



**HAL**  
open science

# **The Mobondo in the Greater Bandundu Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Intercommunal Conflict or an Insurrection?**

Bruno Mandefu, Benjamin Mwadi Makengo

## ► To cite this version:

Bruno Mandefu, Benjamin Mwadi Makengo. The Mobondo in the Greater Bandundu Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Intercommunal Conflict or an Insurrection?. *Asian Social Science*, 2026, 22 (1), pp.85. <10.5539/ass.v22n1p85>. <hal-05552936>

**HAL Id: hal-05552936**

**<https://hal.science/hal-05552936v1>**

Submitted on 14 Mar 2026

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 - Attribution - International License

# The Mobondo in the Greater Bandundu Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Intercommunal Conflict or an Insurrection?

Bruno Mandefu<sup>1</sup> & Benjamin Mwadi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Kisangani, DR. Congo

<sup>2</sup> University of Kinshasa, DR. Congo

Correspondence: Benjamin Mwadi, University of Kinshasa, DR. Congo. E-mail: benjaminmwadi@yahoo.com

Received: November 27, 2025

Accepted: January 10, 2026

Online Published: January 31, 2026

doi:10.5539/ass.v22n1p85

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v22n1p85>

## Abstract

This article offers an in-depth analysis of the Mobondo phenomenon in the Greater Bandundu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, initially perceived as a mere intercommunal conflict opposing the Téké and Yaka communities. Through a strategic qualitative approach—combining field observations, semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis, and the use of institutional reports—the study highlights a critical evolution: Mobondo has transformed into a politically structured insurrection. The findings reveal six determining factors behind this shift: (1) intensification of attacks against state institutions, (2) catastrophic human and material toll, (3) territorial expansion across five provinces, (4) emergence of a hierarchical politico-military leadership, (5) establishment of parallel governance, and (6) ideological instrumentalization of identity-based grievances. These elements confirm, in light of existing theoretical frameworks, the rationalized insurgent nature of Mobondo—characterized by taxation, authority substitution, armed operations, and territorial control. The article argues that Mobondo constitutes a systemic threat to state sovereignty and social cohesion, and calls for a comprehensive response from the Congolese government. Among the recommendations: professionalized and depoliticized military operations, revitalization of public services, structured intercommunal dialogue, equitable land reform, and recognition of legitimate customary authorities.

**Keywords:** Mobondo, Intercommunal Conflict, Insurrection, Téké-Yaka Conflicts

## 1. Introduction

The Mobondo phenomenon, which erupted in the Greater Bandundu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), represents one of the most significant security and governance challenges faced by the Congolese state in its western provinces in recent decades. Initially perceived by political authorities and part of the media as a localized intercommunal dispute opposing the Téké and Yaka communities, the conflict rapidly evolved in scale, intensity, and organization, revealing dynamics that go far beyond traditional community-based violence.

The emergence of Mobondo must be understood within a broader context of structural state fragility, characterized by the prolonged absence of effective public administration in rural areas, the erosion of customary authority, unresolved land tenure regimes, and a persistent security vacuum. These conditions have historically provided fertile ground for violent mobilization in the DRC, where local grievances are frequently transformed into armed movements when institutional channels for conflict resolution fail (Autesserre, 2010; Stearns & Vogel, 2015).

While intercommunal conflicts in the DRC are often interpreted through the lens of competition over land, water, and local power, such explanatory frameworks appear insufficient to account for the Mobondo trajectory. The systematic targeting of state institutions, the establishment of parallel governance mechanisms, the emergence of a hierarchical politico-military leadership, and the rapid territorial expansion across multiple provinces indicate a qualitative transformation of the conflict. These features correspond more closely to the analytical characteristics of an armed insurrection than to those of a spontaneous or cyclical communal clash (Kalyvas, 2006; Kaldor, 2012).

This article advances the central hypothesis that Mobondo has transitioned from a localized intercommunal conflict into a structured armed insurrection with explicit political, territorial, and institutional ambitions. Rather than seeking mere coexistence or renegotiation of access to resources, the movement increasingly challenges the

authority of the Congolese state by substituting its institutions, administering territory, and mobilizing identity-based narratives to legitimize violence. In this sense, Mobondo reflects a broader pattern observed in fragile postcolonial states, where non-state armed actors construct alternative systems of governance in response to perceived state illegitimacy (Kasfir, 2005; Mehler, 2011).

The objective of this study is therefore twofold. First, it seeks to identify and analyze the mechanisms that enabled the transformation of Mobondo from a community-based conflict into an insurrection movement. Second, it examines the political, security, and humanitarian implications of this transformation for state sovereignty, social cohesion, and conflict management in the DRC. By adopting a qualitative strategic approach grounded in field data, institutional reports, and insurrection theory, the article aims to contribute to the growing literature on hybrid conflicts and rebel governance in Africa.

Beyond its empirical contribution, this study also carries important policy implications. Mischaracterizing Mobondo as a purely intercommunal conflict risks legitimizing inadequate responses centered exclusively on mediation or short-term military operations. Recognizing its insurrection nature is a prerequisite for designing an integrated response that combines security reform, land governance, restoration of legitimate customary authority, and inclusive intercommunal dialogue.

The article is structured as follows. Following this introduction, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on intercommunal violence, insurgency, and rebel governance in the DRC and comparable contexts. Section 3 outlines the methodological framework adopted in this study. Section 4 presents the operational theoretical framework distinguishing intercommunal conflict from insurrection. Sections 5 and 6 analyze the origins, evolution, and empirical manifestations of the Mobondo phenomenon. Section 7 discusses the findings in light of existing theories, and Section 8 concludes with policy recommendations and avenues for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature on armed violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo has traditionally emphasized local conflicts over land, identity, and access to resources as the primary drivers of insecurity. Seminal works by Autesserre (2010) and Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2009) argue that many Congolese conflicts originate at the micro-local level, where historical grievances and weak institutional mediation mechanisms fuel recurrent cycles of violence. Within this analytical tradition, intercommunal conflicts are often portrayed as fragmented, episodic, and largely disconnected from broader political projects.

However, more recent scholarship challenges this reductionist interpretation by highlighting the political and institutional dimensions that frequently underlie ostensibly “local” conflicts. Englebort (2003) and Mehler (2011) demonstrate that community-based violence in fragile states often becomes politicized when state authority collapses or loses legitimacy. In such contexts, armed groups may gradually assume functions traditionally reserved for the state, including security provision, taxation, and dispute resolution. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding the Mobondo phenomenon.

