

## DR Congo: ADF rebel group responsible for grave international humanitarian law violations, says UN report

**KINSHASA/GENEVA, 13 May 2015:** A UN report published Wednesday reveals that grave violations of international humanitarian law were committed by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group from Uganda, in Beni territory, North Kivu province, over a three-month period at the end of 2014. These violations, which were both systematic and extremely brutal, may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, the report says.

Between 1 October and 31 December 2014, at least 237 civilians were killed, including 65 women and 35 children, by ADF combatants in Beni territory. Some 47 civilians were also wounded, 20 abducted and two sexually abused. In total, ADF combatants attacked 35 villages. Attackers used machetes, hammers and knives, among other weapons, to wound or execute civilians. Some had their throats slit, were shot at while trying to flee or were burned alive in their homes. Several cases of looting and destruction of property were also documented.

The report details the results of in-depth investigations conducted by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UNJHRO)\*. Human rights officers on the ground gathered more than 180 testimonies from various sources, including from victims and witnesses.

The total number of victims could be much higher, the report says, as UNJHRO human rights officers encountered many difficulties in conducting their investigations and could not access some areas for security reasons.

The report also documents violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in Beni territory during the same period by members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) deployed on Operation Sukola I against the ADF.

At least 300 people, including at least 33 FARDC members, have been arrested in the course of the investigations conducted by the Congolese authorities into the Beni massacres. In November 2014, two FARDC officers and four ADF leaders were convicted by the Congolese military justice authorities for the killing of the FARDC General Mamadou Ndala, and for participating in an insurrectional movement.

*"I welcome these initial steps towards justice, but urge the authorities to redouble their efforts to hold to account all those implicated in the series of truly horrendous crimes that ravaged the Beni area last year,"* said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

According to the report, the civilian population in Beni remains extremely vulnerable to attacks. The threat has now extended to the Irumu territory, also in the east of DRC, where violations committed by ADF combatants have been reported since the beginning of 2015.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Martin Kobler, called on the DRC authorities to put an end to the massacres of civilians in Beni territory with the support of MONUSCO's Force: *"In light of the magnitude and the persistence of the attacks against the civilian population by ADF combatants, I call upon the Congolese authorities to resume, as soon as possible, military cooperation with MONUSCO's Force in order to protect the civilians, guarantee the security of Beni territory and neutralize the ADF."*

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The full report is available here:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CD/ReportMonusco\\_OHCHR\\_May2015\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CD/ReportMonusco_OHCHR_May2015_EN.pdf)

*\*The UN Joint Human Rights Office, which was established in February 2008, comprises the Human Rights Division of the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the DRC (OHCHR-DRC).*

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