FDLR that was deployed in the Kivus. This forced merger triggered a leadership crisis within the FDLR, leading to the defection of their overall commander, General Paul Rwarakabije, and the consequent collapse of internal discipline over the tumultuous period that followed.

At the same time, the anti-Rwanda military coalition that had held solidly across rural districts of the Kivus between 1998 and 2003 broke apart. During this time, the FDLR was part of an alliance of insurgents that served a vital function for Kinshasa in tying down Rwandan forces and their allies from the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy).<sup>3</sup> In Shabunda, the FDLR were close allies of Mai-Mai militias under the command of General Padiri Bulenda, who had his base in Lulingu, in the northern part of the territory.<sup>4</sup>

The *Accord global et inclusif* required the integration of the main belligerents, including most Mai-Mai groups and the RCD, into a new national army, the FARDC. In places like Shabunda, the majority of Mai-Mai fighters slowly started leaving for integration camps in early 2004, producing a security vacuum in many rural areas, which in some places was filled by Mai-Mai defectors who had refused to join the national army, as well as the FDLR.

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3 For more information on the history and activities of the RCD, see Jason Stearns, *From CNDP to M23: The Evolution of an Armed Movement in Eastern Congo* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2012), pp. 13–23.

4 Jason Stearns, *North Kivu: The Background to Conflict in North Kivu Province of Eastern Congo* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2012), pp. 27 and 32. The term Mai-Mai (from *mayi*, ‘water’ in Kiswahili) is a reference to magical protective potions used by members of these groups in their ceremonies; in the first phases of their existence, water treated by their doctors was used to provide protection to combatants and civilian populations. Mai-Mai has become a generic term for various local militias that have spread throughout the eastern DRC since inter-ethnic violence erupted in Masisi in 1993. While they draw on similar forms of mobilization that date back to the pre-colonial period, they have no single chain of command.

The national integration exercise ended up isolating and further destabilizing the FDLR, an armed group of Rwandan origin and hence not part of the integration process. Eager to gain legitimacy, the newly formed FARDC launched attacks against the FDLR in April 2004 and began joint operations against the rebels in 2005, with support from the *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo* (MONUC, UN Mission in the DRC).<sup>5</sup> While these operations were limited, and sporadic collaboration between Congolese army commanders and the FDLR continued until 2009, the FDLR had grounds for anxiety about their security. Betrayed, in their view, by the Congolese government, they no longer had local allies in Shabunda or a strong central command to rein them in. This prompted a vicious backlash from a group that had already become notorious for its brutal violence. Nor were their abuses confined to Shabunda: on 9 July 2005, they attacked Ntulumamba in Kalehe territory, massacring 39 civilians. Other, similar abuses also intensified around this time.<sup>6</sup>

But it was in Shabunda, in response to the Kyoka massacre, that these parallel developments produced a counter-mobilization. At the centre of this phenomenon was the local witchdoctor and Kimbanguist minister Jean Musumbu ('spirit' in Kirega). He rallied local youths and set up a self-defence force. While Musumbu did not have military experience, many of the youths who joined were former Mai-Mai. In the context of continued insecurity, demobilization had shown its clear limits.

Key to the Raia Mutomboki's popularity was an amulet devised by Musumbu, the *dawa* that its wearers believe renders them impervious to bullets if they follow a strict set of conditions. Initially a thin armband called *bijou* (jewel) made by local *bachawi* (witches), the *dawa* drew on initiation ceremonies of the local Rega ethnic community, as well as on

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5 International Crisis Group (ICG), 'The Congo: Solving the FDLR Problem Once and for All' (Africa Briefing No. 25), 12 May 2005. In 2010, MONUC was replaced by MONUSCO.

6 US State Department, '2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic Republic of the Congo', 8 March 2006.

a tradition of Mai-Mai militia that dates back to the pre-colonial period in this part of the Congo.

The mobilization was initially confined to southern Shabunda, specifically the *groupements* of Nkulu and Basitabiyale, and was surprisingly successful.<sup>7</sup> Armed only with spears, machetes, and bows, the Raia Mutomboki were able to drive most FDLR out of the area. The militia's popularity, its magical powers, and its astounding success, all proved contagious: the Raia Mutomboki concept spread to neighbouring areas of Maniema and Katanga provinces, where young people formed militias, adopting the name and sending emissaries to obtain amulets from Musumbu. These groups were not linked through any joint command structure.

This wave of Raia Mutomboki mobilization, albeit small-scale, lasted into 2007. In the UN's weekly internal threat reports, which monitor major developments across the country, the name Raia Mutomboki only appeared 15 times in a two-year period, clustered in late 2005 and early 2007, and mostly in relation to efforts to demobilize one specific group in southern Maniema province.<sup>8</sup> Musumbu's group only appeared in these reports a handful of times, in the context of battles with the Congolese army and the FDLR in late 2005, including an encounter with the FARDC's 107<sup>th</sup> Brigade, a unit made up of former Mai-Mai from neighbouring Mwenga territory and deployed in southern Shabunda.

The Raia Mutomboki groups of these early days had much in common with those that would appear in 2011 throughout Shabunda. They were loosely organized, with Musumbu having little direct control. This diffuse organization was not surprising: Musumbu had little experience as a commander and the large area he controlled had few roads and no cell phone coverage. One former Raia Mutomboki member from the area recalled Musumbu's limited leadership role:

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7 The state administration of the DRC is organized hierarchically in the following fashion: province, territory, *chefferie*/sector, *groupement*, *localité* and village. The last three levels are often, although not always, led by customary authorities.

8 Analysis of 107 MONUC reports, on file with the Usalama Project.



Musumbu went from village to village in those early days, talking to local chiefs and spreading the word. He named a commander in each village, after speaking with local chiefs, but he didn't really control them. He was powerful because of the magic that he spread.<sup>9</sup>

The traditional structure of Rega society was also crucial in influencing Raia Mutomboki cohesion. The Rega are the dominant ethnic group in Shabunda and parts of southern Walikale, Mwenga, and eastern Maniema. They traditionally live in a segmented, decentralized society, with chiefs rarely having influence beyond a cluster of several villages. In pre-colonial society, authority resided largely with lineage chiefs, whose position was not hereditary, and who shared power with other local leaders.<sup>10</sup>

During colonial rule, the Belgians created hereditary positions of customary rule, including the *chef de village*, *chef de localité*, *chef de groupement*, and *chef de collectivité*. Today, however, it is still the lineage chiefs and, in some cases, the *chefs de villages* who retain customary power. When Musumbu began recruiting soldiers, it was these leaders who threw their weight behind him in the southern part of Wakabango I *groupement*, encouraging youths to join and authorizing food collections. But the segmentary nature of Rega society also contributed to keeping the group decentralized and difficult to control.

### A period of opportunism (2007–11)

The 2002 peace deal created not only shifts in local alliances but also a new class of disaffected officers. The various armed groups, which included a disproportionate number of senior officers with inflated ranks but little formal military training, now had to compete for power within one national army. Participation in insurgencies quickly became

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9    Usalama Project Interviewee #401, Bukavu, 5 December 2012.

10   Daniel Biebuyck, *Lega Culture: Art, Initiation, and Moral Philosophy Among a Central African People* (Berkeley: UCLA Press, 1973), pp. 46–50.

a bargaining device for disgruntled officers who wanted better ranks and positions—and given the weakness of the FARDC, such rebellions often ended in successful negotiations.

Other groups feared the loss of local political and economic power after the elections. This fear was enhanced by the emergence of the *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP, National Congress for the Defence of the People) insurgency between 2005–2009, which was backed by Rwanda and became the largest security threat to the Congolese state.<sup>11</sup> Following several failed military offensives against the CNDP, the Congolese government increasingly began falling back on local militia. This served to tie down the CNDP and to suggest that it was only one of many armed groups in the Kivus. This trend became most clearly visible during the Goma Conference in early 2008, when Kinshasa encouraged the participation of many friendly armed groups—some of which had been created from scratch for the occasion—in order to dilute the CNDP’s influence.

The conference was supposed to launch an inclusive peace process and lead to the dismantling of the militias in the Kivus, but neither the government nor the CNDP was willing to make the necessary concessions. The profound lack of trust, compounded by the overall lack of progress in the process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and difficulties with the integration of former rebel commanders into the FARDC command chain, led to renewed fighting.

This was also the case for the Raia Mutomboki, which by this time had largely ceased to exist. Two representatives, Sadiki Kangalaba Devos and Salumu Kaseke, claiming to be Raia Mutomboki leaders, signed the *Actes d’engagement*, the peace deal that resulted from the Goma Conference. According to customary chiefs and civil society leaders, however, these representatives did not have Musumbu’s blessing or that of other Raia Mutomboki commanders. ‘They signed the agreement, took their

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 11 Stearns, *From CNDP to M23*, pp. 24–37.

per diems, and then disappeared,’ said one Congolese intelligence officer involved in the conference.<sup>12</sup>

The opportunism did not stop there, however. It became fashionable to name armed groups in Shabunda ‘Raia Mutomboki’, as it implied popular support and legitimacy. A telling example was a militia that was mobilized by former Mai-Mai fighters and allied politicians between 2006 and 2010. The group was launched by Misaba Bwansolo, better known as *Mwami* (Chief) Alexandre, who had been a Mai-Mai commander under General Padiri during the war against the RCD. Like many Rega Mai-Mai, Alexandre was frustrated by Padiri’s preferment of commanders from his ethnic Tembo community. Alexandre launched a new armed group in southern Shabunda in 2006, only to be arrested a year later by the Congolese army and sentenced to prison for recruiting child soldiers.

