

## A DEADLY “REBELLION WITHOUT A CAUSE” IN THE DRC

By George F. Ward

The insurgency conducted by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been described as a “[rebellion without a cause](#).” Since its first attacks in Uganda in 1996, the ADF has moved in and out of public attention. Most recently, the ADF was again in the news when on November 30, 2015, its forces attacked the town of Eringeti in the eastern DRC near the border with Uganda. According to [Reuters](#), at least 30 people died in the fighting, including seven civilians who were killed in a hospital. A look at the ADF reveals not so much a rebellion without a cause as one that is based on several causes and interests. Taken together, these intertwined factors have provided the ADF with a remarkable degree of resilience. [more...](#)



In this Friday, May 22, 2015 file photo, rebel leader of the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces, Jamil Mukulu, center, is escorted by prison wardens as he appears at a magistrates court to challenge extradition proceedings against him, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The head of Interpol in Uganda said Friday, July 10, 2015, that Mukulu, a most-wanted Ugandan extremist who is accused of committing atrocities in Uganda and Congo, has been extradited to Uganda. (Source: AP Photo/Khalif Said, File.)

---

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---

## A TURNING POINT FOR BURKINA FASO?

By Elisabeth Ferland

The first elections in Burkina Faso since demonstrators ended the 27-year rule of President Blaise Compaoré in October 2014 took place on November 29, 2015. [Fourteen](#) candidates vied to become the first freely elected leader in decades. The White House released a [statement](#) of support for the new President-elect Roch Mark Christian Kabore: “The United States congratulates the people of Burkina Faso for participating in peaceful and orderly elections on November 29, marking a major milestone in the country’s democratic progress.” The election is a first, but welcome, step in a country attempting to overcome many economic and social problems. [more...](#)



People toss pamphlets with the face of Burkina Faso presidential candidate Roch Mark Christian Kabore at a rally in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Friday, Nov. 27, 2015. (Source: AP Photo/Theo Renaut.)

---

Elisabeth Ferland is a Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---

### About IDA

The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

# A DEADLY “REBELLION WITHOUT A CAUSE” IN THE DRC

By George F. Ward

The insurgency conducted by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been described as a “[rebellion without a cause](#).” Since its first attacks in Uganda in 1996, the ADF has moved in and out of public attention. Most recently, the ADF was again in the news when on November 30, 2015, its forces attacked the town of Eringeti in the eastern DRC near the border with Uganda. According to [Reuters](#), at least 30 people died in the fighting, including seven civilians who were killed in a hospital. A look at the ADF reveals not so much a rebellion without a cause as one that is based on several causes and interests. Taken together, these intertwined factors have provided the ADF with a remarkable degree of resilience.

## The ADF—A Persistent Threat

[MONUSCO](#), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC, has the unenviable mission of protecting civilians and supporting peace efforts in the troubled eastern portion of the country, which is home to several insurgent groups. The UN force has long struggled to accomplish its mission, hampered by, among other things, the difficulties of operating effectively in a vast territory, troubled relations with the DRC government, and lack of resources. In March 2013, the UN Security Council sought to bolster MONUSCO by adding a 3,000-strong “[Force Intervention Brigade](#)” with an explicitly offensive mandate targeted on the insurgent groups. In fairly short order, that brigade dealt successfully with the M23 rebel group. The expectation at the time was that the brigade would next turn its attention to other significant insurgent groups, including the ADF.

Yet more than two years later, the ADF continues to terrorize civilians in its area of operations. In the year from October 2014 to September 2015, [450 civilian deaths](#) were attributed to the ADF. In part, the lack of success against the ADF was due to the [suspension of collaboration](#) between MONUSCO and the armed forces of the DRC in February 2015. More recently, some degree of cooperation between the Congolese army and MONUSCO was re-established in the wake of increased ADF raids on villages in the second half of 2015, and a joint operation was launched. In commenting on the difficulty of dealing with the ADF, UN sources noted that both some local Congolese authorities and criminal elements were involved with or complicit in ADF operations.

