The many faces of a rebel group : the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The many faces of a rebel group: the Allied Democratic Forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

KRISTOF TITECA AND DANIEL FAHEY

- ***This is a final author version, before editing by the journal –***
  Final version here:
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307553179_The_many_faces_of_a_rebel_group_the_Allied_Democratic_Forces_in_the_Democratic_Republic_of_Congo

Abstract

This paper discusses the case of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It shows how a variety of actors that have opposed the ADF rebel group have framed the rebels to achieve a range of political and economic objectives, or in response to organizational and individual limitations. The DRC and Ugandan governments have each framed ADF in pursuit of regional, international and national goals separate from their stated desires to eliminate the armed group. The UN stabilization mission in Congo (MONUSCO)'s understanding of the ADF was influenced by organizational limitations and the shortcomings of individual analysts, producing flawed assessments and ineffective policy decisions. Indeed, the many 'faces' of ADF tell us more about the ADF's adversaries than they do about the rebels themselves. The article shows how the policies towards the ADF may not be directly related with defeating a rebel threat, but rather enable the framers (e.g. DRC and Ugandan governments) to pursue various political and economic objectives, or lead the framers to pursue misguided operational plans (e.g. MONUSCO). In doing so, the article highlights more broadly the importance of the production of knowledge on conflicts and rebel groups: the way in which a rebel group is instrumentalised, or in which organizational structure impact on the understanding of the rebel group, are crucial not only in understanding the context, but also in understanding the interventions on the ground.

Introduction

Between October and December 2014, a series of massacres that killed more than 250 people took place in Beni territory, in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) near the border with Uganda.[1] The DRC government and the UN stabilization mission in DRC (MONUSCO) quickly identified a Ugandan rebel group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) as the sole culprits, despite strong indications of the involvement of other actors, including Congolese soldiers.[2] Around the same time, the Ugandan government blamed the murders of several Muslim leaders in Uganda on the ADF, although there was scant supporting evidence.[3]

This article explores how different actors have framed the ADF and why, and what these different framings tell us about the political and economic motives of each actor. In doing so, the article analyses the politics of knowledge construction on rebel groups—specifically the ways in which narratives about a rebel group may reveal more about the intentions of the actor framing the group than about the group itself. The article also shows how processes of knowledge construction are not only related to active instrumentalization by the actors involved, but are also the result of organizational dynamics.

The next section discusses the literature on framing, in particular how wars are framed. After a brief history of the ADF, the article examines how the Ugandan government, Congolese government and MONUSCO framed the ADF, and why: while both governments largely instrumentalize the rebel movement for political and economic reasons, MONUSCO's framing is largely influenced by organizational shortcomings. The final section brings these issues together, showing how particular images of the ADF are constructed through the processes of extraversion and intraversion.

---

[1] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR condemns massacres in Beni, in DR Congo and calls for humanitarian access,* 19 Dec. 2014, http://www.refworld.org/docid/54942d404.html. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs in this article were accessible on 13 July 2016.)

[2] Congo Research Group, *Qui sont les tuers de Beni?* Rapport d'enquête, no. 1, (New York: New York University, March 2016) p. 2.

[3] John Agaba, Josephine Ganyana and Diana Ankunda, 'Muslim clerics murder suspects linked to ADF', *New Vision,* 12 Jan. 2015.

The framing of wars

Wars can provide an excellent context for a diverse range of political and economic actors to pursue 'violent, profitable and politically advantageous strategies . . . with a great deal of impunity'.[4] The 'greed and grievance' literature has (over)emphasized the economic functions of conflicts, while other work, particularly that of David Keen,[5] has shown how war serves a variety of objectives unrelated to the goal of winning the war. Without ignoring the economic dimensions of war he highlights their important political functions, such as the building of a political constituency and the unification of a particular group.

A wide range of terms has been used to refer to the process of understanding and interpreting events.[6] Early approaches relied on the psychology of analogical reasoning to highlight 'knowledge structures'—such as analogies or schemas—through which people 'order, interpret, and simplify, in a word, to make sense of their environment'.[7] Knowledge structures both help policy-makers to arrive at certain choices and play a role in justifying these choices. Similarly, Vertzberger called this 'information processing', referring to a 'range of cognitive and motivational phenomena of great significance in human judgment and decision making in general and foreign policymaking in particular'.[8]

The concepts of knowledge structures and information processing are further developed in the literature on frames and framing,[9] which highlights the main function of frames as organizing information in a coherent fashion through which the world is understood. Frames have not only a 'passive' side in understanding the world, but also an active side, highlighting how information and knowledge are constructed for particular aims, 'as a tool to legitimize and rationalize certain

---

[4] David Keen, *Useful enemies: when waging wars is more important than winning them* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 236.

[5] David Keen, 'A rational kind of madness', *Oxford Development Studies* 25: 1, 1997, pp. 67–75; 'War and peace: what's the difference?', *International Peacekeeping* 7: 4, 2000, pp. 1–22. See also Mats Berdal and David Malone, eds, *Greed and grievance: economic agendas and civil wars* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

[6] Roger Schank and Robert Abelson, *Scripts, plans and knowledge* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 194.

[7] Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at war* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 13.

[8] Yaacov Vertzberger, *The world in their minds* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 1.

[9] Marvin Minsky, 'A framework for representing knowledge', in P. Winston, ed., *The psychology of computer vision* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975).

propositions'.[10] Through framing, actors are able to exercise power in drawing attention to a specific issue, and in determining how such an issue is viewed: 'A successful framing issue will both cause an issue to be seen by those that matter, and ensure that they see it in a specific way.'[11] By this means, actors will try to influence particular target audiences, and to encourage actions on a certain issue. Framing can therefore be considered a 'rhetorical weapon' used for 'political manipulation', and a 'method that actors use to manipulate the decision process'.[12] In other words, frames are able to locate blame and suggest lines of action,[13] and are strategically useful for a range of political and economic functions.[14]

Two additional factors are particularly germane to the purpose of this article. First, much of the literature on framing deals with the efforts of social movements[15], or with how western governments frame their foreign policy. As Fisher highlights,[16] scant attention is paid to how national actors in the global South frame information about war to achieve diverse objectives. These actors are particularly important given the fact that many national governments in the developing world actively seek to 'control what information external actors can access on events and developments in their countries and what options on potential interventions they view as feasible or desirable'.[17] In doing so, national actors in foreign states engage in various image management strategies.[18] Titeca and Costeur have developed this observation by showing how various governments—in particular the Ugandan and Congolese governments—frame events