Alexandre was followed by Kyatend Dittman, a Rega musician who had been in Germany since the 1980s, returning to the Congo in 2003 to try his hand at local politics. He launched a music group, the *Armée rouge* (Red Army), and became involved on the board of Bukavu’s popular Muungano soccer team. Football teams provide powerful political platforms in the DRC. Muungano is popular among Rega, while Bukavu Dawa is seen to represent the Shi community. In November 2006, however, Kyatend was ousted from the presidency of the Muungano club and, increasingly marginalized in the Rega community, he tried reviving the militia set up by Alexandre in Shabunda, starting in early 2007. He attained only modest successes in January 2010, with the active support of Alexandre, who had escaped from prison in Bukavu a year before.

Kyatend’s group often went by the name of Raia Mutomboki, although its legitimacy was contested by Musumbu. It was based in a mineral-rich area around Kitindi in south-eastern Shabunda, undoubtedly attracted by the profits to be made from taxing and trading gold and tin in the region. The local customary chief, *Mwami* Muligi V, supported this group, as he would later support other Raia Mutomboki factions. While some said

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12 Usalama Project Interviewee #402, Bukavu, 4 December 2012.

this was due to a succession struggle, Muligi V himself insists it was out of concern for the local population.<sup>13</sup>

Kyatend's militia came to an end when the Congolese army arrested Muligi V in 2010. When he called on young people in his *chefferie* to turn in their weapons, just 12 were handed over to the FARDC, an indication of how small the group was. The local population then captured Kyatend and handed him over to the government. Both Kyatend and Alexandre have been in prison since June 2010.

### The 23 March Agreement and the expansion of the Raia Mutomboki (2009–12)

Security problems in Shabunda during this period barely registered as a national priority for the government, United Nations, or donor nations. The latter were focused on the CNDP insurrection, which was able to beat back repeated government offensives and even reached the outskirts of Goma in October 2008. The Kinshasa government changed tack, striking a deal with Kigali under which the Rwandans would arrest CNDP commander Laurent Nkunda in return for a series of Congolese army offensives against the FDLR, code-named *Umoja Wetu* ('Our Unity', 2009), *Kimia II* ('Peace II', 2009–2010), and *Amani Leo* ('Peace Today', 2010–2012). The so-called Ihusi agreement also set out the foundations of a comprehensive peace deal, signed on 23 March 2009, which was meant to integrate 22 different armed groups, including the CNDP and the Raia Mutomboki.

This deal was widely hailed by foreign diplomats for bringing an end to the CNDP insurgency and mending ties between the DRC and Rwanda. But in solving some problems, it created others. The deal was skewed in favour of the CNDP and its main rival, the *Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais* (PARECO, Alliance of Resistant Congolese Patriots), which

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 13 Usalama Project Interviewees #402, Bukavu, 4 December 2012, and #403, Bukavu, 15 February 2013.

stirred resentment among officers in rival militias.<sup>14</sup> The joint operations against the FDLR—one of the conditions of the peace deal—also sparked considerable insecurity in rural areas. It was this growing insecurity that would spark the revival of the Raia Mutomboki.

Operations against the FDLR displaced over 800,000 people in 2009 alone, as the FARDC carried out a poorly planned counterinsurgency offensive. In many areas, the government employed local militiamen as guides and trackers, who provided them with crucial information about FDLR positions. These included some former FDLR allies who would later join the Raia Mutomboki, such as the Mai-Mai Kifuafua in southern Masisi. This support for FARDC operations would later lead to brutal retaliation by the FDLR. ‘The army rattled the hornet’s nest and then left us to face the consequences,’ a local chief from northern Shabunda lamented.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the integration of armed groups created internal divisions within the Congolese army. The FARDC favoured officers from the two strongest armed groups, PARECO and especially the CNDP, providing them with some of the most lucrative and powerful positions in the Kivus, angering other officers and provoking latent anti-rwandophone sentiments. The regimentation process crystallized these frustrations. It consisted of merging existing brigades into regiments, which was supposed to streamline the Congolese army’s organization by getting rid of fictitious soldiers, undercutting patronage networks, and breaking up the parallel chains of command maintained by ex-CNDP troops.<sup>16</sup> The effects of this process would also contribute to the expansion of the Raia Mutomboki.

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14 Jason Stearns, *PARECO: Land, Local Strongmen, and the Roots of Militia Politics in North Kivu* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2013).

15 Usalama Project Interviewee #404, Kigulube, 7 December 2012.

16 UN Security Council, S/2011/738, ‘Final report of the Group of Experts on the DRC submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 1952 (2010)’, 2 December 2011, pp. 81–90.

Beginning around May 2011, all Congolese army units based in Shabunda territory left to join regimentation, leaving the territory—along with its lucrative trade routes and mining areas—fundamentally unprotected. The FDLR took advantage of this security vacuum, moving into mining areas around Mulungu (eastern Shabunda) in May, and Lulingu and Nyambembe (northern Shabunda) in June. By May, humanitarian organizations were already warning about the deteriorating security situation in Shabunda, as the FDLR set up new roadblocks and carried out raids in villages previously controlled by the Congolese army.<sup>17</sup> This triggered the remobilization of the Raia Mutomboki throughout Shabunda, albeit in a disparate fashion, along three major axes.

Musumbu remained the focal point of the first group, based between Kalole and Penekusu in southern Shabunda. His earlier success in getting rid of FDLR in the area, however, kept mobilization at a minimum. ‘The Mutomboki were always meant as a response to a security problem,’ said one local chief who knows Musumbu. ‘In Wakabango I, the security problem had largely disappeared, so not many youths took up arms.’<sup>18</sup> The FDLR did conduct sporadic raids into South Kivu’s far south-eastern corner, around the mining areas of Kitindi and Itula, encountering resistance from a local Raia Mutomboki group affiliated to Musumbu, but little is known about this faction, given the remote areas in which it operated. In late 2012, this obscure group moved into western parts of Mwenga province as well.

The second Raia Mutomboki group—which would eventually become the most significant military force—was based in Nduma, along the edges of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in northern Shabunda. This area harbours a scattering of mining areas and a major base the FDLR had set up, which included a training camp, schools, and health centres

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 17 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Monthly Reports, May–July 2011.

18 Usalama Project Interviewee #407, Bukavu, 5 December 2012.

for their dependents.<sup>19</sup> Albert Mutima Muba, the group's chief of staff, recounted a pivotal incident that took place in Nduma in January 2010:

The FDLR killed 36 people in Nduma, they buried people alive, they made them eat cassiterite [a tin oxide mineral], or tied them to the trees and beat them to death. Three of these miners survived and came to tell us about the massacre. But when we went to tell the Congolese army, they arrested us! They made us pay a fine of \$100 to set us free!<sup>20</sup>

It was this FARDC behaviour in response to the Nduma massacre that provoked local outrage. This outrage was most vividly expressed after a visit by the South Kivu governor, Marcellin Cissambo, to Shabunda centre in July 2011, in response to the security problems there. Replying to a question in a town hall meeting about the withdrawal of Congolese troops, he reportedly said: 'Liberate yourselves!' This event is now widely recounted to justify the emergence of the Raia Mutomboki.

In early 2011, the local population responded. According to one version of events, Eyadema Mugugu, a young mineral trader from Nduma who had been one of Musumbu's leading followers, travelled to southern Shabunda to get advice and the magical *dawa* from his former leader. Alternative accounts suggest that Eyadema obtained his first batch of *dawa* from the Mai-Mai of Amuli Yakutumba in Fizi territory.<sup>21</sup> Networks of demobilized combatants and artisanal miners seem to have been particularly important in Eyadema's mobilization but, initially at least, the main motivation was self-defence. Mutima, an elderly man who

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 19 Internal MONUC report, 'Special report on MONUC Bukavu (PAS) mission to Shabunda and Lulingu (South Kivu) on 29–30 November 2007', on file with the Usalama Project.

20 Usalama Project interview with Albert Mutima Muba, Katatwa, 9 December 2012. This account is largely confirmed by other sources.

21 Email correspondence with UN official, 8 June 2012; Usalama Project Interviewee #404, Bukavu, 5 December 2012.

was previously the principal of the high school in nearby Nyambembe, described his own experience:

Major Cimanuka [an FDLR commander] came to Nyambembe and demanded \$10,000 and 30 goats from the local population in July 2011 for ‘reconciliation’. The population gave him this, but then he went and pillaged the village anyway. He said the government had given the east to the Rwandans, that this was theirs now. I was there! I was a teacher at the local school. I contributed 6,000 Congolese francs, all teachers got together \$30. But this was not enough! They came back to pillage the village and burn it down.<sup>22</sup>

As Musumbu had done in 2005, the Raia Mutomboki under Eyadema were able to accomplish what the Congolese army had been unable to achieve: chasing out almost all remaining FDLR from northern Shabunda by early 2012. This fact is often emphasized by local inhabitants.

