# Ambiguous Order

Youth Groups and Urban Policing in the Eastern Congo

BY JUDITH VERWEIJEN, MICHEL THILL AND MAARTEN HENDRIKS

Key points

- In numerous cities in the eastern Congo, youth groups are involved in urban policing, operating in the space between state and non-state actors and formal and informal governance.

- While some youth policing groups are responsible for improvements in security in their neighbourhoods, others play a role in the deterioration of the local security environment.

- These groups may, at times, be co-opted or employed by state security actors, criminal organizations or politicians. This can affect their status and contribution to security.

- The organization and activities of these groups vary significantly across different cities and neighbourhoods. These features also change over time, reflecting how the groups are shaped by broader political and security processes.

- Youth policing groups are not simply security actors. Youth engage with them more broadly to shape the social order of their neighbourhood and city, rendering themselves socially and politically significant.

- The groups should not be romanticized as being necessarily more legitimate auxiliaries of, or alternatives to, state security forces. They have an inherently ambiguous and fluid character, which cautions against including them in donor programming.

- The resources and status provided by inclusion in donor-sponsored programmes are likely to alter the stakes of involvement in these groups, and spark increased conflict, with uncertain outcomes.
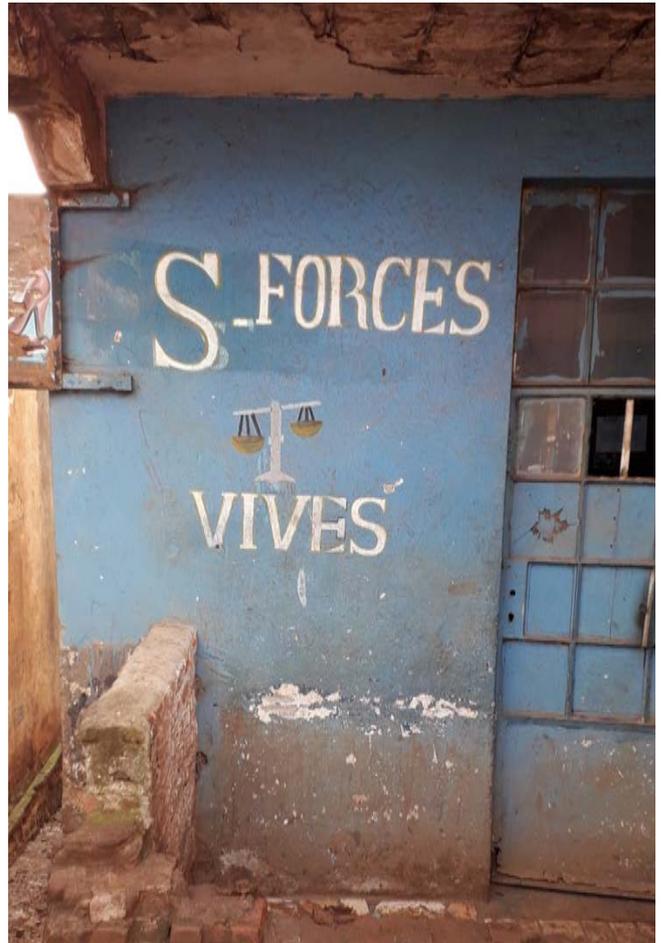
SAJECEK-Forces vives office in Bukavu, DRC, 2019.

Introduction

Contrary to what is often assumed, insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is not limited to rural areas marked by the presence of armed groups and military operations. Cities and towns in the region are subject to rampant criminality, including armed robbery, murders, burglary and kidnappings for ransom. Other, less visible, forms of everyday urban insecurity also abound, including extortion by state security services and local authorities.

State security services have largely failed to improve urban security, despite some occasional short-lived successes. Certain groups within the security services are even suspected of being involved in banditry themselves—allegedly protecting and collaborating with criminals, including by providing them with arms.