A substantial body of literature links intercommunal violence to competition over natural resources and land tenure insecurity. Homer-Dixon (1999) argues that environmental scarcity, demographic pressure, and weak governance structures intensify competition between social groups, increasing the likelihood of violent conflict. In the Congolese context, land disputes are deeply rooted in colonial and postcolonial legal pluralism, where customary land rights coexist uneasily with statutory frameworks (Trefon, 2011; De Herdt & Titeca, 2016). While this approach helps explain the initial outbreak of tensions between the Téké and Yaka communities, it fails to account for the emergence of organized armed leadership, sustained territorial expansion, and deliberate attacks against state institutions observed in the Mobondo case.

Theoretical contributions on insurgency and civil war provide a more robust analytical framework for interpreting such transformations. Kalyvas (2006) conceptualizes civil war as a process in which violence becomes increasingly selective and instrumentalized as armed actors seek to control territory, populations, and information. Insurgencies, in this sense, are not defined solely by ideology but by their capacity to challenge state authority through organized violence and alternative governance. Similarly, Kaldor (2012) emphasizes the hybrid nature of contemporary conflicts, where identity politics, criminal economies, and political objectives intersect.

Rebel governance theory further illuminates the dynamics observed in the Mobondo phenomenon. Kasfir (2005) and Weinstein (2007) show that insurrection groups often establish parallel administrative structures to legitimize their control and ensure compliance among civilian populations. These structures may include the appointment of local authorities, taxation systems, and mechanisms of coercion and redistribution. Empirical

studies from Africa and Latin America illustrate that such governance practices are not incidental but central to insurgent consolidation (Clapham, 1998; Boas & Dunn, 2007).

Comparative analyses reinforce this interpretation. Raleigh et al. (2010) demonstrate that insurrection violence in Africa tends to expand geographically when state presence is weak and security forces lack local legitimacy. Mehler (2011) similarly notes that once armed groups cross certain thresholds—attacking institutions, occupying territory, and eliminating traditional authorities—they effectively transition from communal militias to insurgent movements. These insights resonate strongly with the empirical patterns documented in the Greater Bandundu region.

Despite this extensive body of work on insurgency and rebel governance, the Mobondo phenomenon remains underexplored in the academic literature. Existing references are largely descriptive, policy-oriented, or embedded in humanitarian reporting. This article addresses this gap by situating Mobondo within established theoretical debates on intercommunal conflict, insurrection, and state fragility. By integrating field-based evidence with comparative theory, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how localized communal violence can evolve into structured armed insurgency in the Congolese context.

### **3. Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in strategic and conflict analysis, with the objective of capturing the dynamic transformation of the Mobondo phenomenon from an intercommunal conflict into an armed insurrection. Given the complexity, fluidity, and political sensitivity of the phenomenon, a qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate to analyze actors' motivations, organizational structures, and patterns of violence beyond purely quantitative indicators.

The empirical component of the research is based on a multi-source data collection strategy conducted between 2022 and 2024 in selected localities of the Greater Bandundu region, including Kwamouth, Bagata, Kimvula, and peri-urban areas of Maluku. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with customary chiefs, local administrators, displaced civilians, civil society leaders, former combatants, and security officials. This diversity of respondents allowed for the triangulation of perspectives and reduced the risk of single-source bias.

In addition to field interviews, the study relies on an extensive review of secondary sources, including reports from MONUSCO, OCHA, provincial security services, international and local non-governmental organizations, as well as press releases and situational updates produced by humanitarian actors. These documents provided critical insights into patterns of displacement, casualty figures, territorial control, and institutional responses.

A qualitative content and discourse analysis was conducted on public statements, communiqués attributed to Mobondo actors, media coverage, and political narratives surrounding the conflict. This analytical technique made it possible to identify recurring themes, symbolic references, and identity-based frames used to legitimize violence and mobilize support. Particular attention was paid to the strategic use of ethnicity, historical grievances, and anti-state rhetoric in shaping collective action.

To strengthen analytical rigor, data triangulation was systematically applied by cross-checking interview testimonies with documentary evidence and independent reports. This process enhanced the internal validity of the findings and mitigated potential distortions arising from fear, political alignment, or retrospective justification by respondents. The study does not claim statistical representativeness; rather, it seeks analytical generalization by linking empirical observations to established theoretical frameworks on insurgency and rebel governance.

Ethical considerations were central to the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all interviewees, anonymity was ensured where necessary, and sensitive information was handled with caution to avoid exposing respondents to reprisals. Given the volatile security environment, field access was adaptive and prioritized the safety of both participants and the researcher.

Finally, the analytical framework employed in this study draws on insurrection theory, civil war literature, and governance-in-conflict approaches to differentiate between intercommunal violence and structured insurrection. This framework guided the identification of key indicators—such as institutional targeting, territorial expansion, command hierarchy, and governance practices—that are empirically examined in the subsequent sections.

### **4. Operational Theoretical Framework**

A rigorous analysis of collective violence requires a clear typology that distinguishes between the different forms of conflict—not only to refine their theoretical understanding but also to adapt political, security, and

institutional responses accordingly. In fragile postcolonial contexts such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, two recurrent types of violence emerge significantly: intercommunal conflicts and armed insurgencies. Although they may overlap or evolve from one into the other, these two dynamics present fundamental differences (Kaldor, 2012; Gurr, 1970).

Intercommunal conflicts are characterized by localized clashes between identity-based groups, often linked to territorial claims, historical discrimination, or competition for access to resources. These conflicts generally take an informal, spontaneous, and episodic form. By contrast, insurgencies are distinguished by their systemic aims: they challenge the established state order and mobilize hierarchical, often clandestine, structures to achieve objectives of large-scale political or social transformation (Hobsbawm, 1973; Kalyvas, 2006).