The third group that appeared in Shabunda was the most opportunistic and internally fragmented. It was launched initially by Rega Congolese army officers who were upset by their treatment. The defectors mostly came from the 11<sup>th</sup> integrated brigade, which had an entire battalion made up of officers without jobs, the so-called *battalion cadre*, created by the Congolese army to regroup officers who did not have the connections, education, or physical fitness needed to obtain more lucrative deployments. ‘It was ridiculous,’ one of the officers in the battalion remembered; ‘lieutenants and captains were foot soldiers, majors were platoon commanders. It was humiliating.’<sup>23</sup> Among these were several Rega Mai-Mai officers who had been marginalized, in their words, due to their ethnicity by the former Mai-Mai leader General Padiri, who came from Bunyakiri and was a Tembo.

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22 Usalama Project interview with Mutima, Katatwa, 9 December 2012.

23 Usalama Project Interviewee #408, Bukavu, 7 December 2012.



Those who sympathized with these officers argue that it was this mistreatment that prompted their defection. Several sources suggest that the Lega-Lusu *mutuelle*, an ethnic community organization based in Bukavu, encouraged these officers to return to Shabunda to protect the population from the FDLR during regimentation.<sup>24</sup> According to the Congolese army, however, there was also a push factor: many of the deserters had cases to answer for in military court.<sup>25</sup>

The first to defect was Lieutenant Musolwa Kangela, who went to Mulungu in early 2011. He was followed by several other officers, the most prominent among them Majors Donat Kengwa Omari and Ngandu Lundimu. While these officers did not defect together, by late 2012 most of them had gathered in north-eastern Shabunda, close to their villages of origin. Two other leaders joined this diffuse cluster of commanders: Wangozi Pascal, otherwise known as Sisawa, and Daniel Meshe. These defections also introduced a growing tension between the Raia Mutomboki and the FARDC. When the first FARDC regiment returned to Shabunda in July 2011, in Lulingu a meeting was organised with the Raia Mutomboki to demobilize them and ask them to return to civilian life. The Raia Mutomboki refused, claiming that the FARDC would only be interested in the exploitation of natural resources instead of protecting the population. A heated discussion ended in an armed confrontation. And in October 2011, Major Donat addressed the population in Tshonka and said that he would only welcome non-rwandophone FARDC troops to be deployed in Shabunda territory.

By most accounts, Sisawa was a former miner and young rank-and-file soldier working with Eyadema who struck out on his own. He had two main assets: his mother was a well-known witchdoctor with powerful *dawa*; and he was a valiant fighter, ‘always to be found on the frontlines during military operations’, as one civil society leader put it.<sup>26</sup> Meshe, on

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 24 Usalama Project Interviewee #405, Bukavu, 5 December 2012.

25 Usalama Project Interviewee #402, Bukavu, 6 December 2012.

26 Usalama Project Interviewee #406, Kigulube, 13 December 2012.

the other hand, had stumbled into militia politics almost by accident. A former member of President Laurent Kabila's entourage, he had left for Germany after Kabila's assassination in 2001. He returned in 2011 to mine gold in his home village, Mulanga, in north-eastern Shabunda. Failing in that endeavour, in part due to the insecurity caused by the FDLR, he decided to launch his own armed group. Bolstered by his elite networks and his superior education, he quickly positioned himself as the brains to Sisawa's brawn, although the indiscipline of Sisawa's troops caused internal friction.

By late 2012, Meshe and Sisawa controlled the Chulwe-Kigulube axis, while Ngandu and Kengwa deployed from Nzovu towards the border with Kabare territory. To distinguish themselves, Sisawa's group called themselves Raia Tujigombwe ('Citizens Let's Liberate Ourselves') or sometimes even TP Mazembe, after a popular Congolese soccer team. The alliances among these groups were continuously shifting but, in early February 2013, all of the northern Shabunda factions, including that of Juriste Kikuni, met in Kigulube to try to create a common structure.

## Expansion into Kalehe and clashes with the FARDC (2011–12)

There is little doubt about the Raia Mutomboki's success in Shabunda: Congolese army officers, local chiefs, and UN officials all confirm that by the end of 2011, the FDLR had been pushed out of many of their previous strongholds and were confined to a few positions in the far east of the territory, close to Mwenga, Walungu, and Kabare territories.<sup>27</sup>

It was Eyadema's group that proved to be the most zealous and efficient at expanding its reach. In September 2011, there were reports of Raia Mutomboki activity in Isangi, in North Kivu's southern Walikale territory, and by the beginning of the following year, Eyadema's chief of staff had arrived in nearby Katatwa and Chambucha 'in hot pursuit of

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 27 Usalama Project Interviewees #403, Bukavu, 10 February 2012, and #402, Bukavu, 3 December 2012; MONUSCO South Kivu DRRR Report, 30 October 2011.

the FDLR,' as a local civil society activist put it.<sup>28</sup> By the end of the year, the Raia Mutomboki was expanding southwards into Kalehe territory.

This move posed a challenge to the Raia Mutomboki, as for the first time it was moving into areas inhabited largely by other ethnic communities, where other armed groups were already active, or where a tradition of armed resistance had developed. Yet, testament to the Raia Mutomboki's spreading powers, these barriers did not stop the movement: testament to the Raia Mutomboki's spreading powers. In FDLR-affected areas, the movement was even enthusiastically welcomed, especially by demobilized Mai-Mai combatants for whom the new arrivals presented a unique opportunity to improve their own position. But as the armed group spread into Kalehe territory, it became part of local power struggles, further complicating the security situation.

According to local sources, the influx of internally displaced people (IDPs) from Shabunda, caused by clashes between the FDLR and the Raia Mutomboki, preceded the group's expansion into Kalehe. Their stories about FDLR attacks made the local population even more vigilant for any renewed violence by the FDLR, who in several areas had established some form of accommodation with the local people. But the arrival of the first Raia Mutomboki elements in these territories provided the local population with an opportunity to get rid of the FDLR. For the Raia Mutomboki, the objectives of their operations remained the same as in Shabunda: clear the area of the FDLR, protect the local people, and facilitate their return to the fields previously occupied by FDLR elements.

Three different phases can be distinguished in Kalehe and Walikale territories: the extension of the Eyadema group's zones of operation; their embedding within the local Tembo community; and the integration of various Mai-Mai militias. In short, the movement was transformed during this period from a scattering of loosely-connected self-defence groups into a more structured armed movement that came to be closely connected with, and involved in, local power dynamics.

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 28 Usalama Project Interviewee #409, Hombo, 9 December 2012.

The expansion began in November 2011, when Kalonge *groupement* witnessed an incursion of several FDLR groups fleeing from Raia Mutomboki attacks in Shabunda. Most of these FDLR elements moved on towards the Bunyakiri area, the Ekingi forest, and south-eastern Walikale, in search of protection from Raia Mutomboki attacks. Their arrival, however, immediately sparked widespread fears of renewed violence among the local population—an anxiety that created fertile ground for the Raia Mutomboki’s expansion. After the arrival of a small Raia Mutomboki group in Kalonge—where they first settled in Bisisi, Chibinda Mutale, Chaminunu, Chifunzi, and Fendula villages, before setting up their local headquarters in Bisisi and Mutale—its leaders started recruiting local youth and told them they had to organize themselves against expected FDLR retaliation attacks. One of them told the locals:

When we came to Kalonge, it was to pursue the FDLR, who for a long time butchered the Congolese population. Our mission is not to stay in Kalonge. Therefore, the youth of Kalonge must take care of themselves to eradicate the FDLR system in their area, just like they did in Shabunda.<sup>29</sup>

They added that nobody had anything to fear from combat, as the *dawa* would protect them; young people were furthermore free to enter and leave the movement whenever they wanted.

As soon as they arrived, the Raia Mutomboki succeeded in gaining widespread support from the mostly Tembo local population but also from the local customary leadership. The loose structure of the movement, the unprecedented flexibility given to members to join and leave (very different from the more coercive Mai-Mai militia that previously operated in the region), the direct focus on local protection, and its patriotic discourse, all turned the Raia Mutomboki into a very powerful force. Local customary leaders welcomed the movement and helped mobilize the youth, provide resources, and offer advice before going to combat. Local politicians also

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29 Usalama Project Interviewee, #418, Kalonge, 14 December 2012.

provided some support, though much more clandestinely and in most cases directly linked to their own local agendas or to customary power struggles. But key to this mobilization was the prevalence of demobilized Mai-Mai, for whom this part of Kalehe had been a bastion during the RCD war. In Kalonge, and later on in other parts of Kalehe, Mai-Mai who had been demobilized or who had deserted became the backbone of the movement.

In early 2012, the Raia Mutomboki expanded its operations against the FDLR into Bunyakiri. According to local sources, demobilized Mai-Mai fighters who had been in touch with Raia Mutomboki units in Kalonge were the first to call upon the youth in Bunyakiri to join the group.<sup>30</sup> Other mobilization campaigns followed and an initial operation was carried out in January 2012 in the forest of Mangaa, where an entire FDLR village was destroyed and its inhabitants massacred. On their return to Kalonge, the FDLR killed several Raia Mutomboki combatants in an ambush, among them the two former Mai-Mai recruits that had started the mobilization campaign in Bunyakiri. This immediately boosted the Raia Mutomboki's appeal in Bunyakiri, prompting many more young men to join their ranks. Mobilization was fuelled by a vicious—or, according to local leaders, a virtuous—cycle: Raia Mutomboki attacks inflicted considerable losses on the FDLR, which prompted retaliation, which in turn fuelled further mobilization.