Against this backdrop, urban youth have become involved in everyday policing and practices of order-making—the making, maintaining and transforming of social order.[1] Groups of (mostly male) youth—defined as being roughly between 14 and 40 years of age—patrol the streets at night, guard markets and other public spaces, pursue, catch and punish suspected criminals, and try to retrieve stolen goods. These groups, and the activities that they undertake, differ between neighbourhoods and cities.

Some youth policing groups may contribute to improvements in security, while others are believed to foster greater insecurity. They sometimes collaborate with state security forces, and sometimes do not. They create forms of security that are on the one hand public, benefiting everyone, and on the other hand, private, delivering a service only for those who are able to pay. While some of these groups are highly appreciated by the inhabitants of the quarters in which they operate, others are feared or may be associated with criminal activities.

Based on fieldwork carried out between 2015 and 2019, this briefing examines the structure, operations and social function of youth policing groups in three cities in the eastern Congo: the *Forces vives* in Bukavu, the *Anti-gang* in Goma and the *Balala rondo* in Uvira. In each of these cities, there are many other youth groups and associations involved in policing-like activities whose existence is often more fleeting. This study focuses on groups that have made a strong and enduring imprint on the urban security landscape.

There is a growing drive by donors to include non-state actors, such as youth policing groups, within programmes to improve security governance. Providing support for what is known as multilayered security governance has been suggested as an alternative to state-centered, top-down security sector reform initiatives.[2]

Our findings caution against embracing youth policing groups in donor-funded initiatives.[3] These groups can contribute both to improved security and greater insecurity, depending on often rapidly shifting local political and security dynamics. Any decision to work with or support youth policing groups will become an additional variable in these shifting dynamics, with uncertain outcomes.

Background

The involvement of youth in urban policing and order-making in the Congo is not a new phenomenon. During the era of President Mobutu (1965–1997), the youth wing of the *Mouvement populaire de la révolution* (MPR, Popular Movement of the Revolution), the country's sole political party, maintained what was called a Disciplinary Brigade. In some areas, the group collaborated with the local security services in carrying out night-time patrols. However, it was also reported to carry out arbitrary arrests, primarily for the purpose of extortion, and impose illegal fines on citizens.[4]

In the 1990s, new forms of youth involvement in policing emerged. After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees, mixed with government soldiers and militia members, fled to eastern Zaire (now Congo). In the refugee camps, these groups recreated pre-existing political and military structures and established patrols to maintain security. Inhabitants of the suburbs of Bukavu and Goma, near where refugee camps were located, worried about the activities of these armed patrols. In response, Congolese youth organized neighbourhood watches and patrolled the streets at night.

In 1996, the *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo/Zaïre* (AFDL, Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire)—backed by Rwanda and other African countries—invaded eastern Zaire. The perceived foreign character of the rebellion prompted some urban youth who were already involved in patrolling to join rural groups fighting the AFDL later known as *Mai-Mai*, while others joined urban criminal gangs. In 1998, the Rwanda and Uganda-backed *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy), started a rebellion and occupied eastern Congo's main cities, which caused urban insecurity to reach new heights. It also changed in character, with a rise in armed and violent robberies. To combat this insecurity, many young people again became involved in patrolling, which was encouraged by the RCD's security services. In Bukavu, these patrols were often organized by *chefs de quartier* (neighbourhood authorities), who referred to these units as their *milices* (militias).[5]

Since the formal end of the Congo Wars in 2003, youth policing groups have periodically resurfaced in big cities under different names. In Uvira, there are night-patrol groups called Balala rondo—the name coming from the Swahili word *kulala* (to sleep) and the French word *ronde* (patrol). These groups are organized by neighbourhood and work closely with local authorities, in particular *chefs de quartier* and *chefs d'avenue* (avenue authorities).

In 2011, in an effort to combat rising insecurity in Uvira, the new administrator of Uvira territory allowed the groups to operate in partnership with formal authorities. Subsequent urban authorities and security services have shown less enthusiasm for this approach. After Uvira was besieged by a rebel coalition led by the Mai-Mai Yakutumba in September 2017, Balala rondo groups were suspected of being infiltrated by, or working for the Mai-Mai, which resulted in their suspension. With urban insecurity on the rise again, the groups have recently resurfaced in numerous quarters, operating under an unclear statute.

