

The Situation in East DR Congo

Updated 21/12/2025

I. Background of the Topic

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a big country in central Africa with large mineral resources, such as cobalt, coltan, and gold. For decades, there has been an armed conflict in the eastern part of the country. This conflict involves government forces, local rebel groups, and militias, which are supported by foreign nations. It has led to the displacement of many citizens, numerous deaths, and a serious humanitarian crisis.



North Kivu and South Kivu marked in red - conflict regions

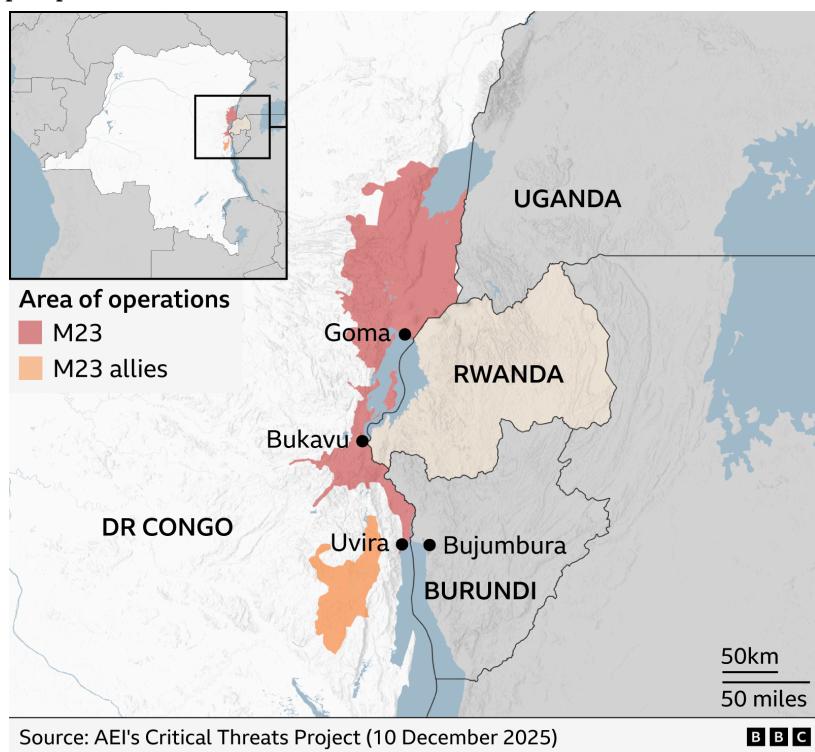
A key actor in this conflict is the M23 rebel group, which is supported by Rwanda. In 2025 the conflict escalated as they made various attacks, and gained control over important cities such as Goma, Bukavu, and Uvira, near the borders with Rwanda and Burundi. The DRC government, with support from the UN, has unsuccessfully tried to stop the advances of M23.

The main reason for the conflict is the desire to control the regions rich in minerals, but it also involves tension between the Tutsi and Hutu communities. M23 members are mainly Tutsi fighters and say they are protecting the Tutsi population as justification for their actions.

Recently, in early December 2025, the DRC and Rwanda signed a peace agreement initiated by the US, signed in its capital city, with the goal of restoring peace in the conflict areas, however the conflict continues as M23 did not directly take part in the agreement, and it

does not require them to give up the control of their occupied territories completely. There have been negotiations between them and the DRC government under the Doha Framework in Qatar in November, however there hasn't been any improvement in the situation since.

On 10 December 2025, M23 took over Uvira, which led to the displacement of over 200,000 people and at least 400 civilians were killed.



This conflict has caused one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, as more than 7 million citizens were internally displaced in DRC, and over 200,000 citizens have been displaced since early December 2025. Refugees fled mainly to Burundi and Rwanda.

Since 5 December 2025, around 33,600 new refugees have come to Burundi, mostly from Kamanyola, Katogota, and Luvungi. Refugee camps and centers were not prepared for such a large number of refugees and are therefore overcrowded. For example, the Cishemere Transit Centre has 4,400 people while being designed for only 700. Many temporary camps have been quickly established, but they lack emergency shelters, latrines, drinkable water, food, medical personnel and resources. A large number of refugees are children, women, and the elderly.

In Rwanda, 1,083 refugees arrived from eastern DRC between 3 and 7 December 2025, mainly from Kamanyola and Luvungi. Those newly arriving go through registration and

receive assistance at the Nyarushishi Transit Centre, where they get food and medical assistance. Some return to DRC through the Kamembe crossing, and others move elsewhere in Rwanda to stay with their extensive family or friends or go to the Nkamira Transit Centre, where they request asylum; however, the capacities are not sufficient. As the number of refugees Rwanda has been dealing with is significantly lower, the humanitarian situation there is way better.