In January 2012, for example, the FDLR killed 13 civilians in Lumendje, which led local youths to take to arms; in a revenge attack, more than 20 FDLR members were killed.<sup>31</sup> On 14 May 2012, the FDLR killed

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 30 Usalama Project Interviewee #419, Kalonge, 14 December 2012.

31 In early 2012, the FDLR attacked several villages around Nzofu after they had learned that the Raia Mutomboki had left the area to track down the FDLR in Kalehe. FDLR elements from Kalonge and Kalehe wanted to teach the Nzofu population a lesson for supporting the Raia Mutomboki and on 1 January killed eight people in Mugabilo village, nine people in Mpamba village, and six people in Luyuyu village. The next day, 11 people were killed in Ngolombe village; this last killing happened close to an FARDC camp, which for the population was further proof that the FARDC was not trying to protect them.

more than 30 civilians in Kamananga, a village located along the road connecting Bunyakiri to Hombo. This massacre was another turning point in the development of the Raia Mutomboki: it left psychological scars on the local population, swaying many more to join the movement as their last resort to protection. This attack was also presented as further evidence of the lack of willingness on MONUSCO's part to protect the population and created deep tensions between the UN peacekeepers and the local population, especially as the peacekeepers had a temporary base less than a kilometre away. The Kamananga massacre provoked an attack on the UN base, injuring several peacekeepers.

At the time of the Kamananga massacre, the Raia Mutomboki had already reached the southern parts of Walikale in North Kivu province, where FDLR massacres had also prompted local support. The lack of protection from the FARDC, which had hardly any presence in the area, facilitated the Raia Mutomboki's development as the main protection force. In April 2012, Raia Mutomboki units mounted a massive operation to dismantle the FDLR camps in Shario and Lukaraba (Walikale territory), where there were large concentrations of FDLR dependents. Some of the FDLR that escaped the attacks fled to Ziralo, where they hoped to receive protection from another Mai-Mai group led by Kirikicho Mirimba, who over time had established strong links with the FDLR. When Kirikicho learned that Raia Mutomboki units were moving towards Ziralo and his own survival was threatened, he initially attacked them, but then eventually struck up a temporary alliance—with the Raia Mutomboki reportedly demanding that he give up his rank of general and end his collaboration with the FDLR.

As in Shabunda, shifting military alliances explain some of the brutality of the fighting, as the FDLR felt betrayed by their former allies. Kirikicho had FDLR officers integrated into his group and the stand-off triggered internecine fighting, with Kirikicho eventually killing his FDLR chief-of-staff. Kirikicho's alliance with the Raia Mutomboki would be short-lived. When Raia Mutomboki took control of Ziralo, Kirikicho joined forces with Kifuafua commanders, who after some initial collaboration had also distanced themselves from Raia Mutomboki in southern Walikale.

By the end of July 2012, Raia Mutomboki was active in Kalonge, Bunyakiri, Ziralo, southern Walikale, and parts of Masisi. As the movement spread and its numbers grew, the commanders made attempts to strengthen its internal organization. ‘Every village needs a chief; every rebellion needs a command,’ Eyadema’s chief of staff Mutima said. ‘We needed to make sure that discipline was maintained.’<sup>32</sup> While at the start of the movement in Kalehe it was difficult to distinguish Raia Mutomboki members from the rest of the population, starting in around July 2012 a series of command posts were set up, with commanders either from Shabunda or recruited locally among former Mai-Mai combatants.

Once the FDLR was flushed out of Bunyakiri, Raia Mutomboki combatants started to patrol in urban centres, first hesitantly and only at night, later on also during the day. As they grew—seizing some weapons from the FDLR and obtaining others from demobilized soldiers—their by FARDC commanders to limit the movement’s military power or even to arrest some of its members led to armed confrontations. In November 2012, the Raia Mutomboki group stopped a delegation of North Kivu provincial authorities and confiscated a significant amount of arms and ammunition. The authorities were relocating from Goma to Beni via Bukavu, following the M23’s advance on the North Kivu capital. During this incident, the Raia Mutomboki declared itself the only legitimate authority and insisted that the delegation ask formal permission to pass. The following day, the delegation headed back to Bukavu under FARDC escort—without their weapons and many of their personal belongings. A further attempt to stop the delegation before it entered the Kahuzi-Biega National Park failed. It was already becoming obvious that a power struggle between the Raia Mutomboki and the FARDC was developing that would provoke further clashes.

The next serious military confrontation began on 30 December 2012, when a Congolese army patrol tried to disarm a group of Raia Mutomboki fighters that was patrolling in the Bunyakiri area. This sparked fighting

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32 Usalama Project interview with Albert Mutima Muba, Katatwa, 9 December 2012.

that killed the second in command of the army's 902<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. Despite mediation efforts, fighting continued in February 2013 in Bunyakiri and also in Walikale and Walungu.

In an effort to reduce the movement's power, the FARDC tried to drive a wedge between the Raia Mutomboki's Rega and Tembo constituencies. On 10 January 2013, army officers of Tembo origin met with local Raia Mutomboki leaders, pressing them to integrate into the army or disarm, arguing that the Raia Mutomboki was a Rega movement that would only bring further suffering to the local population. Following the talks, Eyadema's chief of staff Mutima Muba, himself a Rega, was asked to return to Shabunda. Some Raia Mutomboki factions responded positively, if hesitantly, to the call to integrate into the FARDC—a call that has so far not been realised. But factions under control of ex-Mai Mai combatants and the units stationed in Kalonge resisted demobilization efforts.

In early 2013, the Raia Mutomboki movement was confronted with various divisions in Kalehe and Walikale as a result of growing tensions between Rega commanders and Tembo recruits over the movement's strategy, its impact on local society, and growing tensions between former Mai-Mai commanders and new recruits over claims to leadership positions. Also, while many accepted that the group had succeeded in driving out the FDLR, it was increasingly seen by local communities as a security threat rather than a protection force. In March 2013, a new effort was made to create a more autonomous local structure of the Raia Mutomboki, with ex-Mai Mai combatants in commanding positions. But for the local population and public authorities, the militia was increasingly received as a primary threat to local security and stability.

### Ethnic violence in Masisi (2012–13)

What was probably the bloodiest chapter in Raia Mutomboki history unfolded in southern Masisi between April and September 2012, as the battle between Raia Mutomboki and the FDLR moved into areas inhabited by a large Congolese Hutu population. Here, the Raia Mutomboki's tactics, accentuated by local long-standing communal tensions, resulted in the massacre of over 200 people. A report by the UN's Office for the



High Commissioner for Human Rights, the most reliable investigation of the violence in southern Masisi during this time, states that this is probably an underestimate of the number of deaths.<sup>33</sup>

South-western Masisi had been an FDLR bastion for many years. They had their main headquarters here, and many of their families lived in these remote and fertile hills. It was a strategic area, given its proximity to South Kivu and to the mineral-rich areas of Walikale and Kalehe. Above all, there was a very large Hutu population in these areas, and the FDLR had established alliances with local Hutu elites and militia. During the RCD war of 1998–2003, the FDLR had collaborated extensively with the self-declared chief of Katoyi sector, Bigembe Turinkinko, and his Mongol armed group.<sup>34</sup>

When the Raia Mutomboki arrived in this area, it upset a delicate balance that had been established over the previous decade. Southern Masisi—especially the *groupements* of Ufamandu I and II, and of Nyamaboko I and II—is more ethnically mixed than the rest of the territory, with a large Tembo and Hunde population often in conflict with the Hutu and Tutsi communities. The latter are perceived as immigrants, with many arriving only in the 1970s from other over-populated parts of Masisi, as well as from Goma after the volcanic eruption there in 1977.<sup>35</sup> Customary power in this area lies in the hands of the Hunde and Tembo, who consider themselves to be indigenous, which has made many Hutu anxious over access to customary land titles.

In the military context, however, the area had been relatively united until the arrival of the Raia Mutomboki. Hutu militia collaborated with the FDLR, as did the Mai-Mai Kifuafua, who are predominantly Tembo

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33 UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ‘Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on Human Rights Violations Perpetrated by Armed Groups during Attacks on Villages in Ufamandu I and II, Nyamaboko I And II and Kibabi Groupements, Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province, Between April and September 2012’, 14 November 2012.