[10] Schank and Abelson, *Scripts, plans and knowledge*, p. 45; see also Maurits van der Veen, *Ideas, interests and foreign aid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 28.
[11] Morten Bøas and Desmond McNeill, *Multilateral institutions: a critical introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 1.
[12] Jean Garrison, 'Framing foreign policy alternatives in the inner circle', *Political Psychology* 22: 4, 2001, pp. 777, 778, 801.
[13] See esp. Robert Benford and David Snow, 'Framing processes and social movements', *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, 2000, pp. 611–39.
[14] Regula Hänggli and Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Frame construction and frame promotion', *American Behavioral Scientist* 56: 3, 2012, pp. 260–78.
[15] Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald, eds, *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures and cultural framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[16] Jonathan Fisher, 'Framing Kony: Uganda's war, Obama's advisers and the nature of "influence" in western foreign policy-making', *Third World Quarterly* 35: 4, 2014, pp. 686–704.
[17] Fisher, 'Framing Kony'; Jonathan Fisher, 'When it pays to be a "fragile state": Uganda's use and abuse of a dubious concept', *Third World Quarterly* 35: 2, 2014, pp. 316–32.
[18] Fisher, 'Framing Kony'.

differently for different audiences.[19] More concretely, they show how one particular rebel group—the Lord's Resistance Army—is framed differently for different intended audiences, such as the local population or western governments. These insights are particularly useful for this paper, in which we analyse how the Congolese and Ugandan governments, and the UN mission(s) in the DRC, have framed the ADF, and why.

Second, the literature on framing shows the importance of the political context in which the framing takes place. Amenta and colleagues, for example, have shown how the framing efforts of social movements have to 'fit political circumstances' in order to be effective.[20] The political context 'intersects with the strategic choices that movements make',[21] and different political settings will determine the impact of particular messages.[22] This article builds further on these insights: it aims to show how different structural circumstances—the different political contexts—have an impact on how national governments frame a particular rebel group. More specifically, we will show how the Congolese and Ugandan governments have strategically framed the ADF rebel group at different political levels—international, regional and national—in order to achieve objectives at these various levels that may or may not be related to the reasons why they are fighting against the ADF.

Finally, this article explores how framing happens not only for strategic political and economic reasons, but also because of particular organizational processes: we will show how the UN missions' understandings of the ADF have largely been influenced by organizational shortcomings that led to poor analysis.

The ADF: a brief history

In 1986 the National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by Yoweri Museveni, took power in Uganda after a five-year civil war. Among the challenges facing Museveni was how to manage discord in the Muslim community, which was deeply divided and politicized by the late 1980s. The divisions within the community were exacerbated by the emergence of the Tabliq movement,

---

[19] Kristof Titeca and Théophile Costeur, 'An LRA for everyone: how different actors frame the Lord's Resistance Army', *African Affairs* 114: 454, 2015, pp. 92–114.

[20] Edwin Amenta, Neal Caren and Sheera Joy Olasky, 'Age for leisure?', *American Sociological Review* 70: 3, 2005, p. 519.

[21] Ryan Cragun and Deborah Cragun, *Introduction to sociology* (Tampa, FL: Blacksleet River, 2006), p. 234.

[22] Marco Diani, 'Linking Mobilization frames and political opportunities', *American Sociological Review*, 61:6, December 1996, pp. 1054.

in which Saudi-schooled Ugandan clerics advocated 'a stricter form of Islam, and started to challenge the traditional [Ugandan] Muslim scholars' understanding of Islam'.[23] Museveni's efforts to control the leadership of the Muslim community led to a violent confrontation in 1991, after which the government arrested and jailed 400 Tabliqs, including a leader named Jamil Mukulu.[24] Upon his release from prison in 1993, Mukulu and other Tabliqs established the Salaf Foundation (SF), which had an armed wing: the Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters (UMFF).[25] The UMFF reportedly established ties with the government of Sudan.[26] In February 1995, the Ugandan army (Ugandan People's Defense Force—UPDF) overran the training camp and killed many of the UMFF fighters, but a few dozen survivors including Jamil Mukulu fled to the DRC (then known as Zaire).[27] With the consent and support of President Mobutu, the UMFF remnants re-formed at Bunia as the Allied Democratic Forces, and in June 1995 formed an alliance with the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU).

NALU had been formed in 1986, drawing upon former political movements and marginalized populations in western Uganda who shared opposition to the new Ugandan government led by Yoweri Museveni.[28] To evade Museveni's reach, NALU largely operated across the border in Zaire's Beni and Lubero territories, where its members shared ethnic ties and longstanding political and economic links with Zaire's Nande community.[29] Between 1990 and 1992, NALU carried out several attacks within Uganda, but remained an ineffectual fighting force until its

---

[23] Abdin Chande, 'Muslim-State Relations in East Africa Under Conditions of Military and Civilian or One-Party Dictatorships', *Historia Actual Online* (Fall 2008), p. 106; see also International Crisis Group (ICG), *Eastern Congo: the ADF/NALU's lost rebellion*, Africa briefing no. 93 (Nairobi and Brussels, 19 Dec. 2012), pp. 3–4.

[24] Mike Ssegawa, 'The aftermath of the attack on Uganda Muslim Supreme Council', *Daily Monitor*, 4 Aug. 2015.

[25] This group is also referred to as the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army (UMLA).

[26] Kristof Titeca and Koen Vlassenroot 'Rebels without borders in the Rwenzori borderland? A biography of the Allied Democratic Forces', *The Journal of Eastern African Studies,* 6:1, 2012, pp. 154-176.

[27] Testimony of Mr Benz Tushabe to the Uganda Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2001, CW/08/01, 17 Sept. 2001.

[28] Gerard Prunier, 'Rebel movements and proxy warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo (1986-1999)', *African Affairs* (2004), p. 383. For more on NALU, see Lindsay Scorgie-Porter, 'Militant Islamists or borderland dissidents? An exploration into the Allied Democratic Forces' recruitment practices and constitution', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 53: 1, 2015, pp. 8–10.

[29] Lindsay Scorgie, 'Rwenzori Rebels: The Allied Democratic Forces Conflict in the Uganda-Congo Borderland', Dissertation for the University of Cambridge, October 2012, pp. 92-105.

alliance with the ADF. From the moment the ADF and NALU became allied, ADF appears to have dominated the leadership, and by 2001 the Ugandan government was already describing the ADF as 'the successor organization to NALU'.[30] By the mid-2000s, the few remaining NALU elements had either quit or converted to Islam and remained with the ADF. For simplicity, this article refers to the ADF except where NALU was specifically involved.

ADF/NALU launched their first joint attack in November 1996 on the border post at Mpondwe, Uganda[31], during the First Congo War. The ADF and UPDF fought a series of battles in eastern DRC and western Uganda during 1997 and 1998. At the same time, the ADF carried out several attacks in Uganda, including one in June 1998 on a school, in which the rebels killed at least 70 young people and captured 80 more.[32] By August 1998, the UPDF had 3,400 troops involved in an operation against the ADF, and appeared to be on the verge of defeating the group.[33]

Additional elements of ADF's history are discussed in the sections that follow, but a few key points about the period between 1998 and 2016 deserve mention. First, the Ugandan army invaded DRC in August 1998 and remained as occupation force for nearly five years, but failed during this time to defeat ADF.[34] Second, between 2005 and 2016, the Congolese army carried out several operations against ADF,[35] but in each case failed to defeat them. Third, UN peacekeepers provided direct and/or indirect support to the Congolese army during each operation, but were generally more concerned with other armed groups in eastern Congo during this period than with ADF.

