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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

DR Congo – July to December 2025

31 December 2025

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27 October 2025

Progress in the peace process between the government and M23; security situation

According to media reports, with Qatar acting as mediator, the government and the M23 rebel group agreed on 14 October 2025 in Doha to monitor a possible permanent ceasefire. An international committee is to be set up under the supervision of Qatar, the USA and the African Union. Its purpose will be to investigate and verify possible violations and to communicate with the relevant parties in order to prevent a resumption of hostilities. According to the Qatari Foreign Ministry, the agreement is a decisive step towards a comprehensive peace agreement. According to regional media reports, there have been several attacks on villages in North and South Kivu in recent weeks, which have been attributed to the M23. In addition, there have been repeated clashes between pro-government Wazalendo militias and the M23, including on 19 October near the village of Mudja.¹

DR Congo and Rwanda continue peace talks

On 21 and 22 October 2025, delegations from the DR Congo and Rwanda met for the third time in Washington as part of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism (JSCM) to advance the peace agreement signed on 25 July 2025 (see BN of 30 June 2025). According to media reports, implementation of the agreement had previously stalled. During the previous meeting on 17 and 18 September 2025, it was agreed to introduce a concept of operations (Conops) from 1 October 2025. This aims to end the activities of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in eastern Congo. Both states agree in principle that neutralising the FDLR is necessary to restore peace in eastern Congo and cross-border trust.²

Joint border security; repeated attacks on the civilian population by the ADF

The DR Congo and Uganda agreed on joint security operations on Lake Edward. The north-eastern part of the lake is located in Uganda. According to media reports, the action is a response to an attack by suspected Congolese militias on the Rweshama landing site in Uganda on 1 October 2025. The cooperation includes the coordination of naval forces and joint patrols. The meeting between military representatives from both sides took place while the two neighbouring countries continue Operation Shujaa, launched in 2021, against the Islamist rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri. In recent months, there have been repeated attacks on the civilian population in these regions, which are attributed to the ADF; For example, on 13 October

2025 in North Kivu on the village of Mukondo, leaving 19 dead; on 26 October 2025 in the town of Oicha on a bus carrying street vendors, leaving eight dead; and on 8 September 2025 in an attack on a wake in the village of Ntoyo, leaving more than 70 dead.³

11 November 2025

Stalled peace negotiations

According to media reports, peace talks between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebel group, which continued in Doha from 4 to 6 November 2025, have stalled, mainly due to disagreements over the restoration of state authority. The M23 is said to be strengthening its presence in the areas it occupies, including by recruiting around 400 candidates for judicial positions in order to establish a parallel administration. Furthermore, the parties to the conflict continue to accuse each other of not complying with the previously agreed ceasefire (see BN of 27 October 2025). According to media reports, on 9 November 2025, fierce fighting broke out between the Congolese army and the Twirwaneho group, allied with the M23, in the highlands of the Fizi and Mwenga areas in South Kivu province.

On 7 November 2025, delegates from the DR Congo and Rwanda also met in Washington as part of the Joint Monitoring Committee. According to media reports, the meeting took place amid ongoing mutual accusations. The DR Congo accuses Rwanda, among other things, of sending further troops to support the M23 rebel group despite the peace negotiations. The government in Kigali accuses the DR Congo of recruiting new mercenaries and points to the alleged presence of approximately 14,000 Burundian soldiers in eastern Congo. The meeting ended with the signing of the economic component of the peace agreement of 27 June 2025 (see BN of 30 June 2025).⁴

Dissolution of opposition parties

According to media reports, Interior Minister Jacquemain Shabani announced in a statement on 31 October 2025 the immediate suspension of the activities of twelve opposition parties and said he would apply to the Council of State for their immediate dissolution. The background to this was violations of the principles of consolidating national unity, preserving the sovereignty of the Congolese state and maintaining the security and integrity of the national territory. If the application for a ban is granted, this will be the first time in the history of the Third Republic since 2006 that the judiciary has ordered the dissolution of a political party. The parties most affected are those belonging to the Sauvons la RDC (Save the DR Congo) platform. This platform emerged from a meeting of opposition parties convened by Joseph Kabila in Nairobi on 14 and 15 October 2015. While most of the participants in this meeting already live in exile, according to a media report, other participants were interrogated by the National Intelligence Service about the background to the meeting after their return.⁵