34 Stearns, *PARECO*, pp. 15–17.

35 Stearns, *North Kivu*, pp. 15–21.

and who control much of Ufamandu I and II *groupements*. ‘We had no choice,’ said Limenzi ‘Bridge-Cutter’ Kanganga, the deputy commander of the Kifuafua. ‘They were too strong.’<sup>36</sup>

When the Raia Mutomboki arrived, the balance of forces shifted, as Rega commanders swayed the Tembo to their side in their battle against the Hutu rebels. This change was visible in Chambucha (Walikale), as the Raia Mutomboki began preparing for their entry into Tembo territory by crossing the Bukavu-Kisangani road in pursuit of the FDLR. On 20 April 2012, the FDLR invited local Tembo chiefs and Kifuafua commanders to a meeting in Karaba. According to one participant, the FDLR commander presiding over the meeting said: ‘We have fought the Raia Mutomboki in Shabunda for a year now. We know them and the troubles they will bring here. Know that if you join them, it will bring you nothing but death and destruction.’<sup>37</sup> Scared by these threats, the local leaders returned to Chambucha, close to the Raia Mutomboki’s area of control, and told the Rega commanders that they should not enter into their territory. This flimsy ceasefire, however, was doomed to crumble, especially since both military forces had few ties to local society. On 28 April 2012, the FDLR attacked Chambucha, allegedly in response to the above-mentioned killing of FDLR dependents in Shalio, triggering a massive recruitment of young Tembo into Raia Mutomboki ranks. ‘All the kids from our village went to Katatwa, where the Rega had their *dawa*, and were initiated into the movement,’ one village elder in Chambucha remembered.<sup>38</sup>

The Kifuafua quickly followed suit and changed their name to Raia Mutomboki, seeing that its alliance with the FDLR would not endear them to the local population. ‘The FDLR didn’t trust us, they thought we were Raia Mutomboki,’ said Limenzi, ‘and the local youths all wanted

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36 Usalama Project interview with Limenzi Kanganga, Chambucha, 8 December 2012.

37 Usalama Project Interviewee #410, Chambucha, 9 December 2012.

38 Usalama Project Interviewee #410, Hombo, 10 December 2012.

us to fight against them’.<sup>39</sup> Interviews with local elders, however, suggest that the top Kifuafua leadership under Colonel Delphin Mbaenda saw an opportunity in the Raia Mutomboki to enhance their reputation, pad their ranks with new recruits, and increase their military power with a new *dawa*. ‘Delphin took the *dawa* because it was a craze here, all the youths wanted to have it to be able to fight,’ one of them said.<sup>40</sup> Delphin delegated his own son to become one of the witchdoctors deployed with the Raia Mutomboki troops in the area.<sup>41</sup> Two Kifuafua commanders who refused to support the group were forced out of Kifuafua, with one of them, Jeremy, killed during an armed confrontation with the Raia Mutomboki in May 2012.

Nonetheless, the fact that Limenzi attended another meeting to mend relations with the FDLR, in Kiterema on 7 May 2012, suggests that other Raia Mutomboki commanders from Shabunda were truly dominant and that the Kifuafua were just following their lead. ‘In order to prevent any suspicion that the Kifuafua were collaborating with the Raia Mutomboki, we agreed on joint patrols,’ recalled Justin Kahasha, the acting chief of Ufamandu II *groupement*, lamenting that the FDLR violated the agreement.<sup>42</sup>

After the initial altercation in Chambucha, the Raia Mutomboki spread rapidly into Masisi, with tit-for-tat killings spreading all the way to Remeka by the end of May. All the villages between Mbeshembeshe and Remeka—the administrative headquarters of Ufamandu I and II *groupements* respectively—were burned, as were 11 villages in Nyamaboko I and II.<sup>43</sup> The violence was compounded by the Congolese army’s decision in April 2012 to withdraw its troops from this area to reinforce their positions against the M23 rebellion in Rutshuru and northern Masisi.

39 Usalama Project interview with Limenzi Kanganga, Chambucha, 8 December 2012.

40 Usalama Project Interviewee #409, Hombo, 9 December 2012.

41 Usalama Project Interviewee #405, Minova, 16 February 2013.

42 Usalama Project interview with Justin Kahasha, Mbeshembeshe, 18 December 2012.

43 OHCHR, ‘Report on Human Rights Violations Perpetrated by Armed Groups’, p. 12.

Much as it had in Shabunda during the regimentation process, this produced a vacuum that other armed groups sought to fill.

The Raia Mutomboki offensive reinforced collaboration between Rwandan and Congolese Hutu armed groups, as the FDLR joined forces with the Nyatura, a mostly Hutu militia based in the highlands of Kalehe and Masisi, and led by deserters from the Congolese army.<sup>44</sup> These units also committed abuses; a UN investigation concluded that while the Raia Mutomboki attacked with the specific intent of killing civilians, the FDLR/Nyatura coalition burned villages and killed at least 143 civilians between April and October 2012.<sup>45</sup> When the FDLR high command took the decision in April and May 2012 to vacate its strongholds in southern Masisi due to the Raia Mutomboki attacks, some FDLR troops integrated into Nyatura groups.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Raia Mutomboki offensives in this area was their collaboration with M23 commanders, in particular Colonel Eric Bagege, a Tutsi from Ufamandu I who defected from the FARDC in late July 2012. Bagege travelled to southern Masisi, where he contacted local Raia Mutomboki and Kifuafua commanders, arguing that they both had the same Hutu enemies, and that he would help them find arms caches that the CNDP had left behind around Ngungu. Several sources, including the UN Group of Experts, report that officers close to Bagege had laid the groundwork for his defection and collaboration with Tembo leaders earlier in the year, not least by providing the latter with weapons and ammunition.<sup>46</sup> These leaders were further swayed with cash incentives, as well as by the backlash on the part of Hutu militia who had begun to join forces with the FDLR against the Raia Mutomboki. ‘For the Tembo, the priority was fighting against the Hutu. If they had

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44 Stearns, *PARECO*, pp. 39–43.

45 OHCHR, ‘Report on Human Rights Violations Perpetrated by Armed Groups’, pp. 10–12

46 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 (2011)’, 15 November 2012.

to ally briefly with the M23 to do so, that was acceptable,' said a local civil society leader.<sup>47</sup>

The Raia Mutomboki did collaborate with Badege in an attack against Ngungu on 27 August 2012, but the collaboration was short-lived and opportunistic. There have also been attempts at collaboration between Colonel Albert Kahasha, a FARDC defector and M23 ally, and Raia Mutomboki factions in eastern Shabunda, but these were short-lived as well. In general, all Raia Mutomboki interviewed for this report fervently denounced the M23 rebellion, while rank-and-file troops spoke in virulent terms against the M23 and the Tutsi community in general.

The fighting in southern Masisi eventually calmed down following peace talks between the Raia Mutomboki and Nyatura in October and November 2012, mediated by political leaders from Goma along with local chiefs. These peace deals were then bolstered by a more formal deal on 5 February 2013, which did not include any of the aforementioned Raia Mutomboki factions, but did involve the Nyatura, as well as a group called *Forces de défense congolaise* (FDC, Congolese Defence Forces) that sometimes calls itself Raia Mutomboki, as well.<sup>48</sup> Progressively, the former Kifuafula command also began to distance itself from the Raia Mutomboki, denying that they had ever collaborated together.

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 47 Usalama Project Interviewee #405, Minova, 15 February 2013.

48 The Masisi peace deal was signed by the *Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain* (APCLS, Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo), the Nyatura of Colonel Kapopi, and the *Forces de défense congolaise* of Colonel Bwira.

### 3. Analysing the emergence and success of the Raia Mutomboki

The Raia Mutomboki represents a challenge for analysts: an armed group with its roots in the countryside but that has been able to cross ethnic divides, spanning several hundred kilometres. It is decentralized, ill-disciplined, and has a loose chain of command—but has been able to flush the FDLR, one of the strongest military forces in the region, out of its former strongholds. And it is a counterpoint to the kind of top-down mobilization exemplified by the M23 or PARECO, with straightforward ideology and reference to local rituals playing a more important role than urban elites in its mobilization and internal cohesion.

Despite its parochial character, the appearance of the Raia Mutomboki, and particularly its development into a powerful military movement in 2011, was closely linked to national and regional trends. The most obvious driver was continued insecurity, in particular FDLR abuses. The FDLR alone, however, was not sufficient to prompt mobilization; after all, the FDLR is present across the eastern DRC and has maintained good relations with some communities.

Some responsibility for the violence, ironically, must be accorded to the tumultuous political and security developments prompted by the various Congolese peace processes initiated since 2003: first, the departure of Mai-Mai from many rural areas in 2004-2006 in order to integrate into the national army, and the isolation of the FDLR during the transition; then the launch of massive military operations (*Umoja Wetu* and *Kimia II*) against the FDLR in the interests of the rapprochement between Congo and Rwanda that came about in late 2008; and finally, the security vacuum produced by the regimentation process, itself intended as a corrective to the pro-CNDP bias within the Congolese army. This history serves as a warning to future peace processes, especially those built on the back of military operations.

The history of the Raia Mutomboki—as with many other armed

groups in the eastern and north-eastern DRC—also highlights the lack of focus on governance reform and state presence in rural areas, where battles over customary power, identity, and land, and the absence of a transparent and functioning governance framework have drawn the Raia Mutomboki into a diverse set of local conflicts. For example, several local chiefs in rural Shabunda lamented the government’s neglect: ‘Since the Raia Mutomboki arrived here, since these FDLR massacres started, not once has the administrator of Shabunda, or anyone from Bukavu, come to ask us what our problems are.’<sup>49</sup> The weakness of the state has encouraged local strongmen—customary chiefs, but increasingly also national politicians—to support the group in order to bolster their political influence.

