



Press Release: Publication of Report International Peace Information Service (IPIS) 'Mapping Conflict Motives: Eastern DRC'.

Download the full report and accompanying maps at:
www.ipisresearch.be/mapping_kivu.php

Antwerp, 04/03/2008 - The eastern DRC is still plagued by violent conflict. The centre of the conflict is the 'Petit Nord' region where two large armed groups, a coalition of smaller bands of armed men and the government army are all involved in a persisting battle causing enormous human suffering. In the neighbouring regions of the 'Grand Nord' and northern South-Kivu open warfare no longer takes place, but there is still a considerable presence of armed groups causing security problems.

Currently, Laurent Nkunda and his CNDP are fighting the other three warring parties.

The CNDP has positioned itself in those areas where previously the Congolese Tutsis were living. The CNDP is not only protecting the interests of the Tutsi people in general but also the specific economic interests of some of its members and sympathisers. It controls the grazing lands used by several rich cattle farmers and two mining areas. The army of Laurent Nkunda is infamous for its brutal human rights violations and the presence of child soldiers among its ranks.

The FDLR have adopted a passive stance vis-à-vis the Rwandan State but they continue to carry arms and frequently use them in military operations against the CNDP. They have chosen to live a hidden life on rough terrain. They are involved in different types of illegal business operations such as illegal mining and drug trafficking (hemp). For some of the FDLR it is probably more attractive to continue these business activities than to return to Rwanda. Especially a small group of 'ex-génocidaires' has an interest in maintaining the status quo. The relationship between the FDLR and the Congolese population is often based on fear and characterised by the tendency to dominate.

The Mayi-Mayi coalition of PARECO claims to defend the Congolese people against foreign armed groups. PARECO is clearly vindictive towards the CNDP. It seeks to conquer the lands that it claims are unrightfully occupied by the CNDP/the Tutsi. The Mayi-Mayi want to prevent the creation of a 'Tutsi Land'.

The FARDC are the official protectors of the Congolese state and its population. The majority of their forces in the region have participated in the offensive against the CNDP. However, in the margins of this central conflict military units retain positions in remote areas where their main motive for deployment is to enrich themselves and their superiors. The FARDC is involved in a wide array of illegal trade for example: the trade of tropical timber in Beni, the trade in illegal drugs (hemp) in Lubero, which is a joint business operation with the FDLR, and the coltan trade in Shabunda. Several units have a bad human rights record.

Although there have been a few reports on military confrontations between the FARDC and the FDLR or the FARDC and Mayi-Mayi groups, in general the three 'armies' tend to cooperate in the fight against the forces of Laurent Nkunda.

The English version of the report is posted today on:
www.ipisresearch.be/mapping_kivu.php
The French version will appear shortly.

IPIS is an independent study and information service, focussing on arms trade, exploitation of natural resources and corporate social responsibility in sub-Saharan Africa.

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