## The ADF’s Deep Roots

In fact, the ADF cannot be understood without tracing the history of its involvement with local and national governments, criminal elements, commercial interests, religion, and ethnicity. Two excellent works on the background of the ADF are a 2012 [study](#) by Kristof Titeca and Koen Vlassenroot, “Rebels without Borders in the Rwenzori Borderland? A Biography of the Allied Democratic Forces,” and Lindsay Scorgie-Porter’s 2015 [article](#), “Economic Survival and Borderland Rebellion: The Case of the Allied Democratic Forces on the Uganda-Congo Border.” The discussion that follows is based chiefly on these two sources.

The ADF was originally a Ugandan movement that drew its support mainly from Uganda’s Muslim community. Many of its original adherents were former supporters of the notorious Ugandan President Idi Amin and members of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU). Both the ADF and NALU established themselves in the Rwenzori borderland between the eastern DRC and western Uganda. Over time, the ADF deepened its ties with the people in the borderland through marriage, agriculture, and trade.



In this Friday, May 22, 2015 file photo, rebel leader of the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces, Jamil Mukulu, center, is escorted by prison wardens as he appears at a magistrates court to challenge extradition proceedings against him, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The head of Interpol in Uganda said Friday, July 10, 2015, that Mukulu, a most-wanted Ugandan extremist who is accused of committing atrocities in Uganda and Congo, has been extradited to Uganda. (Source: AP Photo/Khalif Said, File.)



The ADF's initial military focus was on the Ugandan government, which was led then as now by President Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement. Beginning in 1996 the ADF, operating with NALU, targeted Ugandan villages, police posts, army installations, and government facilities with cross-border raids and, in the capital of Kampala, terrorist bomb blasts. ADF/NALU forces received substantial support from the regime in Sudan, which also sought to destabilize Museveni's government. Sudan supplied military assistance by air, helping to fuel military operations that killed more than 1,000 people and displaced 150,000 in the 1996–2001 period.

In 1999, the Uganda army launched its "Operation Mountain Sweep" against the ADF in the DRC. Between 1,500 and 2,000 ADF rebels were killed, and senior leaders were captured. The Ugandan army operations succeeded in reducing the ADF to a few hundred militants and eliminated the rebel threat to Uganda itself.

The ADF's reaction was to embed itself in DRC society. Its combatants became "naturalized" into the predominantly Muslim local communities. Low-level ADF fighters supported themselves through agriculture, while ADF leaders developed other lines of business, including illegal harvesting of timber; coffee cultivation; growing a local brand of marijuana; and trafficking in retail goods, foodstuffs, motorcycles, and pharmaceuticals. The ADF even levied taxes on the chain saws used in illegal timber operations.

Through these economic activities, the ADF forged deep ties with business interests in the DRC and neighboring countries. Acting opportunistically, it found common cause at various times with other rebel groups, such as the Mayi-Mayi, and with Congolese army forces, which themselves were often involved in illicit trading activities. All the while, it maintained connections with its Muslim roots. According to a Ugandan army officer who spoke to Lindsay Scorgie-Porter, assistance to the ADF came from as far afield as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

## **The Outlook for the ADF**

Given its multiple sources of support, the survival of the ADF at least at a minimal level of activity seems likely. Even if MONUSCO and the DRC armed forces were to join in a concerted anti-ADF campaign, the insurgents could fall back on their sanctuaries in the Rwenzori mountains. And in reality, close collaboration between MONUSCO and the DRC army is unlikely to endure long enough to suppress the ADF. In early December, MONUSCO's force intervention brigade, including South African attack helicopters, launched multiple attacks against the ADF. According to a [media report](#), these attacks were carried out despite an attempt by the DRC government to forbid them. The DRC government's stance was reportedly motivated by its desire, based on differences over the mission of the UN force, to reduce the strength of MONUSCO from its current level of over [22,000 uniformed personnel](#) to only 7,000. Given the extent of the threat to vulnerable civilian populations in the eastern DRC, the UN is unlikely to budge on the size of its force. At the same time, the government of the DRC is likely to persist in its periodic efforts to obstruct operations. The ADF may well prove to be the net beneficiary.