24 November

Status of peace negotiations in Doha

On 15 November 2025, representatives of the DR Congo and the M23 rebel group signed a framework agreement in Doha aimed at ending the armed conflict in the east of the country. According to media reports, the framework agreement comprises eight protocols, six of which still require agreement. Mediators from the US and Qatar consider the signing to be a significant step towards peace. Various media reports, however, criticise the fact that it remains incomplete. Many points of contention remain unresolved. In particular, the restoration of state authority in the conflict areas continues to be the subject of discussion. Furthermore, the implementation of previous agreements, such as the monitoring of a ceasefire (see BN of 27 October 2025), is progressing slowly. A delegate from the M23 delegation said in an interview that the group does not consider the agreement to be a binding peace agreement and does not expect any changes in the situation on the ground until the individual measures have been negotiated and discussed. The six remaining protocols are to be negotiated by 29 November 2025. Various media reports consider this timetable to be very ambitious.⁶

Next phase of peace negotiations in Washington

On 19 and 20 November 2025, the fourth meeting of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism (JSCM) between the DR Congo and Rwanda took place in Washington to discuss the second phase of the implementation of the peace agreement signed in June 2025 (see BN of 30 June 2025). As stated in the joint declaration, Kinshasa and Kigali committed themselves to continuing the implementation of the previously agreed operational order (OPORD) and concept of operations (CONOPS) (see BN of 27 October 2025) in order to end the activities of the FDLR and the so-called defence measures on the part of Rwanda and to withdraw their troops from eastern Congo. Observers of the JSCM welcomed the progress made, including the demobilisation and repatriation measures for FDLR members.⁷

Security situation in eastern Congo

While the peace negotiations in Doha and Washington are progressing slowly, the armed conflict in the east of the country continues. According to various media reports, fierce fighting broke out on 13 November 2025 in the Masisi territory of North Kivu between the M23 and Wazalendo groups allied with the government. Thousands of people are said to have been forced to flee their homes. The M23 rebels are reported to have taken control of the area around Kazinga. According to a media report, several battles involving heavy and light weapons between M23 and Wazalendo groups were reported in both North and South Kivu on 17 November 2025. Representatives of the Congolese army (FARDC) confirmed that M23 rebels had captured the town of Katoyi in Masisi territory. The rebel group had also previously captured other locations in the region. Furthermore, on the morning of 19 November 2025, further fighting was reported in Lubero territory and on the central road between Bukavu and Walungu in South Kivu.⁸

Further attacks by the ADF on civil society

On the night of 15 November 2025, Islamist rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacked the health centre in the village of Byambwe in North Kivu. Media reports speak of 17 to 20 dead, while the local Red Cross puts the number of victims at 23. The victims, including breastfeeding women, were reportedly killed in their hospital beds. Others are said to be missing. A press agency, citing a representative of civil society, reports further attacks on villages in the region. However, the number of victims there cannot be determined exactly. MONUSCO puts the number of people killed by the ADF in the Lubero territory of North Kivu between 13 November and 19 November at 89.⁹

01 December 2025

Security situation in western Congo

In the wake of the conflict between the Teke and Yaka communities in north-eastern Kinshasa, which has been smouldering since 2022, the Mobondo militia attacked the village of Nkana near the municipality of Kwamouth on the night of 23 November 2025. After various media reports initially put the number of civilian casualties at 13-14, this figure has since risen to at least 21. In recent weeks, the number of attacks in the region has increased and the militia is said to be occupying several villages. On 8 November 2025, the Mobondo militia also attacked several villages in the immediate vicinity of the Vallée de la N'Sele Wildlife Park. This is located about 50 km from the city centre of Kinshasa.

The background to the conflict is the dispute over traditional land claims between the Teke, who consider themselves the indigenous inhabitants of the region, and other ethnic groups, such as the Yaka, who settled in the region near the Congo River at a later date. The Mobondo militia sees itself as the defender of the Yaka people. According to figures from a recent report by a research institute, the conflict has claimed more than 5,000 lives since 2022. Approximately 280,000 people have been displaced.¹⁰

08 December 2025

DR Congo and Rwanda sign peace agreement in Washington

On 4 December 2025, the heads of state of the DR Congo and Rwanda signed a peace agreement in Washington. According to media reports, the President of the DR Congo, Felix Tshisekedi, and the Rwandan President, Paul

Kagame, committed to advancing previously agreed commitments such as the economic integration pact (see BN of 10 November 2025) and the peace treaty signed on 27 June 2025 (see BN of 30 June 2025). The agreement contains commitments to respect the territorial integrity of each other's countries and to refrain from any aggression and support for armed groups. Other key points of the agreement include new initiatives in the mining sector and further agreements on critical minerals. Among other things, the US government has secured access to these minerals.