Goma is the home of youth policing groups referred to as Anti-gang.[6] The first Anti-gang was founded to protect the market of Virunga against *maibobo* (street children) in 2007 when violence and crime were on the rise. The mayor at the time, Polydore Wundi, backed the Anti-gang, which was initiated by a *Maître* (Master) amongst so-called *sportifs* (those trained in the martial arts). Wundi also provided them with service cards, which state that they are a member of the group.

The initiative was a success, and in October 2008, the mayor's successor, Roger Tumbula, authorized the Anti-gang to operate throughout the city. They were required to report to the mayor, and collaborate with the *Police nationale congolaise* (PNC, Congolese National Police). The formalization of the Anti-gang's activities was disliked by some police and intelligence officials, who accused Tumbula of using the Anti-gang as his own private militia. In June 2010, after Tumbula stepped down as mayor, the Anti-gang were suspended. While they have not disappeared, the form and intensity of their activities have fluctuated ever since.

In Bukavu, rampant insecurity proliferated after the Second Congo War formally ended in 2003. Youth gangs brutalized inhabitants, particularly in the neighbourhood known as *Essence*. The police and army were unable to effectively tackle the situation. Both were also accused of collaborating with the criminals. As a consequence,

some of Essence's youth created their own policing units.

Around the time of the 2006 presidential election, a development organization called *Synergie des associations des jeunes pour l'éducation civique et électorale et la promotion des droits de l'homme au Sud-Kivu* (SAJECEK, Synergy of Youth Associations for Civic and Electoral Education and the Promotion of Human Rights in South-Kivu) absorbed some of these loosely organized movements into its newly created security branch, renaming itself *SAJECEK Essence-Forces vives.* Facing what its leaders perceived as an absence of state security services, the branch's initial aims were to fight crime and put an end to widespread mob justice. Roughly three years later, the organization split into two associations, today known as *SAJECEK-Forces vives* and *Bukavu-Forces vives*, both formally registered as not-for-profit associations.

As this short historical overview shows, youth policing groups in each city have a distinct history and evolution, which has resulted in differences in their organization, status and activities. These elements, which also vary over time and by neighbourhood, shape the ways these groups engage in order-making, including their impact on the local security situation.

Order-making

Urban youth policing groups commonly self-identify and are widely seen as engaging in *autoprise en charge* (taking care of oneself) in the domain of security. This discourse has its roots in the Mobutu era, when public service provision was severely eroded and citizens started their own initiatives to compensate for a barely functioning state.

The groups are not merely security actors. They are engaged in a more complex process that serves to shape the social order of their neighbourhood and city. Their objective is often not solely to improve security, and sometimes security is not their main interest at all. Frequently, they seek to render themselves socially and politically significant. Many young people participate in these groups to gain a sense of social and political agency in a context where they have very limited influence on formal politics and decision-making.

Order-making often includes activities that are related to improving security. For example, in Uvira, a crucial activity for the Balala rondo is night-time patrolling, armed with torches, sticks, vuvuzelas, cell phones, whistles and sometimes machetes. The patrols, which

often catch thieves and hand them over to the military and the police, have become quite popular. Many people believe that as 'children of the neighbourhood', the Balala rondo make a greater contribution to improving security than the state security services. The latter are often portrayed as *bageni* (strangers) and are seen as caring less about the safety of the population than the Balala rondo.

In Bukavu, both versions of the Forces vives play a key role in the security of the neighbourhoods where they operate. They do this either by confronting thieves on their own or by becoming an informal extension of the state security apparatus, helping police and courts to identify and catch criminals. They also locate and retrieve stolen goods, which they return to their owners for a fee. Reflecting their character as an NGO, SAJECEK-Forces vives also engages in advocacy on security-related issues and runs community development projects and campaigns about sexual violence.

