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LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on current Mai-Mai activity

In August 2017 the *United Nations Security Council* notes in a report that:

“The Group noted a similar trend in the Grand Nord area where various Mai Mai groups have emerged during the period of reporting. While their names are new, they draw upon longer-term dynamics of armed mobilization” (United Nations Security Council (10 August 2017) *Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p.4).

In September 2017 the *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* states in a report that:

“A sizeable number of Congolese armed groups countrywide organize themselves under the Mai Mai moniker, a term that signifies resistance against outside agendas that are seen as hindering indigenous communities. But the concept often takes on different political and cultural meanings depending on the local and national contexts. During the Second Congo War, the local militias in the east fighting incursions by Ugandan, Burundian, and Rwandan troops all identified themselves as Mai Mai Congolese nationalists. While many Mai Mai outfits retain this nationalist identity—mostly in opposition to immigrant communities and ethnic Rwandans—the vast majority operate as local franchises pursuing a mix of agendas ranging from the control of resources to extortion, illegal taxation, and banditry. Some operate as religious cults, while others function as private militias loyal to political and business interests. Still others are focused on protecting their territories from rival Mai Mai. Some of the larger Mai Mai outfits are explicitly political in outlook, and therefore more likely to exploit the crisis between Kabila and his opponents to stoke more violence. The Congolese Resistance Patriots (PARECO–Mai Mai) and the Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (Mai Mai APLS) both made—but ultimately aborted—moves to become political parties. Similarly, Mai Mai Kifuafua abandoned efforts to integrate into the military and returned to its positions in North Kivu, where it has operated since 2009. Mai Mai Nyatura (“hit them hard”) targets Tutsi communities in North Kivu in coordination with FDLR. In response, Tutsi communities and their ethnic allies formed Raia Mutomboki (“outraged citizens”) as a self-defense unit. By 2014, Raia Mutomboki had morphed into an array of militias deployed across a swath of territory the size of Belgium in North and South Kivu and parts of Ituri Province in the northeast” (Africa Center for Strategic Studies (29 September 2017) *A Medley of Armed Groups Play on Congo's Crisis*).

A report issued in September 2017 by *BBC News* states:

“The Democratic Republic of Congo's government has used naval boats to fight rebels on Lake Tanganyika in the east of the country, Reuters news agency is quoting sources as saying. There was heavy fighting near the lakeside city of Uvira, the sources told Reuters. The fighting between the Mai-Mai Yakutumba militia and Congolese government forces is reported to have broken out at the weekend on the outskirts of Uvira, which is close to the border with Burundi” (BBC News (28 September 2017) *DR Congo navy 'fights rebels on Lake Tanganyika'*).

A report published in September 2017 by the *United Nations Security Council* notes:

“As detailed in the latest reports on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), despite cooperation between and continuing military operations by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO, foreign and Congolese armed groups, notably the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces and several Mai -Mai groups, perpetrated violence and human rights abuses against civilians, attacked security agents and institutions and engaged in illegal economic activities, including illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources” (United Nations Security Council (29 September 2017) *Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region*, pp.1-2).

In September 2017 the *United Nations Security Council* points out in a report that:

“...there has been an increase in the number and strength of Congolese armed groups, which operate over a wider geographical area . They include the Force de résistance patriotique de l’Ituri (FRPI), which has 300-400 combatants; the Nduma défense du Congo - Renové in North Kivu, which has 200-350 combatants; and Mai-Mai Kata Katanga, which has 200 combatants. Repeated attempts by the Government to negotiate the surrender of those armed groups have failed. There has been a worrying proliferation of Mai -Mai groups across North and South Kivu Provinces, which has been facilitated, to some extent, by the sudden vacuum created by the redeployment of FARDC to address the security crisis in the Kasai region” (United Nations Security Council (29 September 2017) *Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p.5).

In October 2017 the *United Nations Security Council* notes:

“Against the backdrop of an uncertain and complex political transition, the security situation deteriorated further in many areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a major trend: an increase in the targeting of security forces, mainly the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), by Mai-Mai groups. In North Kivu, there were repeated attacks by Mai-Mai groups on FARDC positions amid continuing violence between Hutu and Nande communities during the reporting period. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) also attempted to overrun some FARDC positions. In South Kivu, Mai-Mai groups staged attacks against FARDC troops in several strategic locations in late June. In Tanganyika Province, there were renewed clashes between Twa and Luba militia amid a possible resurgence of Mai-Mai Kata-Katanga and emerging splits between various Twa militia factions” (United Nations Security Council (2 October 2017) *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (October 2017)*, p.4).

A report issued in October 2017 by the *United Nations News Service* comments on:

“...targeted attacks against the national security forces by the Mai-Mai group in North Kivu” (United Nations News Service (11 October 2017) *Despite progress on voter registration, DR Congo faces challenges on election timeline – UN envoy*).

IRIN News in October 2017 notes:

“Speaking on the UN's Radio Okapi in July, North Kivu Governor Julien Pulaku said recent attacks appeared to be beyond the capabilities of local Mai-Mai groups and that a new rebellion was emerging. When the Mai-Mai launch attacks, "they only resist the army's firepower for 30 or 40 minutes. What we are seeing today is that the alleged Mai-Mai are

resisting for one or two or three hours and plan attacks on three, four, or five locations within a month. This suggests a supply of munitions and heavy weapons." " (IRIN News (31 October 2017) *Rebellion fears grow in eastern Congo*).

References

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

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