The comparative table below summarizes the major distinctions between these two categories of collective violence:

Table 1. Intercommunal Conflict vs. Insurrection

Criteria	Intercommunal Conflict	Insurrection
<b>Definition</b>	Clashes or tensions between community groups, often local, based on identity or social differences	Organized revolt against political authority or the State, aiming at systemic change
<b>Motivations</b>	Rivalries, discrimination, identity-based claims, community survival	Political opposition, radical ideologies, social or economic demands
<b>Organization</b>	Informal, often local groups, operating according to community dynamics	Structured groups, sometimes clandestine, with hierarchy and coherent strategy
<b>Objectives</b>	Community protection, identity claims, survival or rivalries	Overthrow of power, regime change, establishment of a new order
<b>Nature of Acts</b>	Sporadic violence, acts of revenge, lynching, isolated attacks	Military operations, guerrilla warfare, sabotage, planned attacks
<b>Duration</b>	Variable; often repetitive but local, potentially lasting years	Long-term, often protracted, sometimes evolving into long asymmetric war
<b>Particular Aspects</b>	Frequently linked to latent conflicts crystallized around identity or local resource issues	Revolutionary or insurgent movements with a clear political strategy
<b>Implications</b>	Creates persistent community tensions, threatens social cohesion	Can destabilize a state, lead to civil war or revolution
<b>Concrete Examples</b>	The ethnic conflict in Darfur (Sudan), where clashes between Arab and non-Arab communities intensified over territorial and resource claims, creating a protracted humanitarian crisis	The FARC rebellion in Colombia, an organized armed insurgency seeking to overthrow the Colombian government and establish a revolutionary regime based on Marxist-Leninist ideology

**Source:** Adapted from Kaldor, M. (2012). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford University Press; enriched by Gurr, T.R. (1970), *Why Men Rebel*.

This comparative synthesis highlights the fundamental distinction between intercommunal violence rooted in local claims and insurrection aimed at transforming a political order. In the case of Mobondo, several elements point toward a transition into an insurrection: rapid geographical expansion across five provinces, structuring into mobile armed cells, coordinated attacks on state symbols (administrative, military, and police offices), and the establishment of an alternative customary governance system. This evolution is reminiscent of other localized rebellions that have developed into armed political movements (Tilly, 2003; Clapham, 1998).

It is therefore imperative, for both Congolese policymakers and researchers, to adopt a hybrid analytical framework that accounts for both identity-based dynamics and political ambitions. Mobondo thus stands at the crossroads between endemic community insecurity and a structured insurrection project.

## 5. Presentation of Mobondo: Causal Origins

The armed group Mobondo today stands as one of the gravest threats to state sovereignty in the Grand Bandundu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Initially ignited by a localized land dispute between the Téké and Yaka communities in Kwamouth territory, the movement rapidly mutated into a structured politico-military insurgency. Its expansion into the provinces of Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, Kwango, Kongo-Central, and Kinshasa reflects a deliberate territorial strategy aimed at undermining and replacing state authority (Vlassenroot, 2002).

The very name Mobondo—derived from a protective ritual object—embodies a strategy of cultural and identity-based legitimization, mobilizing fighters within an almost mystical framework. This appropriation of customary symbols follows a long tradition in rural African rebellions, comparable to the Bakongo movements of the 1960s or the Mai-Mai militias in Eastern Congo (Dunn, 2010).

The underlying land conflict is deeply rooted in Congo's colonial and postcolonial history, marked by ambiguous land tenure regimes, the coexistence of customary rights with modern legal frameworks, and the state's chronic incapacity to regulate agrarian disputes (Trefon, 2011). Tensions between the Téké (indigenous to the Bateke Plateau) and the Yaka (settlers since the colonial era) reached a tipping point in June 2022 when Téké customary chiefs unilaterally increased royalties in the village of Masia-Mbe. Seen as arbitrary and humiliating, this decision reignited longstanding grievances and set off a spiral of violent reprisals (De Koning, 2020).

The political discourse of Mobondo, initially spearheaded by Odon Nkimona Kumbu alias “Kiamvu”, blends calls for customary restoration with territorial claims. The ambition to re-establish a “Yaka Kingdom” is rooted in a collective memory of political dispossession and is framed as a rejection of state authority perceived as foreign, corrupt, or manipulated. This ideological component distinguishes Mobondo from a mere community self-defense force (Clapham, 1998).

In recent developments, Fabrice Kavidioka Zombie—a key figure operating mainly in the Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe axes—has emerged as both a field strategist and an intermediary in regional recruitment. Known for his ability to forge alliances with local business networks and exploit riverine routes for arms trafficking, Kavidioka has reinforced Mobondo's logistical depth. His faction is reported to specialize in urban infiltration tactics and psychological operations targeting both local populations and state security forces. Kavidioka's rising influence illustrates the adaptive and entrepreneurial dimension of Mobondo's leadership structure.

The movement's fragmentation into multiple factions (B52, Satonge, Daddy, Saddam, and Kavidioka's network) reflects internal power competition but also tactical versatility, allowing it to adapt to diverse territorial environments. Far from weakening the insurgency, this decentralization strengthens its resilience and infiltration capacity (Weinstein, 2007).

On the military front, Mobondo's escalating combat capacity is significant: transitioning from artisanal blades to AK-47 assault rifles, PKM machine guns, RPG-7s, and heavy ammunition, as confirmed by MONUSCO field reports (2024). Supply chains rely on local procurement, illicit cross-border trade, and embedded social networks in areas long abandoned by the state. In several territories, local chiefs have been deposed, customs posts seized, and a parallel taxation system installed—forming the rudimentary foundations of rebel governance (Kasfir, 2005).

Perceptions of the FARDC as aligned with the Téké—reinforced by the pejorative label “FARTEK”—have delegitimized military operations and driven segments of the allochthonous population toward ideological sympathy with Mobondo. This dynamic highlights the critical importance of institutional neutrality in managing intercommunal conflicts (Englebert, 2003).

In sum, Mobondo has outgrown the framework of a localized ethnic militia. It has become a hybrid insurgency—identity-driven, territorially anchored, and strategically adaptive—that fuses political rebellion with customary power structures. The emergence of actors like Fabrice Kavidioka Zombie signals an evolution toward a more networked and entrepreneurial insurgent model, capable of sustaining itself through both armed confrontation and embedded social influence.

## 6. Analytical Results

The findings of this research reveal a profound qualitative transformation of the Mobondo phenomenon. From a contained intercommunal conflict, Mobondo has evolved into a structured armed insurgency with a clear political strategy, territorialization of power, and autonomous military capacity. This shift can be explained by a combination of structural factors: institutional fragility, an unresolved land crisis, political marginalization, and a security vacuum. By cross-referencing empirical data, field observations, and security reports, six critical dimensions emerged as key indicators of the insurgency: attacks against state institutions, human and material

toll, territorial expansion, the structuring of politico-military leadership, parallel governance, and the scale of the humanitarian disaster.