According to media reports, both Tshisekedi and Kagame welcomed the signing of the agreement, but at the same time emphasised that there was still a long and difficult road ahead before it could be implemented. Observers and media reports are critical of the agreement, saying that it lacks enforceable mechanisms and accountability, among other things. According to one NGO, the impunity of the perpetrators has no effect on the parties to the conflict feeling obliged to adhere to the agreements. Furthermore, the agreement does not contain any concrete plans on how to proceed against the M23 and FDLR militias.¹¹

Security situation in eastern Congo

While peace efforts are being pushed forward in Washington, armed conflict continues in the east of the country. On 3 December 2025, one day before the negotiations, various media outlets reported ongoing fighting and a generally tense situation in South Kivu. The territories of Uvira, Walungu and Kabare were particularly affected. There are reports of clashes between M23 on the one hand and the Congolese army, Wazalendo militias and Burundian armed forces on the other. On the morning of 3 December 2025, ground fighting was reported on a ten-kilometre-wide strip of land between Kamanyola and Katogota, among other places. The M23's goal is to bypass the enemy to the south in order to encircle Uvira, the last major city in the province. According to a media report, the M23 captured the town of Luvungi on 7 December 2025 without much resistance. Residents of villages in the vicinity of the town are said to have already abandoned their homes and fled south due to the fierce fighting. Civil society in Uvira fears a humanitarian crisis due to the high number of displaced persons.

According to a media report dated 28 November 2025, the advance of the M23 in northern South Kivu had already caused several villages in the territories of Shabunda and Mwenga to be abandoned by their inhabitants weeks earlier. Furthermore, fighting had flared up again within the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the Kabare territory. The parties to the conflict accuse each other of aggression and sabotaging the peace negotiations.¹²

15 December 2025

Security situation in eastern Congo

The Rwanda-backed M23 militia captured Uvira during its latest offensive on 10 December 2025, thereby gaining control of the second-largest city in South Kivu province. Uvira has been the seat of the provincial government since the fall of Bukavu on 16 February 2025 (see BN of 17 February 2025). According to various media reports, the M23 militia was able to capture the city without significant resistance. The Congolese army (FARDC), allied Wazalendo militias and the Burundian army are said to have already withdrawn from the city due to the advance of the M23. The aim of the M23 offensive is to end Burundi's support for the FARDC. Uvira is only 20 km from Bujumbura, Burundi's largest city. In addition to the presence of Burundian troops on Congolese territory, the FARDC is said to have been supplied with reinforcements via the nearby airport in Bujumbura.

Provincial authorities in South Kivu and local media estimate that more than 400 civilians, including women and children, were killed during the conquest. The humanitarian situation in the region has deteriorated significantly. Local UN partners estimate the number of internally displaced persons at more than 200,000 in the week after 2 December alone. The UNHCR reports that 40,000 Congolese refugees alone entered Burundi in the week from 5 December to 11 December 2025. A total of approximately 71,000 Congolese refugees are currently believed to be in Burundi.

The capture of Uvira took place only a few days after the signing of the Washington peace agreement between the DR Congo and Rwanda on 4 December 2025 (see BN of 8 December 2025). The governments of Burundi, several European Union states and the United States called on the M23 and the Rwandan government to immediately cease the offensive and abide by the terms of the peace agreement.¹³

Security situation in eastern Congo

One week after capturing Uvira in South Kivu province (see BN dated 15 December 25), the M23 militia began withdrawing from the city on 17 December 25 under pressure from the United States. According to various media reports, the last troops left Uvira on 18 December 25, heading north. It is not yet clear exactly where the troops are retreating to. According to a coordinator of Congolese civil society in Uvira, the M23 troops are said to have retreated to the town of Kamanyola.

According to media reports, the M23 had previously announced the withdrawal in a statement on the night of 16 December 2025. The M23 sees the withdrawal as a unilateral confidence-building measure to facilitate the peace process. At the same time, the militia has set various conditions as security guarantees, including the deployment of a neutral force and the non-occupation of the city by the Congolese army (FARDC) or its allies. According to the deputy coordinator of the M23, the statement only covers the withdrawal from the city of Uvira. Other recently conquered areas were not mentioned.

According to various media reports, the M23's withdrawal follows demands by the US, which sees Rwanda's recent offensive as a clear violation of the Washington peace agreement (see BN of 08.12.25). Rwanda is accused of supporting the M23 militia. On 12 December 2025, the UN Security Council warned of a conflagration that could drag the entire region into war. UN sources and NGOs also report an increase in violence against civilians by the M23 during the occupation of Uvira. This includes arbitrary executions, bombings of populated areas and other human rights violations. Following the withdrawal of the M23, the Congolese government has called for vigilance and is demanding the complete withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the region. The Burundian Foreign Minister sees the withdrawal as merely a manoeuvre by Rwanda to reduce international pressure.

After discussions two years ago about a gradual withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO, the UN Security Council voted unanimously on 19 December 2025 to extend the offensive mandate until 20 December 2026.¹⁴

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Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de

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