Several factors peculiar to the Raia Mutomboki were key to its success. First, they relied on mass mobilization. The group had a committed core of leaders and fighters, but for military operations they simply called on all able-bodied men from the villages to take up arms, with most resorting to machetes, spears, and crude weapons. This gave the Raia Mutomboki a dual advantage: manpower and good intelligence on FDLR locations. More importantly, it left the FDLR vulnerable to attacks against their dependents, who lived in separate camps. ‘It was a guerrilla battle against a guerrilla force,’ said one Raia Mutomboki commander. ‘They couldn’t outsmart us in our own forests.’<sup>50</sup> An FDLR lieutenant colonel who surrendered to MONUSCO in March 2011 confirmed this, saying that he feared the Raia Mutomboki much more than the Congolese army, as the former targeted their women and children.<sup>51</sup>

Second, the Raia Mutomboki relied on customary power structures and referred to local traditions that reinforced their capacity to embed themselves in local society. Local rituals were turned into preconditions

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 49 Usalama Project Interviewee #411, Kigulube, 12 December 2012.

50 Usalama Project Interviewee #412, Evary, 13 December 2012.

51 Confidential internal MONUSCO debriefing document, on file with the Usalama Project.

for joining the movement and for protecting during combat. They also relied on customary chiefs to spread their message among the population and to mobilize recruits and resources. In many cases, these chiefs also played a very active role within the movement, although this varied from place to place, reaching its height in Bunyakiri and southern Shabunda, while much feebler in northern and north-eastern Shabunda.

Armed groups, however, tend to develop their own dynamics and interests, becoming dislocated from the forces that initially gave birth to them. The same holds for the Raia Mutomboki, whose members are increasingly vying for local power by interfering in local conflict resolution and policing, leading to an increased number of direct confrontations with the Congolese army. Despite their claims to the contrary, many Raia Mutomboki factions have also begun to impose taxes and abuses are becoming more widespread—even perpetrated against the population they claim to protect. What started as a local self-protection force had inexorably transformed into a militia.

The group has also proved to have a very flexible agenda. While its main target was originally the FDLR, today it has positioned itself—often in virulent and xenophobic terms—as a movement for the protection of the country against anyone they dub ‘outsiders’, including Congolese Hutu and Tutsi communities. As a result, traditional social and economic exchanges with these populations have been greatly reduced in areas under their control.

### Structure of the movement

The Raia Mutomboki today is not one unitary movement but a series of different armed groups, bound only by a name and a broad ideology of self-defence. In early 2013, four broad Raia Mutomboki clusters could be distinguished, in southern Shabunda, northern Shabunda/Bunyakiri/southern Walikale, north-eastern Shabunda, and south-eastern Walikale/southern Masisi (see Appendix). It is worth stressing that none of these had a coherent chain of command. Besides these groups, others have sprung up, inspired by the Raia Mutomboki’s ideology and popularity,



from Fizi and Mwenga territory in southern South Kivu province, to Pangí territory in eastern Maniema province.

### Raia Mutomboki support networks

Compared with other armed groups, the Raia Mutomboki have few ties to national or regional elites, although that is slowly changing. As their reputation has grown, politicians have begun to court them. Perhaps the best, albeit still ambiguous example, has been Anselme Energunga, a parliamentarian from Kalehe and former Mai-Mai commander who has produced and distributed videos praising the Raia Mutomboki and denouncing what he alleged was UN backing for the FDLR. It is unclear, however, how much influence Energunga or any other politicians have over Raia Mutomboki groups.

The greatest support for the insurgency comes from local society: customary chiefs, civil society leaders, and the general population. There have, however, been some differences in the kind and degree of support offered in different zones of operation—and the extent of local support has shifted over time. While in most areas the movement was welcomed with great enthusiasm on its arrival, local support has waned as the group evolved from a protection role to that of a controlling force that taxes the population. Bunyakiri is perhaps the clearest example of this trend and of the complex relation between the group and local society.

As mentioned earlier, in FDLR-affected areas of Kalehe territory, the Raia Mutomboki had a magnetic effect on the local population. Rega commanders arriving from Shabunda began by eliciting support from customary chiefs, starting in Kalonge. These chiefs played a pivotal role in youth recruitment into the movement, organizing popular rallies to explain the objectives of the movement and to mobilize potential fighters.

The Raia Mutomboki expansion produced direct consequences, as attacks against FDLR prompted harsh retaliation known as the FDLR *en colère* (in anger), which then in turn spurred more young recruits to join the Raia Mutomboki, often with the support of their parents. Self-defence, the protection of the population, and the prospect of regaining access to farmland were the driving motives for most of these recruits

and supporters. For former Mai-Mai combatants, whose integration into local society after demobilization had often been rocky, the group represented a unique opportunity to improve their social status and economic situation.

Traditional rituals reinforced the capacity of the Raia Mutomboki to embed itself in local society, especially the *Lutende* ceremony, also called *Yando*. Traditionally this was a coming-of-age ceremony, performed at puberty prior to circumcision and lasting several months. It was revived by the Raia Mutomboki with the help of customary chiefs, and was transformed into a ritual only lasting a few days but becoming a precondition to entering the group and to being protected against the enemy by the *dawa*. One customary chief explained: ‘In the Yando ceremony, the youths hear the voice of Kimbilikiti, our spirit, who is the same spirit who makes the *dawa* strong. That’s why the Raia Mutomboki are also called Force Ntakulengwe, which means: “Get out of the way, Kimbilikiti is coming!”’<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the armed groups that previously operated in the area, the Raia Mutomboki is an open movement, in which people can stay or leave as they please. It is also a relatively egalitarian movement with clear prescriptions of conduct within the group, but with little command structure or hierarchy. In several areas around Bunyakiri, the local population convened to elect their own commanders by popular acclamation when the armed group was first formed.<sup>53</sup> The spoils of conflict are often distributed equally among combatants. And being part of the Raia Mutomboki does not exclude other day-to-day activities outside the group, as its members do not formally become soldiers but remain civilians. As a result, it is often hard to distinguish Raia Mutomboki members from the rest of the population.

Its popularity as a protection force, however, has changed over time as

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52 Usalama Project Interviewee #410, Chambucha, 7 December 2012.

53 Usalama Project Interviewee #413, Hombo, 8 December 2012; Usalama Project Interviewee #414, Hombo, 7 December 2012.

attempts to restructure the movement into a more sophisticated military organization transformed its relations with society. As illustrated above, this provoked clashes with the Congolese army; as the state has not been able to protect the population against the FDLR, the Raia Mutomboki claim to be the only legitimate protection force and refuse to take orders from state authorities.

Local state authorities, including administrators, chiefs of police, and intelligence services, undoubtedly view the growing power of the movement as a direct threat, and are calling for its disarmament and demobilization. Indeed, administrators who refuse to support the Raia Mutomboki are increasingly being targeted themselves. One example is the arrest of the *chef du centre* of Kamananga in September 2012, under suspicion of collaboration with the FDLR during its attack at the end of May. Similar cases have been reported elsewhere in Kahele and Walikale territories. The frequent clashes with the Congolese army and threats against MONUSCO form part of this trend. ‘For us, the Congolese army is the same thing as M23,’ said self-styled General Sisawa Kindo, referring to the many rwandophone officers in the army, ‘and MONUSCO has been giving weapons and ammunition to the FDLR.’<sup>54</sup> This latter accusation has become widespread and has made it difficult for the UN to operate in the Raia Mutomboki’s areas of operation.

This tense relationship with administrators is in sharp contrast to the more comfortable links with customary authorities, who have often been the Raia Mutomboki leadership’s main liaison with local communities. Customary chiefs are recognized as the real political authorities and are regularly requested to give advice. In some cases, they are active local representatives of the group. They also provide the group with direct logistical support and resources, even if in most cases clandestinely. According to local sources, the Raia Mutomboki in the Buloho *chefferie* were even given the right to collect contributions from the local population.

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54 Usalama Project interview with self-styled General Sisawa Kindo, by telephone, 27 February 2013.

This close relationship, however, also brings problems, and struggles over customary leadership are perhaps the best example of this. Most of these conflicts have a long history. In many areas of the Kivus, the RCD named its own customary chiefs during the Second Congo War (1998–2003), sometimes from within an incumbent’s family, creating persistent feuds. Elsewhere, conflicts arose due to succession struggles following the death of a chief. The Raia Mutomboki has begun to take sides in these conflicts, setting the stage for potentially brutal internecine altercations. One example is the case of *Kalima groupement*, where the former chief, Jacques Musikami Nzibiro II, has supported the Raia Mutomboki as part of his struggle to regain power after being removed by customary elders, who favoured his younger brother, Jean-Claude Musikami Ngalamira, over him, going against their father’s will. The Raia Mutomboki were divided over the issue. Many demobilized Mai-Mai combatants joined the faction supporting Ngalamira, who during the Congolese war was loyal to Padiri’s Mai-Mai and who currently resides in Kinshasa, while others have been swayed by Nzibiro. This militarization of customary conflicts is a matter of great concern for the population.

There are many other examples of the Raia Mutomboki becoming embroiled in local conflicts. As one observer stated, ‘the Raia Mutomboki have already transformed themselves into judges, administrators, police, and local chiefs, and are addressing themselves the problems of the local population.’<sup>55</sup> Several cases have been reported of their involvement in land conflict resolutions. Elsewhere, they force the local population to participate in *salongo* (communal labour). While initially the population contributed voluntarily to the movement, today these contributions have become obligatory in many (but not all) areas that they occupy. As one local administrator said: ‘The Raia Mutomboki helped us with the FDLR, that is true. But I am afraid that they solved one problem by creating 20 others.’<sup>56</sup>

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55 Usalama Project Interviewee #420, Bulambika, 19 December 2012.