In this context, the data were systematically grouped and analyzed using a thematic grid based on the complex conflict approach (Kaldor, 2012; Mehler, 2011), cross-referenced with insurgency analysis frameworks drawn from the works of Kalyvas (2006) and Weinstein (2007). The results presented in the various tables and figures illustrate Mobondo’s growing strength and the progressive disintegration of the republican order in a significant portion of Congolese territory.

- Attacks on State Institutions: The Defining Insurrectional Dimension

The most significant and revealing evolution in the Mobondo conflict lies in the qualitative transformation of its targets and modes of action. The shift from traditional intercommunal clashes to systematic, coordinated, and strategically planned attacks on all state institutions reveals a direct and structured challenge to the authority of the Congolese state. This transformation stands as the most compelling indicator of the movement’s shift into full-fledged insurgency.

Table 2. Detailed Analysis of Mobondo Attacks on State Institutions (June 2022 – March 2025)

Targeted Institutions	Number of Documented Attacks	Modes of Operation	Strategic Results/Impact	Temporal Evolution
<b>Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC)</b>	207+ direct attacks	Sophisticated ambushes, assaults on fortified positions, prolonged frontal combat	222+ soldiers killed, 15+ military positions captured, weakening of territorial control	Continuous escalation since July 2022
<b>Congolese National Police (PNC)</b>	23+ targeted attacks	Coordinated raids on posts, forced disarmament, systematic neutralization	32+ police officers killed, significant arsenal seized, paralysis of security services	Intensifying since 2023
<b>Local Authorities and Customary Chiefs</b>	67+ violent incidents	Targeted assassinations, forced expulsions, systematic intimidation	89+ chiefs killed, establishment of parallel administration	Systematic targeting 2023–2024
<b>State Infrastructure</b>	156+ destructive attacks	Arson, targeted destruction, strategic occupation	465+ infrastructures destroyed, public services paralyzed	Systematic destruction 2024–2025
<b>ANR Agents</b>	8+ incidents	Targeted killings, neutralization of intelligence networks	State intelligence capacity compromised	Recent specialized targeting

**Source:** Table based on data collected from security services of the five affected provinces, cross-analysis March 2025.

This table highlights the scope, diversity, and growing intensity of attacks carried out by Mobondo militiamen against state institutions between June 2022 and March 2025, revealing a clearly assumed insurgent dynamic. The systematic targeting of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) is particularly significant: more than 207 hostile actions have been recorded, including sophisticated ambushes, prolonged frontal combat, and coordinated assaults on fortified positions. These modes of operation reflect a genuine military strategy that goes far beyond simple communal retaliation. The consequences are severe: over 222 soldiers killed and at least 15 military positions captured, indicating a structural weakening of the state’s territorial control and an erosion of its authority over entire areas. This escalation, which began in July 2022, is part of a strategy of attrition against loyalist forces by a formidable non-state actor.

The Congolese National Police (PNC) has also been targeted in a cycle of precise attacks (23+), often carried out by mobile commandos. These raids aim to disarm officers, dismantle police posts, and neutralize local law enforcement capacities. The toll—32 police officers killed and a significant arsenal seized by

Mobondo—indicates a clear intent to dismantle the intermediate links of the security apparatus. This campaign, intensifying since 2023, contributes to an atmosphere of terror and a security vacuum in several territories.

Moreover, local authorities and customary chiefs, the pillars of grassroots governance, have been targeted in 67 documented violent incidents. These actions include targeted assassinations, forced expulsions, and acts of intimidation designed to break any symbolic or administrative resistance. The killing of 89 customary chiefs and the establishment of parallel administrations in several territorial entities point to a deliberate process of institutional substitution. This strategy of replacing legitimate traditional authority with an insurgent command structure has sharply accelerated between 2023 and 2024.

The offensive against public infrastructure further confirms an intent to dismantle the state in its most basic functions. No fewer than 156 destructive attacks have targeted schools, health centers, administrative offices, and other public assets, with 465 of them being totally or partially destroyed. This wave of destruction, concentrated in the 2024–2025 period, renders basic public services inoperative and facilitates the installation of parallel power. It aligns with a classic strategy of “institutional vacuum” exploited by armed groups to consolidate their alternative legitimacy.

Finally, agents of the National Intelligence Agency (ANR), who safeguard the state’s strategic oversight, have been specifically targeted in at least eight operations. While relatively few in number, these incidents are extremely serious. They demonstrate Mobondo’s capacity to identify, locate, and neutralize state intelligence networks, thereby compromising the government’s ability to anticipate and respond effectively. This recent, specialized targeting suggests a qualitative leap in the insurgents’ mastery of tactical and strategic intelligence.

Collectively, these meticulously orchestrated attacks demonstrate not only Mobondo’s growing military capacity but also its clear intent to dismantle state institutions. The scale of human losses, diversity of targets, coherence of operational methods, and simultaneity of offensives reveal a mature insurgent project—strategically structured and aimed at the complete delegitimization of the established power. This dynamic requires, in response, a comprehensive reassessment of the security and political strategies needed to address this complex crisis.

- Human and Material Toll: The Scale of the Crisis

The magnitude of the human and material toll caused by the Mobondo conflict far exceeds the usual indicators of a simple intercommunal clash. It falls within the logic of an active, structured, and lasting insurgency—marked both by the intensity of human losses, the failure of institutional mechanisms for managing violence, and the progressive consolidation of an autonomous military force within territory beyond state control. This shift toward an insurgency-type crisis is reflected not only in the growing disruptive capacity of Mobondo militiamen but also in the systemic paralysis of the Republic’s defense and security forces, which are unable to contain or reverse the conflict’s momentum. The following tables provide a detailed analysis of this transformation, drawing on data from provincial security services, cross-referenced with field military operation reports.

