

Treasury Sanctions Individuals Destabilizing the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

February 5, 2018

Designations Highlight Actions that Threaten the Peace, Security, and Stability of the DRC

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned four individuals who have engaged in destabilizing activities responsible for prolonging the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and contributing to widespread poverty, chronic food insecurity, and population displacement. As a result of today's actions, all of the designated persons' assets within U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

"We are targeting human rights abusers perpetuating the horrific conflict in the eastern DRC who have contributed to the tremendous suffering of the Congolese people. They are responsible for horrendous acts including sexual abuse and forced military recruitment of children into positions requiring them to commit acts of violence, among other atrocities," said John E. Smith, OFAC Director. "The United States stands in solidarity with the Congolese people against those who destabilize the region."

On January 25, 2018, the United Nations reported that more than 800,000 children have been forced from their homes by violence and armed clashes in eastern DRC in what the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) calls "one of the largest displacement crises in the world for children." UNICEF reports that children in the eastern DRC are also being sexually abused and recruited to fight. UNICEF and its partners have identified more than 800 cases of sexual abuse, and recent data shows that more than 3,000 children have been recruited by militias and armed groups over the past year.

OFAC acted pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13413, as amended by E.O. 13671, which targets actions threatening the peace, security, and stability of the DRC. OFAC's action implements the listings of these four individuals by the United Nations Security Council on February 2, 2018 pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1533 (2004).

MUHINDO AKILI MUNDOS

Muhindo Akili Mundos (Mundos) is an Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) General, Commander of the 31st Brigade. He was appointed commander of the FARDC's Operational Sector in the areas of Beni and Lubero, including Operation Sukola I against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in September 2014. He remained in that position until June 2015.

The FARDC launched Operation Sukola I on January 17, 2014 to track down all active armed groups in Beni Territory, North Kivu Province, especially the Ugandan rebel group ADF and the Rwandan rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). After Mundos took over Sukola I operations, the FARDC allegedly failed to show up for planned joint patrol and operation with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), intentionally led MONUSCO forces away from massacre sites, and prohibited visits to such sites.

Mundos was accused of the brutal crackdown on the civilian population, and for cooperating profitably with rebel groups in the region. Mundos and other influential FARDC officers in eastern DRC had business and operational relationships with the ADF. As of 2014, Mundos reportedly also maintained relationships with the FDLR. Some of Mundos's staff were involved in the illegal commerce of wood, cocoa, and other goods.

In 2014 there was a substantial deterioration of the security situation in the greater Beni region of North Kivu province. There were nine reported incidents with more than 100 civilians, as well as an unspecified number of Congolese soldiers killed and a large number of civilians abducted. Additionally, civilians and local authorities accused the FARDC under Mundos's command of failing to intervene during extremist group raids by the ADF, including attacks targeting civilians. Mundos recruited and equipped former fighters from local armed groups who participated in killings and massacres.

While commander of the FARDC's Sukola I operation, Mundos also reportedly commanded and provided support to a faction of an ADF sub-group known as the ADF-Mwalika. Under Mundos's command, the ADF-Mwalika committed attacks against civilians. FARDC fighters under Mundos's command provided additional support to the ADF-Mwalika during these operations. Mundos is suspected of being involved in the planning and execution of a 2014 attack on a MONUSCO patrol in Beni Territory.

GÉDÉON KYUNGU MUTANGA

Gédéon Kyungu Mutanga (Gédéon) joined the Mai Mai movement in 1999, which saw the widespread formation of community-based armed groups in the eastern DRC. He commanded

one of the most active groups in the province of Katanga from 2003 until 2006, when he approached UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo forces to integrate into the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process. Gédéon was convicted by a DRC court in 2009 for crimes against humanity that included murder, arbitrary executions, torture, cannibalism, mutilation, rape, and sexual slavery. In 2011, Gédéon escaped from a Lubumbashi prison, reconstituted his militia, and resumed attacks on local populations.

After his escape from prison, Gédéon reconstituted his Mai Mai group and began allying his movement with that of the Bakata Katanga, known also as Kata Katanga. As of March 2014, the two groups were considered one group under the presumed leadership of Gédéon. Kata Katanga is responsible for serious human rights abuses and war crimes, with militants carrying out small-scale attacks during 2013 in Lubumbashi and primarily targeting civilians in rural areas.

The situation in central Katanga has been unstable since Gédéon's escape from prison. Returning to his former fiefdom in the area between Mitwaba and Manono, he remobilized many of his former fighters and forcibly recruited a large number of children. Between the end of 2011 and March 2013, the number of internally displaced persons increased 452 percent to an estimated 353,931 people in Katanga province. In 2013, Gédéon and his militia attacked Lubumbashi, killing at least 25 people.

