

Summary

Conflict and the targeting of civilians is intensifying to the North and West of Goma. In the Northern Beni territory, IS aligned Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militants have killed over 100 civilians since May 4, forcing thousands South towards Goma. The town of Sake to the West of Goma, which connects Goma to Bukavu, is encircled by March 23 (M23) militants; fighting which has forced over 300,000 civilians towards Goma since February 7. The worsening conditions in Goma's IDP camps, in addition to M23 shelling of two IDP camps could be cause for demonstrations, which are likely to be repressed.

Recent events and developments

Conflict, in the form of armed clashes, shelling, and indiscriminate attacks on civilians is intensifying in the DRC's North Kivu province. Recent news describes the indiscriminate killing of civilians by the IS aligned ADF in the rural Beni territory to the North of Goma. On June 8, between 38 and 70 civilians were killed by ADF militants. Between May 4 and 7, approximately 70 civilians were killed by ADF militants, also in the Beni territory, indicating advancements by the ADF, which largely consists of Muslim Ugandan militants. Civilians fleeing such danger often move towards Goma, North-Kivu's capital, which already hosts significant numbers of IDPs. 20km West of Goma, the town of Sake is reported to be surrounded by M23 rebels, facing frequent shelling. In the month of May, 16 armed clashes between the army and M23 were recorded around Sake. Shelling occurs more frequently. On June 2, 10 civilians were killed by M23 shelling on Sake. Since fighting started around Sake on February 7, over 300,000 civilians have fled towards Goma, where IDP camps are already crowded and lacking resources. On May 3, M23 shelled the Lac Vert and Mugunga IDP camps, killing 35 civilians. Additionally, Wazalendo militants, irregular forces which support the army, have been reported to have attacked IDPs in these camps on 2 occasions in May. The insecurity and lack of facilities in these camps have led some IDPs to protest in Goma. On May 22, police arrested 4 members of citizen movements protesting the lack of clean water in the camps. Terrible conditions are worsened by the announcement of the first case of monkeypox on June 10 in a Goma IDP camp.

Impact assessment

Increasing conflict to Goma's North and West threatens to worsen the already terrible humanitarian situation in Goma. The indiscriminate murder of civilians by ADF militants to Goma's North is likely to continue, as the army finds itself lacking in resources and far-stretched. To the West of Goma, in the town of Sake, fighting is also likely to continue. Sake, which is one of the last strategic crossroads not yet under M23 control, is threatened by encirclement by M23 forces. As such, the possibility of its capture cannot be discounted. If Sake is captured, Goma will be cut off from Bukavu and cities West of Sake. This would cut off Goma from vital supplies, and potentially open Goma up to a direct offensive by M23. A Goma cut off from supplies is concerning considering the steady influx of IDPs into Goma's IDP camps. IDP camps are by no means safe, as seen by the shelling of the Lac Vert and Mugunga camps on May 3. While it is unclear if the shelling was intentional, future cases are likely to happen as M23 continues their campaign in Sake and North of Goma. Conditions in the camps are likely to worsen given the influx of additional IDPs, especially if Sake and its strategic roads are captured by M23. These conditions exacerbate the risk of the spread of disease, such as monkeypox, the first case of which was reported on June 10. Poor sanitation, access to medicine, and the overcrowded conditions increase the chance of outbreaks. The deterioration of conditions is likely to cause civil unrest. Civilians may protest their conditions in Goma, most likely on public roads and in front of government offices. As seen on May 22, authorities are likely to arrest organisers, and may crack down further with the use of dispersion tactics.

Advice from Forth Global

- Advise staff traveling to DRC to undertake a several days long HEAT training prior to travel.
- Monitor local news and liaise with local partners to remain updated on developing events.
- Prepare travel contingency plans in case of a serious deterioration of the security situation in Goma.
- Avoid all non-essential travel outside Goma.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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