Table 3. Detailed Human Losses – Mobondo Militiamen (2022–2025)

Status	Number	Period	Modalities	Strategic Implications
<b>Neutralized (killed in combat)</b>	184+	2022–2025	Direct combat, military operations	Resistance capacity maintained despite losses
<b>Captured and transferred</b>	673+	2022–2025	Operation Ngemba, surrenders	Military judicial system saturated
<b>Voluntarily surrendered</b>	160+	2023–2024	DDR programs, negotiations	Limited effectiveness of reintegration programs
<b>Tried/Convicted</b>	63	July 2023	Military tribunals	Deficient judicial process
<b>Escaped/Evaded</b>	127+	2023–2025	Escapes, forced releases	Defective prison system

**Source:** Table based on data collected from FARDC, Provincial Security Services, cross-analysis May 2025.

This table reveals a heavy but strategically telling human toll for Mobondo militiamen. Despite the neutralization of more than 184 fighters between 2022 and 2025 in direct clashes with the FARDC, the movement retains a worrying resistance capacity, evidence of constant replenishment of its ranks and a durable insurgent structure. The capture of 673 militiamen, notably during Operation Ngemba, highlights the intensity of confrontations but also reveals saturation within the military judicial system, unable to effectively process such numbers. The 160

voluntary surrenders through Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs remain marginal, illustrating the limits of such mechanisms when dealing with combatants motivated by ideology or deep-rooted clan structures. Furthermore, the trial of only 63 individuals as of July 2023 indicates delays or deficiencies in the judicial handling of insurgents. Lastly, the 127 cases of escape or forced release expose the structural weakness of the Congolese prison system in the face of a group combining military action with security infiltration—heightening the risk of resurgence in so-called stabilized zones.

Table 4. Critical Losses – State Security Forces

Force	Killed	Injured	Missing	Effectiveness/Loss Ratio	Morale Impact
<b>FARDC</b>	222+	127+	8	0.83 (unfavorable)	Significant demoralization
<b>PNC</b>	32+	34+	3	Compromised effectiveness	Post abandonment
<b>ANR</b>	3	7	2	Reduced capacities	Networks compromised
<b>Total</b>	257+	168+	13	Unfavorable	Critical

Source: Table based on data collected from Provincial General Staffs, security services, May 2025.

This table highlights a glaring imbalance between the losses suffered by state security forces and their operational effectiveness, confirming a strategic weakening in the response to the Mobondo threat. The FARDC, with 222 soldiers killed and 127 wounded, display an unfavorable effectiveness/loss ratio (0.83), indicating that the operations conducted have been costly without significantly degrading enemy capabilities. This situation produces demoralization within the ranks, compounded by logistical difficulties and the absence of troop rotations. The Congolese National Police (PNC) also recorded 32 deaths and 34 injuries, often during disarmament operations or lightning raids, leading to post abandonments in rural areas. The National Intelligence Agency (ANR), though less affected in absolute numbers, lost three agents and saw seven others injured, undermining strategic monitoring capacity and the integrity of information networks in affected areas. In total, the 257 deaths, 168 injuries, and 13 disappearances reflect a growing vulnerability of the Congolese state to maintain tactical superiority, allowing Mobondo to entrench itself over time and expand its operational scope by exploiting security gaps.

Table 5. Analysis of Weaponry and Military Capabilities

Equipment Type	Quantity Seized	Quantity Recovered	Current Status	Operational Capacity
<b>Assault rifles (AK-47, etc.)</b>	89+ units	34 units	55+ operational	Sustained combat capacity
<b>Heavy machine guns (PKM)</b>	12+ units	4 units	8+ operational	Collective firepower
<b>Rocket launchers (RPG-7)</b>	6+ units	2 units	4+ operational	Anti-armor capability
<b>Ammunition (rounds)</b>	15,000+ units	3,200 units	Significant stock	Extended operational autonomy
<b>Military uniforms</b>	67+ units	12 units	55+ in use	Infiltration capability
<b>Communication equipment</b>	23+ units	8 units	15+ operational	Tactical coordination

Source: Table based on data collected from Provincial Security Services, inventory March 2025.

This table provides an alarming overview of the military capabilities acquired or retained by Mobondo militiamen, who now possess a significant arsenal enabling the conduct of prolonged operations. With over 89 assault rifles seized and 55 still in circulation, the militia maintains a sustained combat capacity, bolstered by at least eight operational PKM heavy machine guns and four operational RPG-7 rocket launchers, capable of neutralizing light armored vehicles. The existence of a stockpile of more than 15,000 rounds offers logistical autonomy exceeding that of a typical community-based group, reflecting an organized supply network. Additionally, the use of military uniforms (67 recorded, 55 actively used) enables high-risk infiltration and sabotage operations, particularly against loyalist forces or civilian populations. Access to communication

equipment (23 units seized, 15 operational) ensures real-time tactical coordination—essential for carrying out simultaneous attacks on different fronts.

Taken together, these tables demonstrate that the Mobondo conflict has crossed the critical threshold separating a localized uprising from a truly structured insurgency. The scale of human losses, systemic dysfunctions in judicial and penitentiary processing, the vulnerability of security forces, and the militia’s logistical build-up converge to establish a clear diagnosis: The Congolese state is facing not merely a security crisis, but an existential challenge.

- Territorial Expansion

The territorial expansion of the Mobondo phenomenon stands as one of the most powerful markers of its evolution into a structured insurgency. Far from being a spontaneous dynamic of identity defense or localized conflict, this deliberate geographic progression demonstrates a well-developed military and political strategy oriented toward conquest, territorialization, and the institutionalization of a parallel power. By methodically extending across five provinces—Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, Kwango, Kinshasa, and Kongo-Central—Mobondo does not merely assert its presence: it reorganizes space, overthrows local authorities, renames geographical entities, and establishes alternative governance backed by a logic of identity erasure and cultural domination. This insurgency-oriented territorialization marks a fundamental break with the classical model of intercommunal conflicts. It places Mobondo in the category of politico-military movements capable of projecting, anchoring, and administering themselves.

