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Conflict in the DRC: over 50 attacks on newsrooms and journalists recorded in North Kivu in less than a year

Between January 2024 and January 2025, press freedom evaporated at a dizzying pace in North Kivu, a province in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has recorded over 50 attacks on newsrooms and journalists, including looting, destruction, threats and physical violence. RSF calls on the Congolese authorities and the M23 to protect journalists and stop forcibly instrumentalising them as propaganda tools.

The recent capture of the city of Goma by the armed group M23 was the apex of a deteriorating security situation that has affected journalists for at least a year. Before the capture of Goma, RSF recorded 52 press freedom violations between January 2024 and January 2025 in North Kivu province, the hardest-hit area by the conflict between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and the M23. Over a third of the restrictions placed on journalists in the DRC took place in North Kivu.

“In the space of a year, the ability to practice journalism — which was already precarious — has deteriorated at an alarming pace in the province of North Kivu. Journalists are caught in the crossfire of the ongoing conflict and the many militias operating in the province. Attacks on the media, particularly community radio stations, during clashes between the M23 and FARDC have become a sad reality. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls on the North Kivu provincial authorities and the M23 to stop attacking and endangering journalists — and, instead, protect them. We also call on the Ministry of Communication and the telecommunications regulator (CSAC) to take concrete action to guarantee a free and reliable press.”

Anne Bocandé

RSF Editorial Director

At least 26 community radio stations have been looted or forced to close in North Kivu since January 2024. Around ten of them have been directly attacked by members of the M23. “The rebel group regularly tries to take control of radio stations to announce its arrival in a town,” a journalist from the province, who remains anonymous for safety reasons, told RSF. As a result, the radio stations shut down — either because they are forced to or as a measure of prevention — as the M23 advances. What’s more, newsrooms are often looted following the rebel group's takeover of a town, making it difficult to identify the perpetrators.

Nearly 90 journalists displaced

Over the past year, the fighting has resulted in waves of displaced people — including over 4.6 million displaced persons in the [provinces](#) of North and South Kivu. According to RSF partner the Congolese National Press Union (UNPC), some 90 journalists have been [forced to flee](#) their homes, moving from place to place as the rebel group advances and seizes territories. Threats via text messages and calls before the group’s arrival are common.

As they fled, some of these journalists were chased by the M23: “They were looking for me because I had taken the radio transmitter with me. They wanted me to come back and broadcast their news on the radio,” explains a community radio director in Lubero territory who has been displaced since June 2024.

Permanent insecurity

The context of war has fostered serious mistrust in journalists. [Accusations](#) of belonging to the M23 and its ally, Rwanda, are frequent. “Even our sources are constantly suspicious of us,” one reporter told RSF. At the same time, journalists are frequently wanted for reporting abuses committed by the M23 or other armed militias.

What’s more, two journalists were murdered in the span of a month, in circumstances that remain unclear. The coordinator of the radio station *Radio Catholique Maria*, Edmond Bahati Monja, was shot dead in Goma as he was returning home on 27 September. Yoshua Kambere Machozi, a presenter at the *Mpety community radio station*, was abducted by M23 rebels when the town was taken on 29 October. His lifeless body was found on the banks of a river eight days later.

Journalists and media workers are doing their best to resist the crisis, demonstrating extraordinary resilience. One radio director, **Elie Muhindo Lubuto**, has been displaced for almost a year and his station was looted twice in 2024 yet nevertheless, he recently resumed broadcasting in Kalembe.

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