56 Usalama Project Interviewee #415, Hombo, 11 December 2012.

## 4. Conclusions and policy considerations

In previous reports on the M23, PARECO, and the UPC, the Usalama Project has highlighted the main policy challenges that concern all armed groups in the eastern DRC: an ailing state that hampers the adjudication of land and customary conflicts; a weak army that has produced a security vacuum; and a political logic prevalent among elites, whereby armed groups are used for political influence and leverage. While the Raia Mutomboki is certainly concerned by these broad challenges, its specific characteristics demand a different approach. While PARECO and the M23 are good examples of armed groups that were to a large extent initiated and sustained by military and political elites, the Raia Mutomboki continues to be mostly a bottom-up mobilization of young people in response to security threats.

The Congolese army's approach to armed groups in the Kivus is currently one of piecemeal co-option. Over the past few years, and continuing today, it has tried to buy off rebel leaders by offering them money and positions in the FARDC; the Kinshasa government, in particular its military leaders, sees this strategy as the easiest way to deal with these armed groups and reduce their power. This approach has only been partially successful; in most cases, even if commanders leave their bastion, splinter groups are formed by deserters who are unwilling to leave their areas of origin, made comfortable by the taxes they can gather and reluctant to join a disorganized army that is riddled with patronage networks, in which their military abilities and loyalties will not be appreciated.

This approach has also been counterproductive in other ways. Efforts to co-opt armed groups have resulted in an army that includes not only thousands of former rebels but also potentially divisive parallel chains of command. More seriously, it has increased incentives for opportunists to create new armed groups in the hope of getting cash pay-outs and senior army ranks. 'Armed groups have become a bustling business sector in the eastern Congo,' a local human rights activist argued. 'For soldiers

and local politicians alike, it has become good business.<sup>57</sup> This co-option approach has been even less successful with the Raia Mutomboki. In contrast to other groups, Raia Mutomboki has a very diffuse command structure, which makes this strategy difficult.

Dealing with the Raia Mutomboki should primarily entail considering them as a symptom of insecurity, a result of the lack of any constructive state presence, which has allowed local conflicts to go unaddressed. A comprehensive approach will require addressing the security challenges posed by the FDLR, and crafting a demobilization program that can learn from past mistakes and that is part of a comprehensive reform process of the security sector. Perhaps the stiffest challenge—one common to dealing with all armed groups in the Kivus—will be improving local state capacity and governance to prevent conflicts over customary power and land from evolving into full-blown armed mobilization.

## Dealing with the FDLR

Much has been written about the FDLR.<sup>58</sup> The concurrent Raia Mutomboki and M23 crises, however, have brought the group back to international attention with increased urgency. The FDLR has been decimated since 2009, due to the various military operations launched by the Congolese and Rwandan armies, which have triggered a large-scale FDLR demobilization, diminishing its strength by at least 60 per cent over the past four years. Most recent estimates put the FDLR between 1,500–2,500 troops.<sup>59</sup>

The Raia Mutomboki surge, coming on the heels of the FARDC's offensives, pushed the FDLR out of positions they had held for over

57 Usalama Project interview with Raphael Wakenge, Bukavu, 12 June 2012.

58 ICG, 'Solving the FDLR Problem Once and for All'; María Paz Ortega Rodríguez, 'The FDLR as an Obstacle to Peace in the DRC', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 23, pp. 176-182; Human Rights Watch, "'You Will Be Punished': Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo', December 2009, pp. 48–51; Hans Romkema, 'An End in Sight? Opportunities for the Disarmament & Repatriation of the FDLR in the Democratic Republic of Congo', Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) Dissemination Note No. 6, August 2009.

59 Usalama Project interviewee #416, Goma, 13 February 2013.

a decade. In April-May 2012, the FDLR high command was forced to move its headquarters out of south-western Masisi towards the border between Walikale, Rutshuru, and Masisi territories. In South Kivu, the FDLR has also been forced to consolidate, moving many of its troops out of its former strongholds in Kalehe and Shabunda, toward the Mitumba mountains overlooking the Rusizi Plain.

At the same time, however, the M23 crisis has provided the Rwandan rebels with a lifeline, as the hard-pressed Congolese army has tentatively begun to reach out to the FDLR for help. There have been reports, relayed by Congolese officers and UN officials, of this rapprochement in both North and South Kivu, beginning in late 2012 and confirmed by the FDLR.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps linked, there has also been a recurrence of FDLR attacks from bases in the eastern DRC and pushing deep into Rwandan territory; these began in November 2012 and have at times involved several hundred soldiers.<sup>61</sup> These raids were made possible because of the M23 attack on Goma: it created a security vacuum along the Congo-Rwanda border, which the M23 did not have the manpower to patrol, allowing the FDLR to penetrate easily from their bases in the Virunga National Park.

In the past, the answer to the FDLR has always been force, especially counterinsurgency operations by the Congolese and, briefly, Rwandan armies. This policy has often been counterproductive, causing extensive displacement and death amongst the local population. Yet chances of a negotiated settlement are not good. The Rwandan government refuses to negotiate with the group, and, even if it did, would be hard pressed to offer security guarantees for some in its leadership, including its commander, General Sylvestre Mudacumura, who is sought on an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for nine counts of war crimes. Nonetheless, much can be done beyond simply conducting military operations.

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60 Usalama Project Interviewee #403, by telephone, 15 February 2013.

61 Reuters, 'Rwanda says FDLR rebels cross from Congo, attack wardens', 2 December 2012.

Life has become increasingly hard and dangerous for FDLR leaders. Over recent years, several senior officers—including the chief of staff, several battalion commanders, and their spokesperson—have been killed in targeted assassinations. The door should be further opened for those who want to leave and are not wanted for war crimes or crimes against humanity, but do not trust the Rwandan government or have little financial interest in forsaking the spoils of the eastern DRC for a paltry demobilization package in Rwanda. For these officers, donor nations and governments in the region should consider a third country of exile, as was suggested in the November 2007 Nairobi Communiqué signed by the Congolese and Rwandan governments.<sup>62</sup>

For rank-and-file soldiers, especially those who were born in the DRC or married Congolese, Kinshasa should consider offering relocation within the country on a case-by-case basis, although these applicants would have to submit to rigorous conditions, including complete demobilization. To these ends, there needs to be a better sharing of intelligence between the Rwandan and Congolese governments and the UN demobilization team that deals with the FDLR in the field.

It is inevitable that Congolese military operations will be resumed against the FDLR. However, given the likelihood of retaliatory attacks against the population and collateral damage, those attacks should target the high command, not the lower-ranking officers and units in the field, and should adhere to international humanitarian law. That could reduce displacement, open up divisions within the command structure, and lead to much quicker demobilization. At the same time, the FARDC urgently needs to invest in a strategy to protect civilians during their operations, through a clear set of orders given to commanders in the field, including curfews, barracking, and the use of military police to enforce discipline.<sup>63</sup>

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62 UN Security Council, S/2007/679, Nairobi Communiqué, 21 November 2007.

63 Oxfam, 'Commodities of War. Communities speak out on the true cost of war in eastern DRC' (Briefing paper Nr. 164), November 2012.



Finally, the UN demobilization program needs to be reinforced. In particular, their strategy of placing demobilization antennae in key locations, and of directly approaching FDLR officers for defection, should be given more effective support.

### Tailoring a demobilization programme

The Kinshasa government has opposed the creation of a new demobilization programme for Congolese ex-combatants, fearing that this could create perverse incentives to mobilize new groups. While this fear is well-founded, given past experiences, it should not leave the remaining armed groups—which the government calls ‘refractory groups’ and were estimated to number around 4,000 combatants before the M23 crisis—with no option other than fighting or army integration.<sup>64</sup>

Each armed group has its own dynamic, and both donor nations and the Congolese government should engage with each one differently. In the case of the Raia Mutomboki, it is clear that the communities from which they have emerged have extensive influence on the leadership, which is in itself fragmented and weak. In the past, the government bought off rebel leaders and paid little attention to either the rank-and-file or the communities from which they emerged. This has promoted impunity and done nothing to prevent future rebellions. The lack of any real and sustained effort at reintegration has made the Raia Mutomboki an attractive alternative for demobilized Mai-Mai and RCD combatants.

But the Raia Mutomboki should also be understood as an expression of a dire need for security and protection. Kinshasa will have to address the concerns of local communities, offering development and security in exchange for pressure to rein in local militias. This will require a new strategy for community policing and for dealing with the FDLR, and reconciliation conferences will need to be held in some of the worst affected areas to calm tensions. At the same time, a new demobilization programme should be offered, with rigorous vetting and biometric

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64 Usalama Project Interviewee #417, Bukavu, 13 March 2011.

identification to prevent a recycling of former demobilized soldiers, and incorporating a carefully-designed reintegration component.

This process will have to avoid the main mistake of previous demobilization exercises: insufficient follow-up. Between 2004 and 2007, as many as 30 per cent of fighters were disarmed but did not benefit from a reintegration package, and many weapons were hidden rather than handed over to the state. Given the derelict Congolese state, addressing these deficiencies will be a serious challenge.

