

Summary

On June 27, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda signed a US-brokered peace agreement, but violence has persisted. M23 rebels launched a series of deadly attacks between July 11 and 16 in South and North Kivu, targeting civilians, Wazalendo militias, and suspected Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) fighters. Meanwhile, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) terrorist group resumed operations in Ituri on July 8, killing at least 66 people and clashing with FARDC forces in Bwanasura in the following days.

Recent events and developments

On **June 27**, the government of DRC signed a US-brokered peace agreement with the Rwandan government. Despite this, M23 has continued to carry out deadly attacks across South Kivu and North Kivu. On **July 11**, M23 rebels attacked and killed five civilians in Karambi and Kabare territory, South Kivu province, in retaliation for the killing of an M23 rebel by members of the local population. On **July 13**, the M23 began a counterinsurgency operation targeting suspected FDLR militants. This led to clashes in several villages in the Nyabanira area between **July 14 and 15**. On **July 14**, M23 fighters attacked Wazalendo positions near Shoa, Masisi district, continuing an offensive in the area after pro-Congolese government Wazalendo fighters assaulted M23 positions in two villages in the Walikale district of North Kivu. On **July 15**, the M23 clashed with FDLR fighters in several villages in the Binza group in Bwisha, as part of the counterinsurgency operations. The following day, on **July 16**, the M23 clashed with Wazalendo fighters in several villages near the Mudaka locality. Meanwhile, the ADF renewed its attacks on the M23 on **July 8**, after several months of relative inactivity in the Ituri province, particularly in the villages of Bwanasura, Kisamaibo and Mayalibo in the Irumu territory. These attacks resulted in at least 66 fatalities. Clashes also occurred overnight on **July 12 and 13** in Bwanasura, where the ADF were repelled by Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).

Impact assessment

The presence of ADF and FDLR fighters along the border increases the risk of armed clashes with the M23 in the South and North provinces. Clashes are likely to intensify in the Kabare and Walungu districts of South Kivu, especially along the key RN2 and RN5 routes. In North Kivu, recurring violence is expected to persist in the Walikale district between the M23 and the Wazalendo militia, as well as in the Rutshuru district, where the M23 has engaged in combat with suspected FDLR fighters in Nyabanira, and in the Masisi district. Given the latest developments, Rwanda's commitment to the peace agreement and the planned withdrawal of its troops remains uncertain, the renewed violence is likely to prompt Kigali to consider delaying its withdraw. At the same time, the ongoing instability in the region is being exploited by Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). With the Congolese army prioritising operations against M23, ISCAP is able to operate with greater degree freedom in the region and also operate without M23 disruption since they have signed a non-aggression deal earlier this year. ISCAP is likely to increase its attacks and activities, particularly in Beni and Ituri, also in support to ADF. Furthermore, the security situation has already displaced hundreds of thousands of people, putting a strain on humanitarian capacity in Ituri and the Kivus and limiting. This also increases the risk of disruption to aid delivery and access to healthcare in rural areas.

Advice from Forth Global

- Avoid non-essential travel in South, North Kivu and Ituri provinces.
- Maintain a low profile and avoid discussing political and sensitive topics in public.
- Avoid public and crowded areas or areas with military activities.
- Avoid travelling in rural areas and monitor the local situation closely.

Customized advice

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