Table 6. Detailed Mapping of Mobondo Territorial Expansion (2022–2025)

Administrative Level	Units Affected	Specific Examples	Degree of Control	Occupation Methods
Provinces	5 provinces	Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, Kwango, Kinshasa, Kongo-Central	Confirmed active presence	Gradual infiltration
Territories	6+ territories	Kwamouth, Bagata, Kenge, Popokabaka, Maluku, Kimvula	Partial to total control	Direct military occupation
Collectivities/Sectors	8+ entities	Ntua, Wamba-Fatundu, Lonzo, Lufuna, Iponge, Dinga, Lulalumene, Plateau Bateke	Parallel administration	Replacement of authorities
Groupements	47+ groupements	T & é groupements of the Bateke Plateau	Systematic occupation	Demographic control
Villages	156+ villages	Kinsele, Mayala, Mbusie, Menkwo, Lweme	Effective control	Permanent military presence
Renamed Villages	47+ villages	Toponymic changes with Yaka connotation	Cultural appropriation	T & é identity erasure
Installed Authorities	89+ appointments	Yaka chiefs replacing T & é authorities	Parallel governance	Customary legitimization

Source: Table based on data collected from Provincial Security Services, mapping March 2025.

Table 6 precisely illustrates the scale and structuring of this expansion. At the provincial level, Mobondo’s presence is confirmed in five major administrative entities, where gradual infiltration is observed in rural areas poorly controlled by the state. At the territorial level, six jurisdictions—including Kwamouth, Bagata, Kenge, Popokabaka, Maluku, and Kimvula—are affected, with some partially or fully under insurgent control, and several localities under direct military occupation. The movement’s grip extends to the sub-territorial level, particularly in eight collectivities or sectors, where there is systematic replacement of customary or administrative authorities. The table records 47 T & é groupements under systematic occupation, reflecting a clear intent of demographic domination and redefinition of local power relations.

Even more concerning, 156 villages are under permanent control, with 47 of them renamed according to Yaka-influenced toponyms—signaling a symbolic appropriation of the territory and the erasure of T & é identity. Finally, the appointment of 89 Yaka chiefs replacing deposed authorities illustrates a parallel governance system legitimized by custom, consolidating Mobondo’s control not only through arms but also through tradition.



Table 7. Detailed Intelligence on Mobondo Leadership (2025)

Faction/Leader	Zone of Influence	Estimated Strength	Political Ambitions	Military Capabilities	Current Status
<b>Fabrice Kavidioka Zombie</b> ( <i>Chief Leader</i> )	Trans-provincial coordination – multi-faction network	Indirect control of 2,000–3,000 fighters	Political-military consolidation, negotiation from a position of strength	Combined strategy: inter-faction coordination, logistics, financing	Arrested late July 2025
<b>Odon “Kiamvu” Kumbu</b>	Bateke Plateau, T & é territories	800–1,200	“Traditional Yaka King,” restoration of “Lunda Kingdom”	Heavy weaponry, military training	Wanted (international warrant)
<b>Faction “Daddy”</b>	Kwilu (Bagata), northern Kwango	400–600	Expansion toward eastern provinces	Ambush specialization	Active, inter-faction competition
<b>Faction “Satonge”</b>	Southern Mai-Ndombe, Kongo-Central	300–500	Control of trade routes	Taxation, intelligence	Recurrent internal conflicts
<b>Faction “B52”</b>	Kwango (Popokabaka, Kenge)	250–400	Local territorial autonomy	Territorial defense	Opposes other factions
<b>“Cobra” (Neutralized)</b>	Kwamouth (Lweme village)	Dissolved faction	Operational military coordination	Tactical expertise	Killed March 2025
<b>“Saddam”</b>	Maluku (Kinshasa outskirts)	150–250	Capital infiltration	Urban warfare, sabotage	Actively wanted

**Source:** Table based on data collected from Intelligence Services, August 2025 analysis.

Under this coordination, several field figures hold more localized roles: Odon “Kiamvu” Kumbu, a self-proclaimed “Traditional Yaka King,” mobilizes between 800 and 1,200 fighters on the Bateke Plateau, equipped with heavy weapons and advanced military training, which has led to an international arrest warrant. The “Daddy” faction, active in northern Kwilu and Kwango, commands 400 to 600 men and aims to expand eastward using ambush tactics. “Satonge,” operating in southern Mai-Ndombe and Kongo-Central, controls key trade routes through taxation and intelligence, though weakened by internal rivalries. “B52,” based in Popokabaka and Kenge, focuses on defensive territorial autonomy in opposition to other factions. The former “Cobra” faction, dissolved after its leader was neutralized, was specialized in military coordination in Kwamouth. Finally, “Saddam,” active in Maluku (Kinshasa), carries out sabotage and urban guerrilla operations and remains at large.

This overview highlights a hierarchical and functional distribution of roles, where the central leadership—now weakened by the arrest of Fabrice Kavidioka Zombie—coexists with autonomous regional commands, each adapting its tactics and rhetoric to its environment while contributing to the same objective: the violent challenge to state authority and the consolidation of parallel power.

This structuring into autonomous but interconnected commands is characteristic of a mature insurgent movement. The diversity of profiles—from self-proclaimed monarchs to urban warlords—allows for broad coverage of the conflict spectrum: from bush warfare to urban guerrilla, including the customary oversight of rural populations. The mobilization of identity-based narratives (such as the restoration of the Lunda Kingdom) enables Mobondo to anchor its actions in a historical and symbolic dimension, reinforcing its legitimacy among part of the population. Furthermore, the tactical specialization of the factions (sabotage, ambushes, taxation, infiltration) demonstrates operational intelligence and the ability to adapt quickly to government strategies.

This structuring recalls that of other African rebel groups that have evolved into de facto politico-military entities, capable of negotiating, administering, and sustaining prolonged resistance. Even if no formal central coordination is acknowledged, the homogeneity of objectives—state weakening, territorial conquest, parallel legitimization—suggests the persistence of a common ideological core, carrying a long-term insurrectional project.

- Humanitarian Toll: The Magnitude of the Catastrophe

The humanitarian impact of the Mobondo conflict goes far beyond the usual thresholds of intercommunal violence, aligning instead with the darkest dynamics of a protracted armed conflict bearing the traits of a localized civil war. This is no longer merely a clash between communities but an organized process of social, political, and identity annihilation targeting part of the population—engineered by structured politico-military actors often rooted in an ideology of domination.

The treatment inflicted upon civilian populations, the systematic nature of the abuses, the scale of forced displacements, and the destruction of essential infrastructure all fall within a broader strategy aimed at dismantling traditional mechanisms of coexistence and local governance. More than a humanitarian crisis, this represents a descent into organized terror, where civilians become the primary targets and local institutions the first collateral victims. Such dehumanization of warfare reflects not only the State’s loss of control but also the entrenchment of an unrestrained insurgency, indifferent to humanitarian law and international conventions.