The Anti-gang in Goma guard certain public spaces, such as markets, and provide protection to people bothered by *maibobo* and street gangs. Like the Forces vives in Bukavu, the Anti-gang retrieve stolen goods in exchange for a small fee. They also carry out small jobs for the municipal authorities and state security services, such as looking for wanted persons, evicting illegal markets or providing security muscle at public demonstrations. Anti-gang are generally armed with *nunchakus*—a martial arts weapon consisting of two short sticks connected by a rope or chain—reflecting their status as *sportifs* trained in boxing, judo or Shotokan (a style of karate).

Youth policing groups have sometimes used significant violence in their efforts to apprehend suspected criminals. In the early days of youth mobilization in Bukavu's Essence neighbourhood, the Forces vives would publicly flog suspects. These public performances sometimes resulted in serious injuries and, in rare cases, accidental death.[7] Similarly, in its early years (until around 2010), the Anti-gang in Goma engaged in a practice called *Chapitre 7* (Chapter 7). This refers to the mandate of the United Nations mission in the Congo, which permits the use of force in fulfillment of the mission's mandate. Chapitre 7 entailed the public punishment of suspects by dragging them through mud and beating them up, while trying to avoid serious injuries.[8]

The practice of public punishment is not new. During the Mobutu era, as well as the colonial period, criminals

sentenced to death were hanged in Bukavu's main square. Under Mobutu's successor, Laurent-Désiré Kabila (1997–2001), criminals and abusive soldiers alike were also summarily executed there.

Some of today's urban inhabitants look back upon these practices with nostalgia. Due to the dysfunction of the current justice and penitentiary systems, many perpetrators pay their way out of jail or simply escape. In contrast, public executions put an end to criminals' activities once and for all. While stopping short of killing, the past use of public punishment by youth policing groups taps into the popular belief that severe punishments are needed to end crime. It has consequently helped these groups to gain a degree of popular legitimacy.

The aversion of youth policing groups for killing suspects means that they often try to stop forms of *justice populaire* (mob justice)—incidents where citizens try to kill a suspected criminal or witch, generally by burning or stoning them to death.[9] These events also risk undermining the authority of youth policing groups, since they involve forms of order-making that do not depend on their power. Moreover, they undermine the authority of the state, which many youth policing groups claim to uphold. These groups sometimes position themselves as an extension of the state security services. As a leader of the Anti-gang put it: 'It is good if we are recognized by the state, automatically we become an agency of the state'.[10] Others, by contrast, do not consider themselves a part of the state, but rather see themselves as playing a role in improving how it works.

One similarity that youth policing groups have with state security services is that they sometimes get involved in criminal activity. This includes harassment of the population for the purpose of extortion, which one Anti-gang leader in Goma saw as justified because, 'we also are a security agency'.[11] In addition to extortion, youth policing groups are suspected of collaborating with thieves, by providing detailed information on different areas and who owns valuable items there. Such collaboration also includes failing to denounce or hand over to the police known thieves, as this would undermine the groups' business of retrieving stolen goods. Some groups, like the Anti-gang in Goma, are also reported to be involved in trafficking cannabis.

Balala rondo groups in Uvira have been accused of complicity with armed group networks, which they work for as informants or facilitate recruitment and political

mobilization activities. While most armed groups are located in the countryside, their networks extend into cities, in particular to areas situated on the urban periphery. According to one interviewee in Uvira, in the neighbourhoods of *Kasenga* and *Rugombe*, Balala rondo maintain an 'umbilical cord' to Mai-Mai groups in the surrounding hills.[12]

Public and private interests

Youth policing groups require certain resources to operate effectively. These include batteries and pocket lights to conduct night patrols, hot meals for patrollers, and phone credit for communication. To obtain these resources, the groups have developed extensive systems for the collection of financial and in-kind contributions. In Uvira, either the *chef d'avenue* or the Balala rondo themselves collect money and manioc or maize flour from house to house. They also solicit money, batteries and phone credit from market vendors, small shops and local businesses.