[30] International Court of Justice (ICJ), 'Case concerning armed activities on the territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda), counter-memorial submitted by the Republic of Uganda', vol. 1, 21 April 2001, p. 13.

[31] Kristof Titeca, 'The 'Masai' and Miraa: public authority, vigilance and criminality in a Ugandan border town' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47:2, 2009, pp. 219- 317.

[32] J. Tumusiime, 'Museveni shuffles Kazini, Mugume', *The Monitor*, 16 June 1998.

[33] ICJ, 'Case concerning armed activities on the territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)', General List 116, 19 Dec. 2005, paras 45–46.

[34] Daniel Fahey, *Rethinking the Resource Curse: Natural Resources and Polywar in the Ituri District, Democratic Republic of the Congo,* Ph.D dissertation, UC Berkeley, Fall 2011, pp. 111-138.

[35] In 2005, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

ADF leaders consistently claimed their goal was to overthrow the Ugandan government and create an Islamic state,[36] but over the past decade at least their actions have not demonstrated a clear commitment to this goal beyond using it as a narrative to maintain cohesion among ADF members. By the early 2000s, the ADF had established a well-organized society in the forest north-east of Beni town that was supported by international networks and sustained by local connections with the area's Nande community forged decades earlier by NALU.[37] Although the ADF faced regular military operations, first by Ugandan and later by Congo and UN troops, its leaders nonetheless created and maintained a series of camps that contained mosques, schools, health centres, courts, a police force, an internal security force, a prison and even a marriage counselling committee. The ADF's leaders also maintained regular relations with local business and political leaders, as well as episodic contacts with national and international actors.[38] By January 2014, just before a major military operation decimated and fractured the group, the ADF consisted of 1,600–2,500 men, women and children, led mainly by Ugandan nationals but with a sizeable Congolese component.[39]

As the ADF's leaders focused on survival in Congo rather than overthrowing Uganda's government, they became highly secretive, which both concealed their activities from outside observers, and made their image susceptible to manipulation manipulated by outsiders to serve diverse purposes. Specifically, by the late 2000s, the ADF's leaders had ceased making public proclamations, stayed away from social media and harshly punished people caught trying to escape, leading to a sharp reduction in escapees.[40] Also, the ADF tightly controlled movement within and between its forest camps,[41] allowing very few members to travel 'outside' to places such as Beni; these restrictions also enabled them to minimize interactions that might shed light on the ADF's objectives and activities. By 2014, when it came under attack from the Congolese army in its forest strongholds, the ADF was functioning more like a criminal group than a rebellion still pursuing the quixotic goal of taking over Uganda.

---

[36] UN Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2014/42, 23 Jan. 2014, para. 74.
[37] UN Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2015/19, 12 Jan. 2015, paras 15–38.
[38] ICG, *Eastern Congo*, pp. 6–7.
[39] UN Security Council, S/2014/42, para. 71; S/2015/19, para. 17.
[40] UN Security Council, S/2014/42, para. 79.
[41] UN Security Council, 'Midterm Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2014/42**8**, 25 June 2014, annex 9.

In March or April 2015,[42] Tanzanian authorities arrested Jamil Mukulu, who had reportedly been living since June 2014 in Dar es Salaam.[43] Ugandan authorities requested Mukulu's extradition on the grounds of his alleged involvement in the murders of Muslim clerics in Uganda in late 2014 and early 2015. Ugandan government officials hailed Mukulu's arrest as 'the latest in a string of victories we have registered against ADF', which included recent arrests of 40 people.[44] Nevertheless, as of mid-2016, the ADF continues to operate in the DRC.

The framing of the ADF

The ADF and Uganda

The Ugandan government has fairly consistently framed the ADF as a terrorist group that poses an existential threat to the country. This frame has served multiple objectives, most of which have nothing to do with eliminating the ADF. The 'terrorist' frame accurately describes the ADF's actions from 1997 to 2000, a period during which it carried out attacks in Uganda, but the government has invoked this label for a variety of reasons, depending on the particular context: on a regional level, it was used to justify invading and occupying the DRC; on an international level, it was used to gain a place in the US-led 'war on terror'; and on a national level, it was useful to rationalize mass arrests and acts of torture, to assign blame for unsolved murders and to slander opposition politicians.

When the government of Uganda sent thousands of troops into eastern DRC beginning on 3 August 1998[45], it publicly denied the invasion for several weeks. On 22 August 1998, President Museveni stated: 'If unilateral intervention intensifies [in the DRC] Uganda may be forced, after due internal consultations, to take its own independent action in the protection of its own security interests.'[46] Later, after Uganda's involvement in the Congo wars became clear, the government justified its action as a legitimate response to a national security threat, arguing to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that 'as long as the ADF and other anti-Uganda insurgents remained armed and mobilised in Congolese territory, the security of Uganda and its citizens—

[42] Most press reports indicated the arrest took place in April 2015, but one suggests it was in March: Risdel Kasasira, 'Who is ADF's Jamil Mukulu', *Daily Monitor*, 7 Aug. 2015.
[43] There are several versions of how Mukulu was arrested. See Risdel Kasasira, 'Aide betrayed ADF's Mukulu', *Daily Monitor*, 24 May 2015; 'Who is ADF's Jamil Mukulu?', *Daily Monitor*, 7 Aug. 2015.
[44] Charles Etukuri, 'Kayihura parades two more ADF suspects', *New Vision*, 18 July 2015.
[45] Emmy Allio, 'DRC Crisis: What you didn't know', The New Vision, 25 August 1999.
[46] 'Museveni threatens to join Congo war', *Sunday Monitor*, 23 Aug. 1998.

especially the most helpless and vulnerable of them—remained tenuous'.[47] It is interesting to note that this framing of ADF as an immediate threat to national security was not invoked at the time of the invasion, but was developed *ex post facto* when the government needed to rationalize its action to the ICJ and the international community.

The ICJ ultimately rejected Uganda's claim, stating that its actions were not 'proportionate to the series of transborder attacks it claimed had given rise to the right of self-defence, nor . . . necessary to that end'.[48] The ICJ determined that the government of Uganda was responsible for wide-ranging violations of human rights, as well as 'looting, plundering, and exploitation of Congolese natural resources' by the Ugandan army.[49]

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the Ugandan government found new utility in reframing the ADF as a group with links to international terrorist networks. Thus it was able to claim a place in the new, US-led 'war on terror', and thereby to gain new political and economic opportunities. In December 2001, the US government added the ADF (but not NALU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to its 'Terrorist Exclusion List',[50] thus transforming a local conflict along the DRC–Uganda border into part of the rapidly evolving 'fight against terrorism'. Four months later, in March 2002, the Ugandan parliament passed an Anti-Terrorism Act that designated the ADF (but not NALU) and the LRA as terrorist groups.