Table 8. Comprehensive Humanitarian Assessment and Analysis of Violations (June 2022 – June 2025)

Impact Category	Victims/Damage	Demographic Breakdown	Temporal Trend	Legal Qualification
<b>Civilians killed</b>	3,721 confirmed deaths: Kwamouth (3,369), Kwilu (223), Kwango (48), Maluku (81)	T & é (1,100), Yaka (1,917), Others (704)	Geometric escalation 2022–2025	Mass killings, ethnic targeting
<b>Traditional authorities assassinated</b>	89+ customary chiefs	76% T & é 24% alleged collaborators	Systematic targeting 2023–2024	Elimination of local elites
<b>Foreign nationals killed</b>	3 victims: 1 Chinese, 1 from Brazzaville, 1 Angolan	Merchants, civil servants	Rising indiscrimination	Crimes against foreigners
<b>Villages destroyed</b>	222 villages burned	90% majority-T & é villages	Systematic destruction	Destruction of civilian property
<b>Civilian infrastructure destroyed</b>	450+ buildings: Schools (156), Health centers (89), Churches (205)	Essential public services	Intensification 2024–2025	Attacks against civilian property
<b>Forced displacement</b>	550,400+ internally displaced	70% toward Kinshasa, 30% rural zones	Exponential growth	Forced population displacement
<b>Sexual violence</b>	247+ documented cases	Women, children, men	Massive underreporting	Systematic sexual crimes
<b>Child soldiers</b>	89+ minors recruited	Boys (67), Girls (22)	Rising forced recruitment	Use of child soldiers
<b>Looted goods</b>	1,200+ farms, 15,000+ head of livestock	Destruction of livelihoods	Systematic looting	Looting and economic destruction

**Source:** Table based on data collected from United Nations offices, provincial security services, local NGOs, May 2025.

Table 8 offers an exhaustive overview of the human rights violations committed in the context of the Mobondo conflict between June 2022 and June 2025, revealing its full brutality. Confirmed civilian deaths amount to 3,721,

including 3,369 in Kwamouth alone, with most victims belonging to the Téké (1,100), Yaka (1,917), and other minority groups (704). This ethnic targeting is compounded by the assassination of 89 customary chiefs—mostly Téké—highlighting a policy of eliminating community elites.

The methodical destruction of 222 majority-Téké villages and 450 civilian infrastructures (schools, churches, health centers) confirms a scorched-earth strategy aimed at erasing the social and cultural foundations of entire regions. More than 550,400 people have been displaced, fleeing violence toward Kinshasa or peripheral rural areas—marking one of the largest internal displacements in the DRC in two decades.

The documentation of 247 cases of sexual violence (with a high likelihood of underreporting), the recruitment of 89 child soldiers, and the looting of over 1,200 farms and 15,000 head of livestock illustrate the collapse of the socio-economic fabric and the widespread perpetration of war crimes.

This table reflects not merely a crisis but an institutionalized system of terror, where violations of fundamental rights are neither accidental nor peripheral but form an integral part of Mobondo’s insurgent strategy.

Broadly speaking, the analysis of Tables 1 to 7 demonstrates that Mobondo is not a marginal or isolated phenomenon but a hybrid insurgent movement built around a multi-level strategy: militarization of space, institutional collapse, customary legitimization, territorial entrenchment, and destruction of the social fabric. The Congolese State faces an existential challenge, requiring a systemic, clear-sighted, and integrated response that goes far beyond the usual scope of domestic security operations.

**7. Discussion**

This part aims to compare the empirical findings on the evolution of the Mobondo phenomenon with the main theoretical frameworks on non-international armed conflicts and hybrid insurgencies. This approach makes it possible to situate the case of the Grand Bandundu within a broader comparative dynamic and to better grasp the Congolese specificities in contemporary processes of state fragmentation.

The transformations of the Mobondo—characterized by a structured politico-military organization, parallel governance, progressive ideologization, and a territorial strategy—strongly resonate with the typologies of insurgent conflicts proposed by Kalyvas (2006), which highlight the logic of rationalizing violence in civil wars. The author emphasizes the relationship between territorial control, information, and the use of targeted terror. The targeting of customary chiefs, local taxation, and the institutional implantation of the Mobondo fall squarely within this dynamic.

Similarly, the observations of Raleigh et al. (2010) on the fragmentation of state authority in Africa show that fragile peripheral areas, poorly integrated into the national apparatus, become hubs of rebel governance. This aligns with Mehler’s (2011) work, which explains how community violence can tip into insurgency when combined with state inefficiency, alternative customary legitimization, and the exploitation of historical land conflicts. Field data from the territories of Kwamouth, Bagata, Maluku, and Kimvula clearly demonstrate this critical convergence.

Kasfir (2005) develops the concept of “rebel governance,” in which armed groups build parallel administrations in the areas they control. In the case of the Mobondo, the appointment of Yaka customary chiefs to replace Téké authorities, the establishment of a parallel tax system, and the management of migration flows demonstrate the consolidation of a political autonomy project. These dynamics find parallels in the cases of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda or the FARC in Colombia (Clapham, 1998).

The comparative table below (Table 9) reinforces this argument. It cross-references traditional conflict classification criteria with empirical field data. All indicators—from targets to governance to geographical expansion—converge toward classifying Mobondo as an armed insurgency rather than a mere community conflict. This justifies a reassessment of political and security responses, which must be based on explicit recognition of the insurgent nature of the phenomenon.

Table 9. Classification Criteria – Comparative Analysis

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Intercommunal Conflict</b>	<b>Mobondo (Observed Reality)</b>	<b>Classification</b>
<b>Main targets</b>	Rival communities exclusively	State + institutions + communities	Insurgency
<b>Declared objectives</b>	Coexistence, resource sharing	Alternative governance, “kingdom”	Insurgency

<b>Geographic expansion</b>	Localized, contact zones	5 provinces, 156+ villages	Insurgency
<b>Organization</b>	Traditional leadership	Politico-military structure	Insurgency
<b>Conflict duration</b>	Episodic, cyclical	Persistent, 3+ years	Insurgency
<b>Governance</b>	Respect for established authorities	Active parallel administration	Insurgency
<b>Resources/Financing</b>	Community contribution	Forced taxation, organized looting	Insurgency

**Source:** Table based on data collected from security services of the five affected provinces, May 2025.

As shown in the table above, the field results align with several comparative studies in Central and East Africa. For example, Mehler's (2011) research on community conflicts in Chad and the Central African Republic shows that crossing certain critical thresholds—attacking institutions, occupying territory, erasing legitimate authorities—transforms a local crisis into an insurgency-type conflict. Similarly, Kasfir's (2005) work on “rebel governance” in African conflicts highlights the capacity of certain groups to establish civilian administrations in the areas they control, with fiscal, judicial, and security structures. This is precisely what is observed with the Mobondo in the territories of Kwamouth, Bagata, Popokabaka, and Kimvula.

