**Activity 3.1 Case Study Scenario 2 – The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Background**

For more than thirty years, the territory of Beni has experienced cycles of violence which are at the root of the grave human rights and humanitarian law violations committed against civilians. The natural resources of this region such as timber and gold, as well as its fertile land favorable for agriculture have continued to fuel the greed of politicians and local armed groups.

In 1995, after being driven out of Uganda from where its members originate, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an armed group with a radical Islamist orientation5, established its rear base in the territory of Beni following an alliance with the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), another Ugandan rebel movement already present in the territory of Beni since 1988. The group invested in local economic activities in Beni and in the illegal traffic of natural resources such as timber and gold, while forming close ties with local leaders.

The armed forces of the DRC (FARDC) launched several offensives to eradicate the ADF, exacerbating tensions with the group. During operations against the ADF the FARDC was accused of grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

**Rise in ADF attacks**

Since 2014, following the FARDC offensives, the group intensified its activities in the DRC, perpetrating massacres against local populations. Between 1 October and 31 December 2014, at least 237 civilians were killed, including 65 women and 35 children, by ADF combatants in Beni territory. Some 47 civilians were also wounded, 20 abducted and two sexually abused. In total, ADF combatants attacked 35 villages. Attackers used machetes, hammers and knives, among other weapons, to wound or execute civilians. Some had their throats slits, were shot at while trying to flee or were burned alive in their homes. The majority of the attacks were effectively carried out at sunset, when the population was returning from working in the fields.

During July 2016 the FARDC and the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) received warning of suspected planned attacks on villages in Beni, including the growing presence of unidentified armed men in the area.

Following initial warnings, armed men killed nine civilians in a field in Oicha, just outside of Beni, on 5 July 2016.

Weeks later, on 13 August, presumed ADF elements massacred at least 50 civilians, including 15 women and 2 children, in the Rwangoma and Beni areas, on the border with Virunga National Park. The assailants, disguised as park rangers, established a barrier at the entrance of the park, near Paida, where they detained, tied up and killed farmers returning to their homes. The assailants then proceeded towards Rwangoma, torching houses along the way and killing more civilians.

There remains an ongoing risk of additional attacks by the ADF. Local self-defense militias have also formed as a result of perceived failure by the FARDC and MONUSCO to protect civilians.