### Building and decentralizing the state

The lynchpin of success in stabilizing the Kivus will be the creation of strong, accountable, and impartial state institutions. This will be a long-term process that will rely largely on the political will of the Congolese government to carry out necessary reforms. It is a question of capacity: a large majority of the population has no access to the few courts in the Kivus; there are not enough police to maintain law and order; and the administrative officials who are present often lack adequate resources for general operating costs—everything from office paper, fuel for their motorcycles, to access to mobile phone networks.

The various factions of the Raia Mutomboki have effectively taken advantage of this lack of state control to position themselves as alternative sources of authority. The movement exploits unresolved local customary conflicts, the lack of justice mechanisms, and the absence of officials to promote ethnic tensions. Several processes are underway to address this state frailty, none of which have made much headway.

The DRC's constitution, which was promulgated on 18 February 2006 by President Joseph Kabila, envisions radical changes to governance in rural areas through decentralization and local elections.<sup>65</sup> Forty per cent of national revenues are supposed to be kept by the provinces, of which another 40 per cent is supposed to be reserved for local administration,

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 65 World Intellectual Property Organization, 'Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo', 18 February 2006.

the level of the state most important for the management of conflicts in rural areas. However, these mandated shifts in revenue distribution have, for the most part, not been carried out.<sup>66</sup> Worse yet, the local elections that were supposed to have created councils to hold chiefs accountable have been delayed by over five years. These elections, and the decentralization process, will have to be carried out with careful planning to prevent the creation of another, unaccountable layer of bureaucracy. In particular, this administration should be helped to promote local ethnic cohabitation and reconciliation, and provide a framework for local conflict resolution.

The main international approach to these challenges of institutional reform has been through the Kinshasa government's *Programme de stabilisation et de reconstruction de l'est du Congo* (STAREC, Stabilization and Reconstruction Programme for the Eastern DRC), supported by donor nations through the ISSSS since 2009. It was designed to back up the March 2009 peace deal between the government and armed groups with an institutional development programme for the Kivus. It faltered, however, due to its technocratic approach—prioritizing infrastructure over governance, and focusing on local administration without addressing the national institutions in which they were embedded—and due to the Congolese government's lack of ownership.

A review of both STAREC and the ISSSS was undertaken in 2011-12 and a new, improved version is currently being designed. It promises to be more inclusive, enhancing the capacity of local communities to shape reforms and hold their leaders accountable through what are called 'platforms for democratic dialogue' in rural villages. For this new approach to be successful, however, it will have to tackle institutions from the top and the bottom, forging a new consensus behind a substantial

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66 Herbert Weiss and Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, 'Decentralization and the DRC: An overview' (New York: Center for International Cooperation, 2009); Kai Kaiser, 'Decentralization in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Opportunities and Risks' (International Studies Program Working paper, Georgia State University, 2008).

engagement with President Kabila at the centre and the provincial government. Institutions such as the police, the army, and the justice system are national bodies and will have to be overhauled root-and-branch, despite government recalcitrance. Indeed, the new Framework Agreement explicitly calls for Congolese institutional reforms, under the auspices of a new UN special envoy, and provides an opportunity for donors to establish a new collaborative relationship with the Congolese government that is rooted in reform.

## Appendix: Raia Mutomboki structure, January 2013

### SOUTHERN SHABUNDA

Jean Musumbu, still considered the spiritual godfather to all Raia Mutomboki and an advisor to all Shabunda groups, heads this cluster. He is based between Penekusu and Kalole and exerts influence (although perhaps not absolute control) from Mulungu in the north-east to Itula in the south-east. He has been reluctant to expand his group, turning down offers of support from politicians and allowing his group to wane since the FDLR largely abandoned this part of the province. Some of his important commanders include:

- Mulungu: Bimpenzi
- Penekusu and Kitindi: Karolo and Kasapar
- Baliga: Makombo and Natalis

### NORTHERN SHABUNDA/BUNYAKIRI/SOUTHERN WALIKALE

This group, by far the largest, is the only truly multi-ethnic Raia Mutomboki branch, including Rega, Kano, and Tembo. Its charismatic leader, Eyadema Mugugu, was arrested by the FARDC in June 2012 in Walikale and transferred to Ndolo military prison in Kinshasa, leaving Juriste Kikuni to lead the group from his base at Nduma, in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. Also called Force Ntakulegwe ('Get out of the way, Kimbilikiti [a powerful spirit] is coming!'), this group began restructuring in June 2012. In March 2013, the Raia Mutomboki operating in Bunyakiri-Kalehe adopted a new structure, replacing original Rega commanders by Tembo commanders in an attempt to distance themselves from the Rega dominance and to reinforce their own position in anticipation of possible negotiations with the Kabila government.

#### NORTH-EASTERN SHABUNDA

This is perhaps the most fragmented group, although they share a broad geographical area stretching between Katchungu in the west to Chulwe in the east. Another characteristic of this cluster is the prevalence of army defectors, who play important roles in the various chains of command. The main factions here are:

- Self-styled General Sisawa Kindo and Daniel Meshe, based in Kigulube (although often at odds with each other)
- Major Ngandu Lundimu and Major Donat Kengwa, based in Nzovu
- Makombo and Natalis, based in Lubila
- Maheshe, based around Chulwe

#### SOUTH-EASTERN WALIKALE AND SOUTHERN MASISI

This group consists mostly of Mai-Mai Kifuafua who renamed themselves Raia Mutomboki in May 2012 during the inter-ethnic violence in Masisi. They are considered by Kikuni's group to fall under their command, a claim rejected by the Kifuafua's main commander, Colonel Delphin Mbaenda. They are based in Busurungi and reach as far eastwards as Ngungu. According to Limenzi, a meeting in early December 2012 merged their group with the former FDC under self-styled General Luanda Butu, which would change this structure. Commanders on the ground, however, did not seem to be aware of these changes. Their chain of command was:

- Division Commander: Colonel (self-styled General) Delphin Mbaenda
- Deputy Commander: Colonel Limenzi Kanganga
- Chief of Staff: Biofu Matata
- 1st Brigade (in Kilambo): Colonel Bienfait Kilombo
- 2nd Brigade (Ufamandu II): Colonel Bilikoliko Migenya
- 3rd Brigade (Ufamandu I): Colonel Noa Katamasoko
- 4th Brigade (Mianga): Colonel Sango

## Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases

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|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Accord global et inclusif</i> | Global and Inclusive Agreement; peace agreement signed in December 2002 in Pretoria, officially concluding the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (signed in Zambia in 1999) and ending the Second Congo War |
| Amani Leo                        | Peace Today; Congolese army offensive against FDLR (q.v.), 2010-12   |
| <i>Armée rouge</i>               | Red Army   |
| <i>bachawi</i>                   | witches (Kiswahili)  |
| <i>chefferie</i>                 | chiefdom, the highest level of customary administration  |
| CNDP                             | <i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i> / National Congress for the Defence of the People  |
| <i>dawa</i>                      | medicine (Kiswahili); magical amulet or potion used by local militia to protect themselves from harm   |
| <i>en colère</i>                 | in anger   |
| DDR                              | disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration   |
| FARDC                            | <i>Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> / Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo   |
| FDC                              | <i>Front de la défense du Congo</i> / Defence Front of the Congo   |
| FDLR                             | <i>Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda</i> / Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda  |
| <i>groupement</i>                | grouping, the second highest level of customary administration   |
| IDPs                             | internally displaced people  |
| ISSS                             | International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (also known as I4S)  |
| Kimilikiti                       | a powerful spirit  |
| <i>Kimia</i>                     | Peace  |
| <i>Lutende</i>                   | traditional coming-of-age ceremony, performed at puberty prior to circumcision   |
| Mai-Mai Kifuafua                 | Mainly Tembo Mai-Mai whose zones of influence are largely in Ufamandu I and II <i>groupements</i> of Walikale territory  |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| MONUC             | <i>Mission de l'Organisation des nations unies en République démocratique du Congo</i> (UN Mission in the DRC)  |
| MONUSCO           | <i>Mission de l'Organisation des nations unies pour la stabilisation en RDC</i> (UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC)   |
| <i>mutuelle</i>   | ethnic community organization providing social services   |
| Ntakulegwe        | 'Get out of the way, Kimbilikiti (q.v.) is coming!' (Kirega)  |
| PARECO            | <i>Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais</i> / Alliance of Resistant Congolese Patriots  |
| PNDDR             | <i>Programme national pour le désarmement, la démobilisation et la réintégration</i> / National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration                       |
| Raia Mutomboki    | Outraged Citizens (Kiswahili)   |
| Raia Tujjomboe    | Citizens, let us liberate ourselves (Kiswahili)   |
| Rega              | The main ethnic group in Shabunda (territory in South Kivu), also present in Mwenga (territory in South Kivu), in North Kivu's southern Walikale, and in eastern Maniema Province |
| RCD               | <i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie</i> / Congolese Rally for Democracy   |
| <i>salongo</i>    | communal labour (Lingala)   |
| STAREC            | <i>Programme de stabilisation et de reconstruction de l'est du Congo</i> / Stabilization and Reconstruction Programme for the Eastern Congo                                       |
| <i>Umoja Wetu</i> | Our Unity (Kiswahili)   |
| <i>yando</i>      | traditional coming-of-age ceremony, performed at puberty prior to circumcision  |



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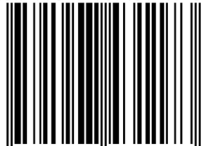


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