In Bukavu, both of the Forces vives groups receive financial contributions from members, sympathizers, grateful clients and political backers. A major source of income is derived from the recovery of stolen goods. Depending on the difficulty of the case, they ask for *frais de recherche* (research fees). If they manage to find a stolen item, the lucky owner will pay an additional fee that is commensurate with the value of the object, a *cadeau de remerciement* (gift of appreciation).[13] This business model has become quite successful across Bukavu and several other youth groups now offer a similar service.

The Anti-gang in Goma also generate income from retrieving stolen goods and collecting money from shops and businesses. In the *Ndosho* neighbourhood, these supposedly voluntary contributions came to be seen by business owners as *tracasseries* (harassment). When shopkeepers refused to pay, they were intimidated. In response, the *déboutistes*, a grassroots social movement in Ndosho, tracked down the Anti-gang and beat one of them up. Combined with the dwindling support supplied by the mayor and the police, Anti-gang activities in the neighbourhood subsequently declined.

Forced contributions become even more problematic when people suspect that they are being pocketed by the leaders of youth policing groups, or the urban authorities coordinating the collections. Whether this occurs largely depends on the general norms and morality of the groups' leadership and of the urban

authorities involved. Some show responsible leadership and monitor the behaviour of their members towards citizens, punishing them in case of wrong-doing. Others, by contrast, act in a more self-interested manner.

The risk of self-interested behaviour grows when more money is at stake. Wealthier individuals and businesses sometimes pay youth policing groups quite large sums, but in return they expect them to guard their homes and other installations. This occurs in Uvira's *Kilibula* neighbourhood, where an agent of a big trading company and the supervisor of the harbour used to pay the Balala rondo large sacks of beans and rice and around USD 50-100 a month to guard their warehouses and homes. In Goma, similar arrangements exist, with the Anti-gang being hired to guard *ngandas* (bars) in popular neighbourhoods. Such arrangements transform youth policing groups from providers of public to private security.

Efforts to harness youth policing groups for personal interest also inform donations by political actors. Some politicians contribute to these groups in order to be seen as do-gooders who care for the security of the population—a dynamic that may intensify during elections. Youth form a substantial part of the electorate and also hold additional political weight as the main organizers of demonstrations and roadblocks.

As a local official in Uvira explained: 'There are political interferences, people think that by taking responsibility for, by getting hold of these youths, they have a chance to pass the election...They have even created groups of youth pretending they are neighborhood groups, but in reality they are campaign committees, linked to politicians'.[14]

In Goma too, certain political actors, particularly mayors, have sought to gain a hold on youth policing groups. This is partly because they felt that they had little influence over the urban police—who primarily respond to their own hierarchy—and lower-rank urban authorities. The Anti-gang, by contrast, may be more responsive to the mayor's demands and can therefore be harnessed to push their political agenda.

Similar dynamics can be observed in Bukavu, where urban and provincial politicians understand the importance of Essence as a bastion of popular opinion and activism. Forces vives quickly established themselves as a leading voice there with the ability to shape local opinion. This has made their leaders targets of political manipulation.

It would, however, be a mistake to see youth policing groups, which always maintain a significant level of autonomy, simply as the puppets of powerful authorities. Political manipulation goes both ways—while politicians aim to gain a foothold in particular parts of town through their association with youth policing groups, their leaders often try to propel themselves into influential positions in politics or local administration.

Between formal and informal spheres

The status of youth policing groups depends on whether they are authorized and encouraged by local authorities to operate, or whether their activities are prohibited (and such prohibition is actively enforced). In the absence of national legislation, policies or directives surrounding non-state security providers come from local administrative and security authorities, such as city mayors and urban or provincial police chiefs.