Very young children were reportedly being actively recruited to join the Mai Mai Gédéon group whenever it passed through inhabited areas. Since the beginning of 2013, MONUSCO and UNICEF had removed 163 children from the Bakata Katanga. UNICEF separated an additional 30 children from the group upon its arrival at Ndolo military prison in Kinshasa. On August 11 and 15, 2013, 82 children aged between eight and 17 years old were separated from the Bakata Katanga armed group. The release notes that the children were identified and separated through concerted efforts of child protection officers working in Katanga province, and had reportedly been recruited during the past six months by Bakata Katanga.

During the night of April 12, 2014, Bakata Katanga attacked villages in Pweto Territory, Katanga Province, where they burned approximately 100 homes, a hospital, and a pharmacy, and kidnapped an unknown number of inhabitants, with some residents fleeing to other areas. The militia continued to set villages on fire in the area, and the recurrence of violence made it difficult for humanitarians to take care of internally displaced people in the region. This resulted in some humanitarian organizations suspending their activities in the region.

Gédéon was the Bakata Katanga militia commander with hundreds of followers at the time of his surrender to DRC government authorities on October 11, 2016. However, only about 60-100 fighters entered Lubumbashi with Gédéon, out of hundreds of fighters that had moved to near Lubumbashi in August 2016 to negotiate the group's surrender. When Gédéon surrendered in October 2016, he received a "hero's welcome" from the Haut Katanga governor and several high-ranking military figures during a ceremony at a Lubumbashi stadium. Some reports allege that the DRC government brought Gédéon back both to intimidate critics of President Kabila in Lubumbashi and to help DRC government security forces respond to any potential political unrest in the city. As of late October 2016, Gédéon does not appear to be imprisoned, nor is he under house arrest, despite the presence of some security forces in front of his house in Lubumbashi. As of March 2017, some of Gédéon's militia fighters remain in the bush, and Gédéon continues to be lodged at government expense.

GUIDON SHIMIRAY MWISSA

GUIDON SHIMIRAY MWISSA (MWISSA) PARTICIPATED IN THE CREATION OF THE NDUMA DEFENSE DU CONGO (NDC) ARMED GROUP, PRIOR TO BREAKING AWAY TO CREATE HIS OWN GROUP, THE NDUMA DEFENCE OF CONGO-RENOVÉ (NDC-R) IN 2014. THE NDC-R USES CHILD SOLDIERS AND DEPLOYED THEM IN ARMED CONFLICT. THE NDC-R IS ALSO ACCUSED OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES, AND OF IMPOSING ILLEGAL TAXES IN GOLD MINING AREAS AND USING THE PROCEEDS TO PURCHASE WEAPONS IN VIOLATION OF THE ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST THE DRC. MWISSA CAME TO POWER WITH THE HELP OF SOME LOCAL POLITICIANS, TRADERS, AND A FEW FARDC OFFICERS. THESE INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED MWISSA TO CONTROL THE MINERAL RICH AREAS IN DRC'S WALIKALE TERRITORY.

Fighting between NDC-R and Mai Mai Cheka militia in 2015 led to villages in the vicinity being burned and plundered, and non-governmental organizations were unable to complete their work and provide aid to the population in those areas.

The NDC-R was also responsible for the crisis in the Bulehusa area in 2016 when armed fighters associated with the NDC-R militia moved into the area following months of attacks by the NDC-R and other groups. The NDC-R leaders reportedly threatened Hutu internally-displaced persons to force them to leave the area. Internally displaced person site leaders were told the Hutu population must leave within 48 hours. On June 12, the NDC-R and an allied Mai Mai group returned to burn Hutu-owned huts, killing at least four and wounding 20, though a Hutu spokesman later said 27 people were killed. In July 2016, incursions by approximately 30 NDC-R fighters in North Kivu caused thousands of Hutu families to flee. The NDC-R tried to prevent United Nations humanitarian food distributions in the Bulehusa area in June 2016, and has killed over 30 civilians on the basis of their ethnicity.

LUCIEN NZABAMWITA

Lucien Nzabamwita (Nzabamwita) is a military leader of the FDLR. On January 3, 2013 OFAC designated the FDLR for fomenting violence and instability in the DRC. The FDLR is an armed group whose members include individuals responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The group has been active in eastern DRC for years, destroying communities, committing heinous abuses, including sexual violence and the illegal recruitment and use of child soldiers, and causing mass-displacement. As of late 2015, Nzabamwita was the commander of the FDLR-Forces Combattantes Abacunguzi (FOCA), the armed wing of the FDLR, Reserve Brigade, a unit that protects FDLR headquarters. In late 2016, Nzabamwita became the head of the FDLR-FOCA Group 5.

[Identifying information on the individuals and entities designated today.](#)

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