---

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---

# A TURNING POINT FOR BURKINA FASO?

By Elisabeth Ferland

The first elections in Burkina Faso since demonstrators ended the 27-year rule of President Blaise Compaoré in October 2014 took place on November 29, 2015. [Fourteen](#) candidates vied to become the first freely elected leader in decades. The White House released a [statement](#) of support for the new President-elect Roch Mark Christian Kabore: "The United States congratulates the people of Burkina Faso for participating in peaceful and orderly elections on November 29, marking a major milestone in the country's democratic progress." The election is a first, but welcome, step in a country attempting to overcome many economic and social problems.



People toss pamphlets with the face of Burkina Faso presidential candidate Roch Mark Christian Kabore at a rally in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Friday, Nov. 27, 2015. (Source: AP Photo/Theo Renault.)

## Attempted Coup Pushes Back Election

The election was originally scheduled for October 11, but an attempted coup d'état by the military on September 16 forced postponement. Under coup leader General Gilbert Diendere, the military took temporary [control](#) after guards seized the interim president, Michel Kafando, the prime minister, Isaac Zida, and two cabinet members. Due to domestic protests, whose suppression resulted in 14 [deaths](#) according to Amnesty International, and international opposition to the coup, interim President Kafando took back control seven days later. General Diendere was [charged](#) in October with crimes against humanity, attacking national security, and murder. (While being held for those charges, General Diendere was also charged on December 7 with complicity in the 1987 murder of former President Thomas Sankara, which led to the rise of Blaise Compaoré.) Elections were pushed back to November to allow the protests to dissipate and tensions following the coup attempt to die down.

## First Election since October 2014 Uprising

Less than three months after the failed coup attempt, the Burkinabe went to the polls in an historic election. It was the first time in 27 years (and the last four elections) that Compaoré was not on the ballot. Over 70 percent of the [population](#) is under 30 years old, making this the first election for the majority of the country without an incumbent on the ballot. It also marked the end of the transition period that began in October 2014 with the uprising that followed Compaoré's attempt to amend the constitution to extend his term.

The elections took place in the midst of relative calm, under international, regional, and local observation. All told, [more](#) than 17,000 official election observers were at nearly 18,000 polling stations. Barthelme Kere, [president](#) of the electoral commission, noted the success of the provisions: "this election went off in calm and serenity, which shows the maturity of the people of Burkina Faso." Despite the calm, [security](#) was paramount, with increased police presence on the streets. Between November 27 and December 1, Burkina Faso's land borders were also closed as a precaution.

In an effort to be open and transparent, election-monitoring application software that could be accessed using mobile devices published results within hours of the polls closing. The Burkina Open Data Initiative (BODI), responsible for promoting information and computer technology, ran the app in [partnership](#) with the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). The [website](#), which is still active, has all the election results posted for each race. President-elect Kabore won with 53.49 percent of the vote, avoiding the need for a run-off. Of the 5,517,015 people eligible to vote, 3,309,988 people actually voted, placing turnout at 60 percent. These efforts at transparency were positive, especially on a continent where delayed election results often result in suspicion and protests.



## Conclusion

Kabore [broke](#) from Compaoré's party in January 2014 after the introduction of the proposed amendment to the constitution that would have allowed Compaoré to run again. In the previous government, Kabore had been prime minister and speaker of parliament. Kabore and 75 [members](#) of the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) joined together to form the now victorious People's Movement for Progress (MPP). In less than two years, Burkina Faso has taken great strides toward becoming a more democratic country. But Kabore will have to work hard to prove that his presidency will really be different from the one that preceded him, given his background as a leading figure in Compaoré's government.

The election is only the first step in a long process for a country that ranks among the 20 [poorest](#) in the world. President-elect Kabore ran on a [platform](#) to build a "new Burkina Faso" that targeted the youth, women, and the elderly. He wants to fight youth unemployment, modernize the health-care system and improve access to education. After 27 years under the [same](#) leadership, the electorate is going to expect change, including reforms to the justice system and efforts to end corruption. Kabore will still face some political opposition. Although members of Compaoré's CDP were not [allowed](#) to run for president, they were not banned from running for Parliament and won 18 [places](#) in the 127-seat body.

---

Elisabeth Ferland is a Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

---