Local authorities have regularly changed their position towards youth policing groups, depending on their personal preferences, their political calculations and networks, and evolving security and political dynamics. The result is cycles of formalization and informalization.[15]

While some chiefs of security services have encouraged the actions of youth policing groups, many have been hesitant in working with them. A police officer in Uvira explained:

The balala rondo is a phenomenon that we cannot approve of. A juridical base, do they have one? A functional base? And the theory? They only have the practice…This system has been created by whom? Who has asked these young people to patrol? And they report to whom? That's the question. They are accountable to whom? There is no statute for these people, it works de facto.[16]

Youth policing groups and state security services display ambivalent attitudes towards each other. The army and police often rely on the groups, which have good knowledge of their local area and its criminal community, to help maintain security. A low-level urban authority in Bukavu explained: 'At Essence, the Forces vives can do things the police cannot.'[17]

However, the groups may also be seen as an obstacle or threat to state security forces. First, the police may feel that the groups are doing their work more successfully than they do. This may earn youth policing groups more popular legitimacy than the police. Second, some

police officers complain that the groups are too close to criminal networks and protect thieves instead of handing them over to the authorities. Third, where state security forces are involved in illegal activities, or the protection of people involved in them, the presence of youth policing groups may be a hindrance to their activities.

Youth policing groups, for their part, see state security forces in an equally ambivalent manner. On the one hand, they may appear to be imitating or copying certain police practices. For example, in Goma, the Anti-gang use terminology of the state armed forces such as *état-major* (general staff). They also often remove suspects' shoes to deter them from running away—a practice learned by observing the police. Youth policing groups generally also want to collaborate with state security forces, which provides them with a degree of authority and increases the perception that they are formal entities.

On the other hand, youth policing groups tend to deeply dislike and distrust the state security forces due to their perceived incompetence, corruption and involvement in illegal activities. Moreover, they often accuse the police of releasing the thieves that they have captured much too quickly.

This practice is seen as causing a security risk for the youth policing groups, as those who are released may seek to take revenge on the people who denounced and caught them. In Bukavu, a young woman with a close association to the Forces vives explained: 'You will find thieves who tell us: "Even if you take us to prison, I will come back and will start with you." Immediately, you will be scared to denounce a thief.'[18]

Policy considerations

Urban youth policing groups can be difficult to categorize and display different features across cities, neighbourhoods and over time. They are neither fully formal, nor completely informal; they mimic certain elements of official security services, but also have characteristics that differ significantly from these; they hover between the public and private spheres; and they are connected with both improvements and deterioration in the urban security environment.

The changing nature of youth policing groups makes their incorporation into donor-sponsored initiatives inherently risky. The behaviour of these groups, which may at times be constructive or helpful towards donor-supported security agendas, cannot be guaranteed

in the future. Changes in leadership of these groups, or among the authorities who back them, may have profound effects on their behaviour and activities. They may rapidly morph into criminal gangs, tools for the enrichment of powerful individuals or political mobilizers.

The increased financial resources and status that comes with participating in donor-funded initiatives may feed into conflicts and competition within the groups' leadership. It may also foster jealousy among state security forces, with whom they already have difficult relations.

In addition, access to external funds can make these groups immune to changes in the local security context. Therefore, they may persist when, from a security point of view, their existence may no longer be needed or be counter-productive. When making a positive contribution to security, the groups' continuing existence can also reduce incentives to further improve the functioning of the state security services.

Efforts by Congolese authorities to regulate youth policing groups have had mixed results. In Uvira, the *chef de cité* (town chief) stipulated in 2011 that all Balala rondo must be registered by *chefs de quartiers* and that the lists be submitted to the town hall. Rules for recruitment were also established, including the exclusion of minors from the groups. Members were supposed to be well-known in the community and to have good morals.

These criteria were listed in a protocol that each *chef de quartier* and Balala rondo president was asked to sign. However, Balala rondo presidents often allowed unregistered individuals, including minors, to participate in patrols.

Initiatives to provide these groups with cards or badges have not been very successful either. A rapidly changing membership, as well as the fact that the cards and badges were easily lost or sold, meant that many patrollers ended up without either.

An alternative method of regulating youth policing groups is to absorb them into existing civil society organizations (as happened in Bukavu). This could regulate the groups' more violent practices while simultaneously allowing their members to engage in community development projects.