During the 2000s, the Ugandan government repeatedly asserted that the ADF had links with terrorist groups, or blamed ADF for specific attacks. As early as 2005, it was claiming that ADF was linked to Al-Qaeda,[51] a claim it has been repeating ever since. In 2007, the Ugandan authorities claimed to have thwarted an ADF attack on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala; media accounts identified the ADF as linked to Al-Qaeda, and

---

[47] ICJ, 'Case concerning armed activities on the territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda), counter-memorial submitted by the Republic of Uganda', vol. 1, 21 April 2001, para. 97..

[48] ICJ, 'Case Concerning Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)', General List no. 116, 19 December 2005, para. 147.

[49] ICJ, ICJ, 'Case Concerning Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)', General List no. 116, 19 December 2005, para. 345.

[50] IRIN, 'LRA, ADF on American terrorist list', 7 Dec. 2001.

[51] Fawzia Sheikh, 'New danger from Ugandan rebel group?', Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 6 June 2005, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/new-danger-from-ugandan-rebel-group-0.

suggested they had colluded on the planned attack.[52] On 11 July 2010, two terrorist bombings in Kampala killed more than 80 people. While Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for these attacks[53]—which were reportedly in retaliation for Uganda's participation in the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM)—Ugandan authorities quickly asserted an ADF link and suggested that the ADF and Al-Shabaab had collaborated.[54] In 2011, on the anniversary of the 2010 bombings, the Ugandan authorities announced a manhunt for ADF leaders, and alleged that the ADF was working with Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda in the Horn of Africa.[55] In 2013, a UPDF spokesman stated: 'There is no doubt; ADF has a linkage with Al-Shabaab. They collaborate. They have trained ADF on the use of improvised explosive devices.'[56] Other Ugandan authorities have since repeated this last claim.[57]

Despite these varied assertions, evidence of a clear link between the ADF and other terrorist groups has never materialized.[58] The UN Group of Experts in 2013, 2014 and 2015 found no evidence of links between ADF and Al-Shabaab or Al-Qaeda.[59] The findings of the 2014 Group are particularly convincing because they are based on a large amount of primary source information that emerged from a major military operation against the ADF, as well as on the statements of DRC government officials and the UN panels on Al-Qaeda and Somalia. Explosives experts have also doubted any link between the ADF and Al-Shabaab or other foreign terrorists, based on their examination of the ADF's homemade bombs.[60]

---

[52] Grace Matsiko, 'CHOGM: how security averted a terror strike', *Daily Monitor*, 1 Dec. 2007. Grace Matsiko, 'Terror suspects still in detention', *The Daily Monitor*, 2 May 2008.
[53] Sudarsan Raghaven, 'Arrests made in bomb attacks on World Cup fans in Uganda', *Washington Post*, 13 July 2010.
[54] Max Delany, 'Uganda bombings', *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 July 2010; 'Security find new clues on the terror attacks', *Independent*, 25 July 2010.
[55] The Daily Monitor, 'Terrorism is alive in region, says CMI boss', *Daily Monitor*, 11 July 2011.
[56] IRIN, 'DRC-based Uganda rebel groups 'recruiting, training', *IRIN*, 11 July 2013.
[57] IRIN, 'DRC-based Uganda rebel groups "recruiting, training"', 11 July 2013, http://www.irinnews.org/report/98400/drc-based-ugandan-rebel-group-%E2%80%9Crecruiting-training%E2%80%9D.
[58] Human Rights Watch, 'Open Secret: Illegal Detention and Torture by the Joint Anti-terrorism Task Force in Uganda' (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009), pp. 23-25.
[59] UN Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2016/466, 23 May 2016, para. 212; UN Security Council, S/2015/19, para. 7; UN Security Council, S/2014/42, para. 72.
[60] Alan Barlowe, *C-IED Assessment Report* (Mogadishu, Somalia: United Nations Mine Action Service), 10 June 2014, p. 4.

Notwithstanding the absence of credible proof for these links, the alleged connection between the ADF and terrorist groups has attracted considerable political capital and financial assistance to the government of Uganda, particularly in the context of the 'war on terror'. According to the US Congressional Research Service, 'The State Department considers Uganda to be a key regional partner and a valuable ally in combating terrorist threats in the region.'[61] Indeed, between 2001 and 2012 overall US military and economic assistance to Uganda rose steadily from US$77 million to US$399 million.[62] This included substantial military training, equipment and financing allocations to the UPDF.

The US government has collaborated with the Ugandan government on several 'anti-terrorist' endeavours. Most importantly, Washington has financially and militarily supported Uganda's participation in AMISOM.[63] The US has also provided key financing, military training, intelligence and US special forces for the Ugandan government's war against the LRA.[64] The fight against the ADF, as well as the war against the LRA, allows the Ugandan government to increase its defence budget. For example, in 1999, government officials justified a 26 per cent increase in the defence budget in part by claiming the resources were needed to fight the ADF.[65]

The Ugandan government is alleged to have perpetrated a range of human rights violations under the cover of fighting terrorism and terror groups. Uganda's Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force (JATT)—created in 1999 to deal with the ADF—has been accused of a variety of abuses including illegal detention and torture.[66] Others have criticized the Ugandan government for having 'used the rhetoric of counterterrorism and anti-terrorism laws to suppress freedoms of

---

[61] Lauren Ploch, *Countering terrorism in east Africa: the US response* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 3 Nov. 2010), p. 59.

[62] US Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook), https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports-greenbook.html. Values are current year US$.

[63] Princeton N. Lyman, 'The war on terrorism in Africa', in John H. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild, eds, *Africa in world politics: reforming political order* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009) pp. 282–3.

[64] WikiLeaks, U.S. State Department, 'Cable 10KAMPALA23_a; Uganda: continued US support for anti-LRA efforts critical', 14 Jan. 2010; posted on Wikileaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/10KAMPALA23_a.html. Kristof Titeca and Theophile Costeur, 'An LRA for everyone', pp. 15-19.

[65] Levi Ochieng, 'World Bank backs Uganda on increased defense cash', *East African*, 7 Sept. 1998.

[66] Human Rights Watch, 'Open Secret'p. 3.

expression and assembly'.[67] The US State Department's annual human rights reports contain numerous mentions of the Ugandan government's actions, including harassment and arrest of Muslims during 2002 and 2003, and the torture and murder of an alleged ADF collaborator in 2005.[68] The State Department reports also contain numerous examples of attacks on and arbitrary arrest of members of the political opposition in the name of fighting terror.

More recently, the government of Uganda has tried to blame the ADF for a series of murders and attacks in and around Kampala. In December 2014 and January 2015, after unknown assailants killed three Muslim clerics in Kampala, Ugandan authorities blamed the killings on the ADF and arrested six alleged ADF agents.[69] However, the government did not disclose any evidence that linked ADF to the crimes. Similarly, after an unknown gunman killed government prosecutor Joan Kagezi on 30 March 2015, government spokesmen initially blamed ADF, and then shifted blame to Al-Shabaab,[70] but again offered no evidence for these claims.

