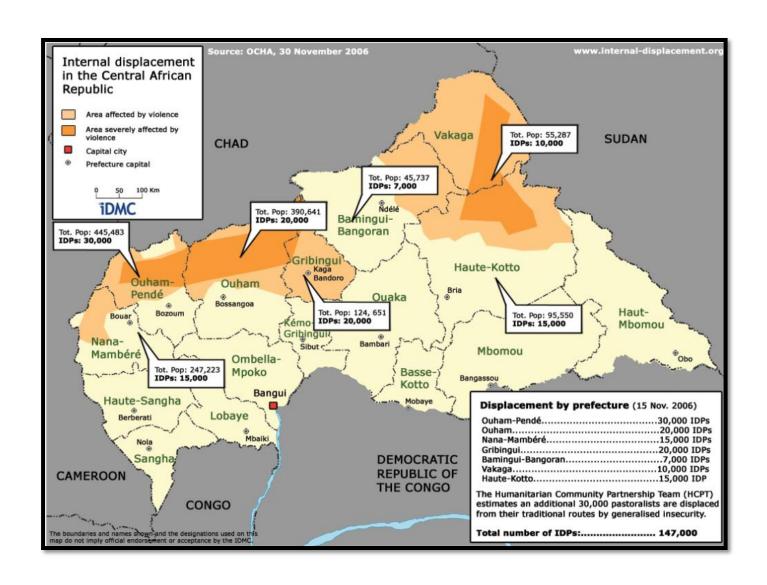
Unknown testimonies: remembering the 2006 attacks in rural C.A.R

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Political situation in 2006 in CAR



The attacks at Ndonge in 2006

• Two attacks in the village, and in the savanna around.

The period is called *ngimbò kóó rèbêl*, the «times of the bandits» without any other specific dates. They had heard rumours but they went on doing their usual activities. The first attack of Ndonge took

place at 9 a.m., and a second one a few days after at midnight, and during all this time they raided the savanna around.

• Who are the bandits?

Two terms are used in gbaya: (i) zàrgínà (< hausa 'cubes of washing blue') used more specifically for «bandit, road blocker», (ii) rèbêl (< french 'rebelle'), I will translate both by «bandit». One witness uses the adjective dáŋ « bad » to call them ?ó dáŋ béí « bastards » and further ?ó dáŋ mò, «trash», producing then a value judgment. But most often they use wà 3P or ?à 3S, contrasting with 1S, 1P and the use of the proper name for the other people.

The testimonies recorded in 2012

• Who are the narrators?



The narrators

Lineages	et sections of the village	Lineages et sections of the village
	gbàyík fìò	6òzôm
bòngòwèn	dòfìò	6òdòé-tòrò
	kòktòè (1 et 2)	6òyè (1 et 2)
	sòr-mò	bògòn (1, 2 et 3)

Tab.1 The lineages and sections of the village of Ndongué

Noun	Lineage-section	Age (years)	Narration duration	Encounter with the bandits
FP	6òdòé-tòrò	55	10:05	Around 5pm, returning from the field, after bath
AF	6ògòŋ 2	35	4:02	In the morning in the village, in front of house
BM	6òzôm	60	5:30	In the morning in the village, next to house
GN	kòktòe	50	2:42	Le matin au village
LM	6ògàŋ 1	35	6 :34	Vers 17h, au retour des champs, après s'être baigné (see them from far away)
PD	gbàyík-fìò	30	3:37	Le matin au village en revenait de la source (water for bricks)
AD	бо̀уѐ	65	9:38	In the morning, in the bush while trapping
MG	gbàyík-fiò	60	6:31	In the bush where he was gold-digging in the Wèi river around 3pm

Tab.2 The authors of the testimonies collected

A brutal contact

After the surprise, comes the urge to flee. Many run away, which alerts those who see them. This flight is described as dramatic and unusual for these people who are running; it leaves the witnesses bewildered.

Feeling such powerlessness in the face of such massive and swift invasion makes them consider dying.

Bandits' attitude

- An immediate control over space and people
 They arrived in large numbers, blocked the access to the village, gather people and interrogate them.
- Showing off how powerful they are

 The bandits claim rights over everything and everyone, give orders and are always ready to resort to violence.

 They are unpredictible and may attack anyone. They expect to be obeyed no matter their demands. Any initiative is condemned if noticed. The villagers are all

the more traumatized as the bandits' threats target a

close friend, a relative or even worse, a child.

The villagers' attitude

• The forms of resistance

While the bandits quickly get lost in the bush and don't know anything of the village, the villagers who perfectly know their territory, would answer that they know nothing when interrogated. The claim not to know anything is recurrent in the accounts of the incidents (paths, the « rich »).

Solidarity

They all experience the same misfortune and are the victims of the same menace. This solidarity goes beyond the family or the village, it includes everyone they know, even the Mbororo.

The certainty of being protected by the ancestors

In some stories, the certainty of being able to rely on the ancestors is clearly expressed.

Expressing feelings

In the accounts, people's fear is opposed to the bandits' joy.

Conclusion

Fomally speaking, these accounts generally follow the timeline of the events experienced however with some remarks that give a piece of information that the villagers only could have gotten afterwards. In this testimony of violence and pillage, the villagers expressed themselves with calm and control, which makes it even more powerful. We get to see and hear about what happened, but rarely in judging terms. Only the adjective *day* « wicked-mean » is used.

In the face of harsh brutality, unfailing solidarity comes forth. Each tries to resist whenever he/she can, by not giving away information or not denouncing anyone. These accounts are situated within a space that they all know and practice, where they know how to recognize the signs of their ancestors' protection.

The group's collective memory feeds on this kind of narrative that passes on information, allowing each of them to find a way to be better prepared and protected in the future.

Thank you