Yet, it is unclear how the more ad-hoc operating groups, such as the Balala rondo, would react to such a high degree of institutionalization, and the increased control, bureaucracy and fees that come with it. It is precisely in being semi-regulated and semi-official that these groups can be efficient and powerful.[19] For instance, not being bound by strict rules and supervision renders the groups useful for political actors, who in turn provide them with income and influence.

Regardless of how these groups are regulated, it seems important to provide members of youth policing groups with civic education and training in human rights. Yet paradoxically, less violent behaviour may cause them to lose popularity, particularly as they may consequently be seen as being less effective. This, in turn, can create space for the emergence of unregulated and more violent groups, as has occurred in Bukavu, where some groups have begun violently punishing suspected criminals.

A member of one of these groups—*Pomba solution*—explained: 'Even if you reproach a child with mere words, they will never listen, but if you use the whip, they will easily understand.'[20] These developments show the complex role of violence in processes of legitimation and de-legitimation.

Ultimately, how to deal with and regulate youth policing groups is a question that has to be addressed by Congolese authorities and civil society. History has shown that, in the absence of an effective state, Congolese youth will come together to engage in alternative forms of urban order-making.

Contrary to romanticizing youth initiatives as an effective grassroots response to an inefficient and corrupt state, it should be acknowledged that they are inherently complex and ambiguous. In this, they are no different from the Congolese state, and, for that matter, Congolese society at large.

Notes

1 We derive the term order-making from Hélène Kyed, 'State Recognition of Traditional Authority, Citizenship and State Formation in Rural Post-War Mozambique', PhD dissertation, Roskilde University Centre, 2007, 6.

2 Eric Scheye and Andrew McLean, *Enhancing the Delivery of Justice and Security*, Paris: OECD, 2006; Bruce Baker, 'Linking State and Non-State Security and Justice', *Development Policy Review* 28/5 (2008): 597–616; Bruce Baker, 'Policing for Conflict Zones: What Have Local Policing Groups Taught Us?', *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 6/1 (2017): 1–16.

3 These findings support similar work on other parts of the eastern Congo. See Kasper Hoffmann, Koen Vlassenroot and Karen Büscher, 'Competition, Patronage and Fragmentation: The Limits of Bottom-Up Approaches to Security Governance in Ituri', *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 7/1 (2018): 1–17.

4 Michael Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988*,* 64–65.

5 Security Sector Accountability and Police Reform (SSAPR*),* *Acteurs non-étatiques: pratiques de sécurité et de justice*, *Matadi, Kananga et Bukavu*: SSAPR, 2012, on file with authors.

6 For an in-depth analysis of the Anti-gang, see Maarten Hendriks, 'The Politics of Everyday Policing in Goma: The Case of the Anti-gang', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12/2 (2018): 274–289.

7 Acteurs non-étatiques, 54.

8 See Hendriks, 'The Politics of Everyday Policing in Goma'.

9 See Judith Verweijen, 'The Disconcerting Popularity of Popular In/justice in the Fizi/Uvira Region, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo', *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 22/3 (2015): 335–359.

10 Interview with Anti-gang leader, Goma, 10 December 2015.

11 Interview with Anti-gang member, Goma, 19 December 2015.

12 Interview with civil society member, Uvira, 15 July 2015.

13 Interview with member of Bukavu Forces-vives, Bukavu, 26 October 2016.

14 Interview with territorial authority, Uvira, 15 July 2015.

15 See Maria Eriksson Baaz, Ola Olsson and Judith Verweijen, 'Navigating "Taxation" on the Congo River: The Interplay of Legitimation and "Officialisation"', *Review of African Political Economy* 45/156 (2018): 250–266.

16 Interview with PNC officer, Uvira, 15 July 2015.

17 Interview with low-level urban authority, Bukavu, 27 October 2017.

18 Focus group with youth in Essence, Bukavu, 12 March 2019.

19 Hélène-Marie Kyed, 'Street Authorities: Community Policing in Mozambique and Swaziland', *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 41/S1 (2018): 19–34.

20 Interview with Pomba Solution member, Bukavu, 27 March 2019.