In sum, the Ugandan government has consistently portrayed ADF as a terrorist movement that poses an existential threat to the government. In this master frame, the rebel movement has served a range of objectives, differing according to the political context and more particularly to the level of interaction. At the regional level, the Ugandan government invoked the actions of the ADF in Uganda as pretext for invading the DRC, although its actions demonstrated that after the invasion it was less interested in the ADF than in various political and economic objectives. At the international level, the Ugandan government secured a spot in the US-led 'war on terror'—and the political and financial benefits this provided—by alleging links between the ADF and organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab. Lastly, on a national level, the framing of the ADF has served a range of political purposes, including human rights violations and assigning blame for various murders and attacks.

The ADF and the DRC

---

[67] Open Society Foundations, *Counterterrorism and human rights abuses in Kenya and Uganda: the World Cup bombing and beyond* (New York, 2013), p. 12; Human Rights Watch, 'Open Secret', pp. 72–4.

[68] US State Department, country reports on human rights practices, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/index.htm.

[69] Agaba et al., 'Muslim clerics'.

[70] Haggai Matsiko, 'Prosecutor Kagezi case puts focus on target killings', *The Independent*, 12 April 2015.

The DRC has adopted not one uniform master frame for the ADF but rather multiple framings that suit diverse political and economic interests. An early DRC government framing of the ADF countered the Ugandan government's characterization of the group as a puppet of the DRC state, while more recent framings have portrayed the ADF as a group that presented a grave danger to local communities, as the group responsible for a series of massacres, and as the group that murdered a national hero. As noted above, the government of Zaire played an important role in the creation of the ADF in 1995 as a force that could harass the government of Uganda, and potentially defend the Mobutu regime. Following Mobutu's defeat in 1997, the new regime of President Laurent Desirée Kabila allowed Ugandan troops into eastern DRC to fight the ADF; in some cases the Ugandan troops collaborated with Congolese forces in attacking the ADF.[71]

With the ADF at the centre of Uganda's defence in the ICJ case, the DRC government responded by denying such control,[72] and succeeded in convincing the ICJ not only that it was not controlling the ADF, but also that Uganda was invoking the ADF merely as a justification for the pursuit of other objectives, including access to the DRC's resource wealth.[73] In this way, the DRC government turned Uganda's framing of ADF on its head, and achieved a symbolic victory in winning the ICJ case against the Ugandan government.

After the Ugandan army withdrew from north-east DRC in May 2003, the Congolese state slowly re-established its presence and control in the region where the ADF was active. Over the next decade, the DRC government repeatedly attacked the ADF,[74] but paid more attention to other rebel groups. The operations against the ADF were partial successes, each weakening the group but all failing to defeat it. Whether this outcome was intentional or the result of corruption or incompetence is beyond the scope of this article, but it is worth noting that by its actions, the DRC treated the ADF an enemy whose continued existence was tolerable, at least to the government.

---

[71] ICJ, 'Affaire relative aux activités armées sur le territoire du Congo (République Démocratique du Congo c. Ouganda), réplique de la République Démocratique du Congo', vol. 1, May 2002, para. 3.38.

[72] ICJ, 'Affaire relative aux activités armées sur le territoire du Congo (République Démocratique du Congo c. Ouganda), réplique de la République Démocratique du Congo', vol. 1, May 2002, para. 3.19.

[73] ICJ, 'Case concerning armed activities on the territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)', General List 116, 19 Dec. 2005, paras 297–305, 345.

[74] Most notably in 2005, 2010 and 2012.

The ADF acquired new utility to the DRC government in 2013, when the latter came under strong pressure—particularly from Rwanda, but also the United States and MONUSCO—to attack another rebel movement: the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). During the second half of 2013, the Congolese armed forces FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo) and MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) were fighting the Rwandan-backed M23 (Mouvement du 23 mars) rebels in North Kivu. There was widespread speculation that the FARDC and the FIB would (or should) attack FDLR after defeating the M23.[75]

However, the DRC authorities decided to attack the ADF instead. The reasons for this decision are complex, and extend beyond the collaboration between the FARDC and the FDLR. The latter was in effect a tool in the continental power struggle in which Rwanda competed with Tanzania, South Africa and the DRC.[76] On 28 November 2013, shortly after the M23's defeat, President Kabila 'denounced harassments against the civilian population [by the ADF] and promised urgent measures before the end of the year'.[77]Although these harassments had been going on for years, Kabila found it useful to invoke them only in late 2013, when he was under pressure to attack the FDLR. Kabila thus reframed ADF from an enemy whose presence had largely been tolerated into an enemy that posed a grave threat; the ultimate objective appears to have been to avoid having to attack the FDLR. In January 2014, the FARDC launched operation Sukola I against ADF; this too, like past such operations, weakened but failed to defeat the ADF.

In October 2014, the ADF's survival after the operation became very useful to the DRC government, which created new framings of the group as mass killers, insurrectionists and assassins. Starting in October 2014, a series of massacres and killings took place in the Beni area,[78] which DRC government officials—and MONUSCO chief Martin Kobler—attributed to the ADF.[79] Although the ADF had a long history of attacking civilian populations, information

[75] Stuart A. Reid, 'Did Russ Feingold just end a war?', *Politico*, 11 March 2014; International Crisis Group, 'Eastern Congo', p. 11.

[76] ICG, *Eastern Congo*, pp. 13–16; UN Security Council, S/2015/19, paras. 61–3, 71, 77–8.

[77] MONUSCO report, 30 November 2013.

[78] UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), 'Rapport du Bureau conjoint des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme sur les violations du droit international humanitaire commises par des combattants des Forces alliées démocratiques (ADF) dans le territoire de Beni, province du Nord-Kivu, entre le 1er octobre et le 31 décembre 2014', May 2015, para. 2.

[79] Daniel Fahey, 'New insights on Congo's Islamist rebels', The Washington Post , Monkey Cage, 19 February 2015; MONUSCO, 'Martin Kobler, Head of MONUSCO, is in Beni to

soon emerged suggesting that it was not responsible for all of the attacks. For example, in some cases, attackers spoke languages that were not used by the ADF, and some attacks took place far from the area where the ADF was active.[80] From various sources, information emerged that individual FARDC soldiers were directly involved in some of the massacres[81], and possibly indirectly involved in others through a failure to protect civilian populations.[82]

Nevertheless, the Congolese government clearly framed the ADF as being solely or predominantly responsible for the massacres. This not only limited understanding of the true nature of the violence and the identities of the attackers, but also enabled the government to link the ADF to its political opponents and critical media outlets. In October and November 2014, the DRC authorities arrested approximately 200 people, including members of the political opposition, and on 14 November the government shut down five radio stations in Beni-Butembo for alleged complicity with 'negative forces in acts of terrorism'.[83] In December 2014, the DRC authorities arrested dozens more people and claimed that the ADF was working with other rebel groups as part of a new insurrection against the DRC government.[84] ADF elements were thus framed as mass murderers, an identification that not only provided a ready attribution for these attacks, but also justified a range of politically useful arrests.

