



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Current information on m23

A report issued in June 2015 by *Freedom House* states that:

“Despite progress implementing 2013 accords that formally ended hostilities between the national army and the M23, numerous rebel groups remain active in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale, and Katanga, contributing to mass internal displacement” (Freedom House (2 June 2015) *Freedom in the World 2015 - Congo, Democratic Republic of (Kinshasa)*).

Human Rights Watch in a report reviewing events of 2014 published in January 2015 states:

“In late 2013, there was a period of optimism that armed violence and attacks on civilians might decrease in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, following the defeat of the abusive M23 armed group, and the subsequent surrender of combatants from other armed groups. But in 2014, the government made little progress in capitalizing on these opportunities to improve security for civilians in the east. The M23, whose fighters carried out widespread war crimes during its 19-month rebellion, was defeated in November 2013 after international pressure on the group’s Rwandan backers and the deployment of a United Nations “intervention brigade” to conduct offensive operations against armed groups and strengthen the MONUSCO peacekeeping mission. Several thousand fighters from other armed groups surrendered in the weeks that followed. But the government stalled in implementing a new Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program for former combatants, and there were few efforts made to bring to justice M23 and other armed group leaders implicated in abuses. Numerous armed groups remain active and their fighters continue to carry out brutal attacks on civilians” (Human Rights Watch (29 January 2015) *World Report 2015: Democratic Republic of the Congo*).

A report released in February 2015 by *Amnesty International* reviewing events of 2014 points out that:

“The security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remained dire and an upsurge in violence by armed groups claimed the lives of thousands of civilians and forced more than a million people to leave their homes” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15, DRC*).

The *United Nations Security Council* points out in a report released in March 2015 that:

“...eastern DRC has continued to suffer from recurring cycles of conflict and persistent violence by armed groups...” (United Nations Security Council (26 March 2015) *Security Council resolution 2211 (2015) [on extension of the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) until 31 Mar. 2016]*, p.1).

In April 2015 *Agence France-Presse* states:

“The Democratic Republic of Congo announced Thursday it had granted amnesty to around 375 ex-members of the defeated M23 rebel movement. The rebels’ 18-month war, during which they briefly seized the key eastern DR Congo town of Goma, capital of the mineral-rich North Kivu province, was brought to an end in 2013 by government troops and UN peacekeepers. Some 1,300 rebels fled to Uganda and others took refuge in Rwanda after their insurgency was crushed” (*Agence France-Presse* (30 April 2015) *DR Congo grants amnesty to hundreds of M23 rebels*).

This document also notes:

“While the M23 rebels were defeated, numerous armed groups still operate in a region that has been in turmoil for the best part of the past two decades. Much of the rebel activity consists of abuses against civilians and illegal exploitation of natural resources, be it metals, ivory or timber” (*ibid*).

A report released by the *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* in May 2015 states:

“Pervasive insecurity in the eastern DRC has allowed armed groups to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes against civilians” (*Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* (15 May 2015) *Democratic Republic of the Congo*).

In May 2015 a document issued by *Jane's Terrorism Watch Report* notes:

“A FORMER senior Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) commander, identified as Bertrand Bisimwa and exiled in Uganda, denied on 7 May that the M23 had created a new group under the name of the Mouvement Chretien pour la Reconstruction du Congo (MCRC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, l'Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale reported” (*Jane's Terrorism Watch Report* (20 May 2015) *Former M23 militants deny creation of a new militant group in DRC*).

A report published in June 2015 by the *Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project* notes that:

“Since the beginning of 2015, numerous offensives have been launched by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC). These include operations against Rwandan FDLR rebels in North and South Kivu and Katanga, Ugandan ADF rebels in the areas north of the town of Beni (which has been the site of frequent attacks on civilians), the FNL around the Uvira plateaus, FRPI militiamen in the territory of Walendu Bindi, and the APCLS in the Lukweti area. However, despite these operations, many of which are still ongoing...violence against civilians and between the various militant non-state actors continues in these regions, with new trends emerging, such as inter-communal violence between ethnic militias in the Manono area and surrounding locales” (*Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project* (June 2015) *ACLED Conflict Trends Report No. 38 June 2015*, p.2).

Reuters in June 2015 states:

“U.N. forces have deployed ground troops, attack helicopters and drones to support a campaign by Democratic Republic of Congo's army against rebels in the northeast of the country...The U.N. Congo mission is the world's largest and it has gone into

action in the country's eastern provinces to combat armed groups, dozens of which plague the region" (Reuters (10 June 2015) *UN deploys troops, helicopters to back Congo in fight with rebels*).

In July 2015 *BMI Research* notes the:

"...the presence of a large number of armed groups in North and South Kivu" (BMI Research (1 July 2015) *DRC - Q3 2015*).

A report issued in July 2015 by *BMI Research* notes the

"...recently defeated M23..." (BMI Research (1 July 2015) *DRC Conflict Minerals And The Dodd-Frank Act - Crib Sheet*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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