Humanitarian conditions are still poor in the South Kivu region, with limited healthcare access, lack of food, often leading to starvation, outbreaks of cholera and measles, and incidents of gender-based violence reported as well.

On 16 December 2025, M23 announced they'd withdraw from Uvira as a "trust-building measure" requested by the US. However, reports suggest that some fighters still remain.

II. UN Involvement

The UN has played an important role in monitoring and responding to the conflict in eastern DRC. The Peacekeeping Mission was created in 1999 and is called MONUSCO. In December 2025, the UN Security Council renewed its mandate until December 2026, maintaining 11,500 troops.

MONUSCO's tasks include:

- Protecting the civilians
- Monitoring ceasefires, disarmament, and reintegration
- Neutralizing armed groups alongside Congolese forces
- Monitoring human rights abuses and arms embargoes

Relevant UNSC Resolutions:

- [Resolution 1279 \(1999\)](#): Established to monitor peace processes and humanitarian assistance in the DRC through MONUC.
- [Resolution 1925 \(2010\)](#): Expanded MONUSCO's mandate to include civilian protection and offensive operations with the Force Intervention Brigade.
- [Resolution 2669 \(2022\)](#): Reaffirmed MONUSCO's role in civilian protection, monitoring human rights, and supporting the DRC government to stabilize conflict zones.
- [Resolution 2808 \(mid 12/2025\)](#): Extended the MONUSCO mandate until 20 December 2026, maintaining an authorized force of 11,500 military personnel, 600 military observers and staff officers, 443 police personnel, and 1,270 members of formed police units.
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166643>)

III. Bloc Positions

United States:

- Initiated a peace agreement in early December, has shown interest in the mineral resources, and faced criticism for it.
- Condemned the M23 offensive, accused Rwanda of breaking the Washington peace deal as it supports the M23, and demanded M23 comply with ceasefire obligations signed in the Doha Framework.

France:

- Stressed the need for stable peace in eastern DRC and called for all parties to respect their commitments signed in agreements.

China and Russia:

- Both countries supported prolonging the MONUSCO mandate but emphasized the need to respect DRC sovereignty, preventing resource exploitation, mainly by the US, which has shown interest in the resources, and maintaining neutrality in the conflict.
- Russia requested detailed proposals on MONUSCO's role in ceasefire monitoring by 1 March 2026.

M23: The previously mentioned rebel group, supported by Rwanda, has captured significant territory in South Kivu. On 16 December 2025, the M23 announced it would withdraw from Uvira as a “trust-building measure” requested by the US; however, reports indicate that some fighters remain. It's currently holding hundreds of Burundian soldiers, who have been countering M23 with the approval of the DR Congolese government, hostage.

V. Questions to Consider

1. What is your country's official stance on the conflict, and which actors does it support?
2. Has your country taken any actions related to the conflict in the past, and can you elaborate on those?
3. How can the M23 and other foreign-backed militias be prevented from breaking fragile peace agreements?
4. What steps must be taken for urgent humanitarian assistance to solve the humanitarian crisis?
5. What roles should MONUSCO have in the conflict in accordance with your country's policies?
6. At the moment of doing research, have there been any important changes regarding the situation in East DR Congo?

VI. Sources and useful links

www.aljazeera.com M23 announces exit from DRC's Uvira as US-brokered ceasefire stutters (16 Dec)

www.aljazeera.com Residents emerge in DR Congo's tense Uvira after M23 rebel takeover (13 Dec)

[Human Rights Watch - DR Congo: Fall of Eastern City Puts Civilians at Risk](#)
[Warring Parties Should Protect Population in Uvira; Improve Access to Aid \(15 Dec\)](#)

[BBC Situation in DR Congo summary, updated in December 2025](#)

[UNHCR Canada - Humanitarian crisis in Burundi \(Dec 19\)](#)

[US accuses Rwanda of inflaming conflict in DR Congo as fighting intensifies | DW News](#)
(YouTube video, Dec 18)

[World Politics Review - M23 Rebel Group Captures Burundian Soldiers in Eastern Congo \(Dec 16\)](#)

[World Politics Review - Reviewing the effectiveness of the peace agreement signed in the JS](#)

[UN News - Peace falters as fighting in eastern DR Congo raises fears of regional war](#)

[Le Monde - Page avec des actualités sur RD Congo pour ceux qui parlent français](#)