Lastly, the ADF was also politically useful as a scapegoat for the murder of FARDC Colonel Mamadou Ndala, who was assassinated in an ambush in Beni in January 2014. Mamadou had become a national hero just months before, in November 2013, after leading the Congolese army to its greatest victory in years, against the Rwanda-supported M23 rebel group. However, Mamadou's popularity become a threat to some within the Congolese politico-military

---

express his support to the families of the victims of massacres perpetrated by ADF', press release, 17 October 2014.

[80] UN Security Council, S/2015/19, paras. 41-43.

[81] UNJHRO, May 2015, para. 54 ; UN Security Council, 'Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2016/ 466, 23 May 2016, paras 198-207.

[82] UNJHRO, 'Rapport', May 2015, para. 54; UN Security Council, S/2016/466, paras 198–207; République Démocratique du Congo, Assemblée Nationale 2ème législature de la 3ème République, 'Rapport de la mission d'information et de réconfort auprès des populations de la ville de Beni et des agglomérations du territoire de Beni. Victimes des Tueries du 02 au 21 Octobre 2014', Nov. 2014.

[83] UNJHRO, 'Rapport', May 2015, para. 65. Radio France International, 'RCD: que se passe-t-il à Beni?', 21 November 2014; UN Security Council, S/2015/19, para. 43.

[84] Radio France International, 'Tueries à Beni: Kinshasa annonce des dizaines d'arrestations', *Radio France International*, 20 December 2014.

establishment.[85] From various sources, information emerged that some FARDC officers were involved in his death, but the government deflected this suspicion producing a mysterious witness called only 'Mr X' (see further discussion below), who deftly accused several 'rogue' FARDC officers of collaborating with the ADF in the assassination.[86]

To summarize, then, the DRC government has been framing the ADF in different ways: it did not use a particular master frame, but instead adapted its framings to particular political contexts and objectives. At the regional level, the ADF has been useful in averting military action against the FDLR. More generally, between 2005 and 2012, the DRC government found the ADF to be useful for justifying the occasional military operation but not so important that it needed to be eliminated. That changed in 2013 and 2014, when the ADF took on new importance as a group that could be framed as mass murders, insurgents and assassins, thus enabling the DRC government to divert attention from and subvert investigation into the role of its army and other local actors in the violence and insecurity in and around Beni. Moreover, it allowed the government to take action against the political opposition. In other words, it also played an important domestic political role, further demonstrating how the framing of a rebel movement is determined by the particular political context.

The ADF and MONUSCO

Up to now, we have shown how governments have politically instrumentalized ADF as a 'useful enemy'.[87] In other words, there has been clear strategic intent on the part of particular actors—the Ugandan and Congolese authorities—to invoke the ADF in different ways to achieve various political and economic objectives. We now wish, through a discussion of the UN peacekeeping force in Congo (MONUSCO), to show how the framing of the rebel movement is related not only to strategic intent or instrumentalization, but also to organizational and individual dynamics; or, more particularly, how information is collected and analysed by an organization. To put this

[85] Juakali Kambale, 'DR Congo: was Col. Mamadou Ndala's death a conspiracy?', *Africa Review*, 7 Jan. 2014; Kris Berwouts, 'Congo after M23: the prophet Mukungubila and the death of Colonel Mamadou', *African Arguments*, 7 Jan. 2014.

[86] Lea-Lisa Westerhoff, 'RDC: affaire Ndala, un témoin clé charge un colonel congolais', Radio France International (RFI), 4 Nov. 2014 ; UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2014/956, 30 Dec. 2014, para. 21.

[87] Keen, Useful enemies.

another way, both the politics and the process of knowledge production help to explain how MONUSCO understood, described and reacted to the ADF.

The initial UN mission in Congo, called MONUC (1999–2010), displayed only marginal interest in the ADF. During 2005, when MONUC started to expand its footprint in eastern Congo, the mission leadership accorded greater importance to neutralizing armed groups in the Ituri district and the FDLR than to dealing with the ADF.[88] An August 2005 MONUCO briefing on armed groups noted: 'Ugandan claims that the ADF constitute a serious threat to their stability are exaggerated as reports indicate that the ADF have little equipment other than basic infantry weapons and light mortar' [sic].[89] The MONUC leadership viewed ADF as a 'lesser threat to destabilization in North Kivu' than other armed groups,[90] and by 2009 was describing the ADF as 'largely inactive'.[91] When FARDC launched a unilateral operation against ADF on 25 June 2010, MONUC (which became MONUSCO on 1 July 2010) had troops in the area, but remained passive as 100,000 people were displaced, and as both FARDC and ADF committed human rights violations against local populations.[92]

During 2012 and 2013, MONUSCO continued to pay little attention to the ADF, focusing instead on the M23 and FDLR rebel groups. Following the joint MONUSCO–FARDC defeat of M23 in November 2013, MONUSCO was planning to support a new operation against the FDLR,[93] but the Congolese government chose instead to attack the ADF unilaterally. MONUSCO provided limited support for the Congolese operation, which failed to defeat the ADF.[94] In August 2014, MONUSCO chief Martin Kobler told the Security Council: 'FARDC—at great cost to its

[88] MONUC, 'Division Commander's Operational Directive', 9 May 2005, pp. 6-8.
[89] MONUC, 'Update and assessment of armed groups operating in the DRC', Aug. 2005.
[90] MONUC, 'Division commander's operational directive', 9 May 2005, p. B-2.
[91] UN Security Council, 'Twenty-ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2009/472, 18 Sept. 2009, para. 24.
[92] UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2010/512, 29 Nov. 2010, paras. 17–18; ICG, *Eastern Congo*, p. 7.
[93] UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', S/2014/147, 5 March 2014, para. 23.
[94] UN Security Council, S/2014/147, para. 21; UN Security Council, S/2015/19, paras. 4-5.

troops—has reduced the ADF to a shadow of its former self.'[95] In the same speech, Kobler also reaffirmed MONUSCO's focus on the FDLR over and above the ADF, stating: 'The first priority of the Mission has been to put an end to the FDLR.'[96]

For nearly a decade, MONUC and MONUSCO repeatedly framed the ADF as a relatively minor group, a local nuisance. MONUSCO viewed claims of its strength as 'exaggerated', and considered the group a 'lesser threat', at times 'largely inactive' and by mid-2014 reduced to a 'shadow of its former self'. Then, however, this framing underwent a radical change.