Comparative analysis therefore demonstrates that the phenomenon cannot be reduced to an explosion of interethnic violence but constitutes a mature insurgent project. This also echoes the conclusions of Stearns and Vogel (2015), which state that the Congolese State fails to stabilize rural and peripheral areas, creating lasting security vacuums where alternative forms of power thrive.

In light of these elements, the reality of the Mobondo fully fits into an insurgent trajectory. The prolonged silence of the authorities, as well as the reluctance to acknowledge the political nature of the crisis, have allowed the movement to consolidate. It is therefore imperative for the Congolese State to revise its response tools, relying not only on a military approach but also on political, customary, and social levers to delegitimize insurgent alternatives. The integration of local actors, the restoration of the State's neutrality, and the resolution of land issues become prerequisites for sustainable stabilization.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

At the end of this study, it is clear that the Mobondo phenomenon has crossed a critical threshold in its evolution, shifting from a classic intercommunal conflict to a structured armed insurgency with profound implications for the stability of the Congolese State. This transformation is neither accidental nor marginal; rather, it is rooted in historical, political, socio-economic, and identity-based dynamics.

The empirical analysis has highlighted several key dimensions: the systematic attacks against state institutions, the planned territorial expansion across five provinces, the emergence of a hierarchical and structured politico-military leadership, the establishment of parallel governance, and a nationwide humanitarian crisis with more than 3,700 deaths, 550,000 internally displaced persons, and the destruction of more than 450 public and customary infrastructures.

The comparison of these findings with the analytical frameworks of Kalyvas (2006), Raleigh et al. (2010), and Kasfir (2005) confirms that Mobondo operates within a logic of rationalized insurgency, aimed at progressively replacing the legitimate State with an autonomous politico-military authority. Its ability to collect taxes, administer, recruit, and maintain territorial control is a strong indicator of its consolidation.

In light of this situation, it is imperative for the Congolese State to adopt a comprehensive, integrated, and multisectoral strategy. To this end, we recommend:

- Strengthening the security response through coordinated, professional, and non-partisan operations, with adequate logistical support and improved operational intelligence.
- Establishing a special inter-institutional task force to monitor the Mobondo crisis, bringing together intelligence services, military justice, customary chieftaincies, and humanitarian partners.
- Restoring public authority in affected areas by reestablishing basic social services and supporting legitimate customary chiefs.
- Initiating a structured dialogue among the concerned communities (Téké Yaka, Suku, Mbala) under the

guidance of impartial mediators to promote reconciliation and cohesion.

- Launching an ambitious rural development program focused on fair, participatory, and inclusive land reform.

However, this study has several limitations. It relies largely on secondary data and partially accessible field reports due to security instability in the study areas. The absence of updated statistics, constraints on accessing Mobondo-occupied zones, and the risks faced by investigators have limited the empirical depth of certain analyses. Furthermore, the complexity of local dynamics—where the line between victims and perpetrators is often blurred—complicates the strict categorization of responsibilities.

For these reasons, further research is needed. A long-term ethnographic study would provide deeper insight into the logics of adherence to Mobondo through the narratives of its members. In addition, a comparative analysis with other postcolonial African insurgent movements could offer interpretive tools for understanding the conditions of emergence, consolidation, and exit from armed insurgencies. Finally, studying mechanisms of disarmament, transitional justice, and reintegration is crucial to anticipate sustainable solutions and to prevent the resurgence of similar dynamics in other regions of the DRC.

## References

- Autesserre, S. (2010). *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511761034>
- Boas, M., & Dunn, K. (2007). *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Clapham, C. (1998). *African Guerrillas*. Indiana University Press.
- De Herdt, T., & Titeca, K. (2016). Governance with empty pockets: The education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Development and Change*, 47(3), 472-495. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12231>
- De Koning, R. (2020). *Resource conflicts and armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. SIPRI. Retrieved from <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2020>
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Dunn, K. C. (2010). *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230106094>
- Englebert, P. (2003). Why Congo Persists: Sovereignty, Globalization and the Violent Reproduction of a Weak State. *QJ*, 22(3), 29-50.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine.
- Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400826206>
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1973). *Peasants and Politics*. Columbia University Press.
- Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1999). *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*. Princeton University Press.
- Kaldor, M. (2012). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (3rd ed.). Stanford University Press.
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818462>
- Kasfir, N. (2005). Guerrillas and civilian participation: The National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981–86. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43(2), 271-296. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X05000819>
- Mehler, A. (2011). Rebels and parties: The impact of armed insurgency on representation in the Central African Republic. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49(1), 115-139.
- MONUSCO. (2024). *Rapport sur la situation sécuritaire dans le Grand Bandundu*. Division des droits de l'homme.
- Raleigh, C., Linke, A., Hegre, H., & Karlsen, J. (2010). Introducing ACLED: An Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(5), 651-660. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343310378914>
- Stearns, J., & Vogel, C. (2015). *The Landscape of Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo*. Congo Research Group, NYU. Retrieved from <https://www.congoresearchgroup.org/>

- Tilly, C. (2003). *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804366>
- Trefon, T. (2011). *Congo Masquerade: The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform Failure*. Zed Books. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350220685>
- Vlassenroot, K. (2002). Citizenship, Identity and the Politics of Conflict: The Case of South Kivu. *Review of African Political Economy*, 29(93/94), 499-515.
- Vlassenroot, K., & Raeymaekers, T. (2009). *The Crisis in Kivu: Drivers of Conflict and the Challenges of Peacebuilding*. International Alert.
- Weinstein, J. M. (2007). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511809880>

**Acknowledgments**

Not applicable.

**Authors contributions**

Not applicable.

**Funding**

Not applicable.

**Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Informed consent**

Obtained.

**Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

**Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

**Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

**Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.