

Kinsele Attack: M'obondo Militia Assault on FARDC Position, Kwamouth Territory (July 2024)

Kinsele Village, Kwamouth Territory, Mai-Ndombe Province, DRC

4° 8'13.63"S 16°25'27.11"E

Published: 20 December 2024 by J.J. van Oeffel

Incident Date: 13 July 2024

Fatalities: 72-100+

Injured: UNK

Aggressor(s): Monbondo militia
from the Yaka community

Victim(s) Profile: FARDC soldiers, militiamen

In the early hours of Saturday, 13 July 2024, fighters of the Mobondo militia (an armed group presenting itself as defender of the Yaka community) attacked a FARDC (Congolese national army) position in the village of Kinsele, Kwamouth Territory, Mai-Ndombe Province, on the RN17 highway east of Kinshasa. It was the second Mobondo attack on the village within a week, following a first, repelled attempt on Friday, 12 July. The army repulsed the Saturday attack and reported inflicting heavy losses on the militia, but suffered nine soldiers killed, including a major, a lieutenant, and two captains; a soldier's wife was also killed, reportedly executed by the militia, with local reports describing her as beheaded. Total fatalities across both incidents are reported at a minimum of 72, with at least one source citing more than 100.

Kwamouth Territory has been the site of intercommunal violence between the Teke and Yaka communities since June 2022, a conflict Human Rights Watch and other monitors

attribute to disputes over land and customary authority. The Mobondo militia, drawn primarily from the Yaka community, has repeatedly attacked FARDC positions and Teke communities in the territory despite an April 2024 ceasefire agreement signed before Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi, which some traditional chiefs have said was not fully inclusive and which further Mobondo attacks violated within days of signing.

On Friday, 12 July 2024, Mobondo fighters made a first attempt to attack the army position at Kinsele; this was repelled. On Saturday, 13 July, the militia returned in greater force, armed with hunting rifles and machetes, and attacked again. FARDC forces repulsed the assault, with army spokesman Sylvain Ekenge stating that 35 militia fighters were killed alongside a soldier's wife. David Bisaka, provincial deputy for Kwamouth Territory, told the Associated Press that searches were continuing for further bodies in the surrounding bush, and that the army had “succeeded in routing this militia” for the second time in a week. Stanys Liby, chief of the nearby village of Kimomo, told U.N.-backed Radio Okapi that the dead included a major, a lieutenant, two captains, and five enlisted soldiers (nine FARDC dead in total) along with the soldier's wife. The soldiers' bodies were transported to a mortuary in Kinshasa the same day. Local reporting cited by the case file states the woman was beheaded; this detail was not independently corroborated in the wire reporting reviewed for this report.

Casualty figures vary by source and likely reflect some conflation of the two attacks (12 and 13 July) given the difficulty of reporting from the area. Associated Press and Reuters both report at least 70-72 total dead, including the nine soldiers and the soldier's wife, with Reuters citing 35 militia dead specifically; a single Congolese outlet (Actualite.cd) reported a total exceeding 100. The intercommunal conflict of which this attack is one episode has killed over 3,000 people and displaced more than 550,000 since 2022, per Catholic Church estimates, concentrated in Kwamouth Territory and the Maluku commune of Kinshasa Province.

Date: the case file lists the incident as occurring at 05:00 local time on 15 July 2024. Independent wire reporting (AP, Reuters, both filed 15–16 July) consistently describes the

attack as having occurred on “Saturday” 13 July 2024 with 15 July being the date the attack was first confirmed to international media, not the date of the attack itself. This report uses 13 July as the incident date and flags 15 July as the reporting date.

Note on Direction from Kinshasa: the case file describes Kinsele as approximately 100 km southeast of Kinshasa. AP places it about 100 km east of Kinshasa; Reuters places it about 130 km northeast. Kwamouth town itself is confirmed (Wikipedia/Wikidata) to lie northeast of Kinshasa, at the Kasai–Congo confluence. None of the independent sources reviewed describe the area as southeast of the capital; this should be corrected to east/northeast.

References

Associated Press, "At Least 72 People Are Killed in a Militia Attack Near Congo's Capital in a Conflict Over Land," 16 July 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/congo-violence-militia-mobondo-teke-yaka-kinsele-85d38243b0e991819c20c70d16f98282>.

Reuters, "West DR Congo militia kills nine soldiers at weekend, army spokesman says," 16 July 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/west-dr-congo-militia-kills-nine-soldiers-weekend-army-s-pokesman-says-2024-07-16/>.

VOA News, "At least 70 killed in militia attack in western DR Congo," 16 July 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/at-least-70-killed-in-a-militia-attack-in-western-dr-congo/7700301.html>.

"Une nouvelle attaque de la milice Mobondo fait environ...," Radio Okapi, 15 July 2024, <https://www.radiookapi.net/2024/07/15/emissions/dialogue-entre-congolais/une-nouvelle-attaque-de-la-milice-mobondo-fait-environ>.

"Around fifty dead after an attack by militiamen against the army in the DRC," RFI, 15 July 2024, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20240715-around-fifty-dead-after-an-attack-by-militiamen-against-the-army-in-the-drc>.

"RDC, Kwamouth: plusieurs dizaines de miliciens Mobondo et 9 militaires tués lors de combat," Actualite.cd, 25 July 2024, <https://actualite.cd/2024/07/25/rdc-kwamouth-plusieurs-dizaines-de-miliciens-mobondo-et-9-militaires-tues-lors-de-combat>.

"Western DR Congo clashes," Wikipedia, accessed 16 July 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_DR_Congo_clashes.

Human Rights Watch, "Intercommunal Violence in Western Congo Kills Scores," 29 June 2023, <https://www.hrw.org>.