Starting in August 2014, internal MONUSCO reports began to describe the ADF as having extensive links to international terrorist groups including Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Boko Haram and the Taliban; the reports also claimed ADF was working with the governments of Sudan, Iran and Afghanistan.[97] Moreover, MONUSCO reports stated that the ADF leader Jamil Mukulu had travelled to Pakistan to pick up Taliban-trained Boko Haram jihadists; the reports added that, after collecting these terrorists, Mukulu would return to Beni in September 2014 and attack MONUSCO.[98]

After October 2014, when the mass killings in the Beni area began, MONUSCO's intelligence units and leaders routinely identified the ADF as an international terrorist movement (embracing the framing of the Ugandan government) that was uniquely responsible for the massacres (reiterating the framing of the Congolese government). For example, MONUSCO chief Martin Kobler repeatedly referred to the ADF as 'terrorists'[99] and denounced their deeds as acts of terrorism.[100] In February 2016, Hervé Ladsous, the Head of the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, singled out the ADF as responsible for the killings in the Beni area and

---

[95] Martin Kobler, 'Statement to the United Nations Security Council', New York, 7 Aug. 2014, p. 2.

[96] Kobler, 'Statement', 7 Aug. 2014, p. 4.

[97] Daniel Fahey, 'Congo's "Mr X": the man who fooled the UN', *World Policy Journal* 33: 2, Summer 2016, pp. 92, 98; authors' interviews with former UN officials, non-governmental organisation officials, and academics, Feb.–Oct. 2015.

[98] Daniel Fahey, 'Congo's "Mr X"', p. 99.

[99] AFP World News, 'UN warns of long fight against DR Congo massacres', *AFP,* 10 December 2014; MONUSCO, 'Beni: Le Chef de la MONUSCO visite les lieux des massacres des civils à Eringeti', *A la une / MONUSCO.* http://monusco.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=11192&mid=14306&ItemID=20811

[100] Martin Kobler, 'Overcoming the stalemate', statement to UN Security Council, 27 Oct. 2014.

stated that it had clear links to Al-Shabaab.[101]

This profound shift in MONUSCO's framing emerged from MONUC/MONUSCO's history of downplaying and ignoring the ADF, which left it largely ignorant about the group and its goals. MONUSCO's intelligence analysts—who were primary filters of information for the MONUSCO leadership—had focused for several years on other armed groups (specifically the CNDP—Congrès National pour le Développement et la Paix, M23 and FDLR) in geographic regions at some distance from the ADF; one consequence of this was a lack of any permanent intelligence presence in Beni, where the ADF was active, which affected the quality of the information available to MONUSCO leaders. The MONUSCO leadership compounded this problem in February 2014, when it instituted strict security measures in Beni following the murder of a Congolese UN disarmament worker;[102] this further limited MONUSCO's access to primary sources of information on the ADF and made them reliant upon information of dubious quality provided by the Congolese army and Ugandan military officers operating in Beni.[103] In October 2014, Martin Kobler acknowledged MONUSCO's limited knowledge of the ADF, telling the Security Council that MONUSCO had been preoccupied with the FDLR 'even possibly to the detriment of our focus on the ADF threat'.[104]

In June 2014, the UN Group of Experts expressed concern about the poor quality of MONUSCO's intelligence on the ADF, noting that 'unverified or unsubstantiated claims about ADF allies, actions, capabilities and intentions may lead to misguided and ineffective decisions at the strategic and operational levels'.[105] In July 2014, MONUSCO created a Joint Intelligence and Operations Centre (JIOC) in Beni to address this criticism; but the JIOC, which became MONUSCO's primary source of information about the rebels, was staffed by military officers who had no prior understanding of ADF or the Beni area. Our field research found similar problems in MONUSCO's intelligence units,[106] including staff with little or no intelligence training, little or no prior knowledge of conflict in Congo and Uganda, and little or no skill in

[101] Christophe Boisbouvier, 'Mali, RDC, RCA: le chef des casques bleus fait le point sur les missions en cours', RFI, 2 Feb. 2016.
[102] 'Nord Kivu: un agent de la MONUSCO tué à Beni', Radio Okapi, 5 Feb. 2014.
[103] Author's interview with UN official, Brussels, Feb. 2015.
[104] Kobler, 'Overcoming the stalemate'.
[105] UN Security Council, S/2014/428, para. 39.
[106] This included interviews with UN officials, Congolese sources, journalists, and independent researchers conducted during 2015 in the DRC and Uganda, as well as remotely through social media and email and Skype communications.

French or local languages. Moreover, the regular rotation of UN staff limits institutional knowledge and memory, and results in assemblages of analysts who often have only a superficial understanding of the conflict in the DRC. Compounding these limitations is the phenomenon noted by Autessere, in which MONUC and MONUSCO have often relied on a very limited pool of informants when gathering and analysing information, leading to partial and superficial assessments, as well as an inability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant actors and messages.[107]

The limitations of MONUSCO's abilities to collect and analyse information became particularly evident in August 2014, when a self-proclaimed ADF commander surrendered to MONUSCO. This man, called 'Mr X' in a DRC government report,[108] became the sole source for MONUSCO's new framing of the ADF as a group with extensive terrorist links that was importing Taliban-trained Boko Haram jihadists to attack MONUSCO. Mr X's claims built upon the longstanding Ugandan narrative about the ADF, which MONUC and MONUSCO had downplayed or ignored for more than a decade. Although Mr X's claims were not deemed credible by local staff and other analysts,[109] MONUSCO's intelligence analysts believed his stories, and made his claims the centrepiece of their understanding of the ADF and its intentions.[110]

In October 2014, when the massacres began in the Beni area, MONUSCO's analysts believed Mr X had prophesied the attacks.[111] As noted above, Martin Kobler denounced the ADF as terrorists, and MONUSCO portrayed the group as directly or indirectly responsible for virtually all of the killings. In response to MONUSCO's embrace of these dubious framings, giving them credibility

---

[107] Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp. 118–23; 128; 154-55.

[108] The DRC court decision refers to this man as 'Mr X': Government of DRC, Operational Military Court of North Kivu, 'Pro-Justicia, Arret,' RP nos 15, 17 and 18/014; RMP nos 0385, 0418 and 0419; BBM/014, undated (2014), p. 27. In 2016, the UN Group of Experts identified this man as being Adrian Muhumuza: UN Security Council, S/2016/466, para. 208.

[109] Authors' interviews with Congolese sources, non-governmental organization leaders, and independent researchers, Oct.–Dec. 2015. Local staff, who doubted Mr. X's claims because of their own extensive knowledge of ADF, remained silent because they believed their opinions were not valued, and because they believed speaking up could affect their job security. Authors' discussions with MONUSCO staff, October-December 2015.

[110] Internal MONUSCO report, Oct. 2014; Fahey, 'Congo's "Mr X"', p. 100.

[111] Authors' interviews with independent researchers by phone and email, as well as in Goma, DRC, July and Oct. 2015.

and international visibility, some analysts questioned this narrative; they included the UN Group of Experts, which noted that 'as of late November [2014], there is still a lack of independent and critical analysis of ADF and the causes of violence in the Beni area'.[112] Nonetheless, the problems continued, and in a rather spectacular example of MONUSCO's intelligence shortcomings, in May 2015 the mission blamed ADF 'terrorists' for an ambush near Beni that killed two and wounded 26 Tanzanian peacekeepers, when in fact it was later shown that Congolese army soldiers were responsible for the attack.[113]

To summarize, then: starting in late 2014, MONUSCO's narrative about the ADF shifted radically. After years of marginalizing and downplaying the group's capacities and threats, suddenly the UN mission presented the ADF as a rampaging terrorist force with ties to half a dozen international groups. We have shown how these new framings were rooted in MONUSCO's flawed intelligence assessments, which are indicative of what Yarhi-Milo calls 'selective attention' by political leaders and intelligence agencies in understanding an adversary's intentions.[114] By basing its analysis on very limited information—most particularly a single dubious source—and consequently repeating questionable government claims about the ADF, MONUSCO's political and intelligence leadership exhibited 'individual perceptual biases and organizational interests and practices' that influenced 'which types of indicators observers regard as credible signals of the adversary's intentions'.[115]

The available evidence, then, suggests that MONUSCO embraced politically charged—but inherently flawed—narratives about the ADF's allies and actions because of shortcomings in the process of knowledge production by MONUSCO analysts, rather than as a result of strategic intent.[116] The intelligence failure on the ADF that began in mid-2014 was rooted in a history of

---

[112] UN Security Council, S/2015/19, para. 45. See also: Caroline Hellyer, 'Congo/Uganda: high profile military operations against ADF will not rebuild local stability', *African Arguments*, 16 October 2014.

[113] UN Security Council, 'Group of Experts progress update', 15 Jan. 2016, p. 1. For the mission's viewpoint, see: Radio Okapi, 'La MONUSCO annonce "une action très forte" contre les rebelles des ADF', 6 May 2015.

[114] Keren Yarhi-Milo, 'In the eye of the beholder', *International Security* 38: 1, 2013, pp.10-11, 46-51,

[115] Yarhi-Milo, 'In the eye of the beholder', p. 9.

[116] This does not preclude that MONUSCO's intelligence analysts were driven by political forces to create certain narratives, but the authors do not have any evidence that this was the case; more evident and glaring are the individual and organizational limitations that resulted in flawed analyses.

institutionally marginalizing the ADF, and flourished as a result of bias, groupthink and poor leadership.

Conclusion

In this article, we have shown how a dynamic process of knowledge construction has framed the ADF rebel group in myriad ways for a variety of purposes. As highlighted in the introduction, while the framing literature pays extensive attention to this process, little attention is given to how national actors in the global South frame information. Written from a different perspective, Bayart's concept of 'extraversion' looks at a similar phenomenon in the African context, specifically 'the creation and the capture of a rent generated by dependency',[117] a phenomenon in which image construction plays an important role. Bayart has shown how African states can successfully export a particular 'institutional image' in a 'game of make-believe' in 'communication with their Western sovereigns and financiers'.[118]

With respect to the DRC, Kevin Dunn's work shows how former President Mobutu consciously used particular constructions of national identity for various audiences, and to achieve particular aims.[119] Dunn has shown how Mobutu managed to articulate a 'counter-discourse' on Zaire and alter the dominant image of the country 'through the appropriation of Third World discourses on nationalism, Western philosophical rhetoric, colonial imagery and the narratives of Cold War competition'.[120] In doing so, Dunn managed to demonstrate how internal actors have 'discursive agency and do not passively have their identity written for/upon them'.[121] Jourde similarly noted the 'process of identity construction and representation, by which decision makers simultaneously define the identity of their own state and interpret the identity of other states'.[122]

This article has further contributed to the understanding of knowledge construction, framing and extraversion by analysing how two states and the UN missions have understood and described a

---

[117] Jean-François Bayart, 'Africa in the world: a history of extraversion', *African Affairs* 99 (395), 2000, p. 222.

[118] Bayart, 'Africa in the world', p. 226.

[119] Kevin Dunn 'Imagining Mobutu's Zaïre', Millennium , 30, 2 (2001), pp. 235-258

[120] Kevin Dunn, 'Imagining Mobutu's Zaïre', *Millennium* 30: 2, 2001, p. 236.

[121] Dunn, 'Imagining Mobutu's Zaïre'. See also Jonathan Fisher 'Managing donor perceptions: contextualizing Uganda's 2007 intervention in Somalia', *African Affairs* 111, 444 (2012) pp. 404-424,.for a description of Uganda.

[122] Cédric Jourde, 'The international relations of small neoauthorian states', *International Studies Quarterly* 51: 2, 2007, p. 485.

particular rebel group—the ADF. First, we have shown that knowledge production on a rebel group can facilitate rent-seeking behaviour in a process similar to Bayart's notion of extraversion. This is particularly evident in this case in respect of Uganda, which obtained various political and economic 'rents' through the 'war on terror'. This extraversion happened primarily through the construction of a particular image of the ADF, in which certain elements were emphasized, and others neglected, in a process used to 'authorize, enable, and justify specific practices and policies . . . while precluding others'.[123]

Second, this article has shown how particular framings of the ADF equally enable a process of what can be called 'intraversion': the domestic political use of a rebel group. Rent-seeking in this way primarily happens along political lines: for both Congo and Uganda, we have shown how the construction of knowledge about a rebel group provides access to a range of national political benefits, such as the oppression of opposition or the finding of a scapegoat.

Third, this article has demonstrated how MONUSCO's intelligence failure interacted with pre-existing processes of extraversion and intraversion in ways that enabled rent-seeking behaviour by regional governments.

One clear effect of the various forms of framing has been a failure to protect civilian populations, most recently (and currently) by MONUSCO and the Congolese government. Indeed, during 20 years of operations by and against the ADF, thousands of people in Congo and Uganda have been killed or wounded, and tens of thousands more have been displaced, imprisoned, tortured or otherwise affected.[124] We do not suggest that the failures to protect civilians are entirely attributable to the way in which each entity framed and understood the ADF; but, to the extent that narratives inform policies and operational plans, we argue that MONUSCO's intelligence failure and governmental actors' disinformation campaign contributed to a failure to protect civilians,[125] as well as to a failure to hold perpetrators accountable.[126]

'Knowledge production' is not merely fodder for academic theorists: it can and does have real and grave consequences for civilian populations in places such as the DRC. The politics and

---

[123] Séverine Autessere, 'Dangerous tales: dominant narratives on the Congo and their unintended consequences', *African Affairs* 111: 4443, 2012, p. 207.

[124] See International Crisis Group, 'Eastern Congo: The ADF/NALU's Lost Rebellion', pp. 5-7; UN Security Council, S/2014/428 paras. 11, 25-26; UN Security Council, S/2015/19, paras. 4, 13

[125] Cf. UN Security Council, S/2016/466, paras 93–8.

[126] Cf. UN Security Council, S/2016/466, paras 205–7.

processes of knowledge production are thus important considerations in understanding both the context of armed conflict, and the nature and consequences of interventions on the ground.