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Information on the current security situation including use of child soldiers by militia groups

In September 2023 the *United Nations Security Council* states that:

“Between 20 June and 31 August, the Mission verified 417 grave violations perpetrated against 319 children (230 boys and 89 girls), including 185 children who were recruited and used (153 boys and 32 girls)” *United Nations Security Council (21 September 2023) Report of the Secretary-General*, p.11).

Save the Children in November 2023 points out that:

“Conflict has been raging in parts of the country for nearly three decades, with children killed, sexually assaulted, abducted, and forcibly recruited for use by armed groups” (*Save the Children (1 November 2023) DRC: More than 5% of children now displaced as conflict forces a record number of people from their homes*).

In November 2023 *UNICEF* states that:

“The situation continues to deteriorate dramatically in the two eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu, with spill over into a third (South Kivu). Armed conflicts and intercommunal clashes continue to generate unprecedented humanitarian needs” (*UNICEF (20 November 2023) UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo Humanitarian Situation Report No.5 - Level 3 Emergency scale up Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu provinces (1 - 31 October 2023)*, p.2).

This document also states that:

“Recruitment and use of children represented more than 60 per cent of all UN verified cases of grave violations, followed by abduction and killing and maiming of children” (*ibid*, p.3).

A report issued in November 2023 by *United Nations News Service* states that:

“Violent clashes between non-state armed groups and government forces have displaced more than 450,000 people in the last six weeks in Rutshuru and Masisi territories in North Kivu province” (*United Nations News Service (24 November 2023) Congo-Kinshasa: Clashes in Eastern DR Congo Displace 450,000 in Six Weeks*).

In November 2023 the *UNHCR* states that:

“Children are increasingly vulnerable to recruitment and use by armed groups, with more than 450 verified cases from July to September, a 50 per cent increase versus first half of the year” (*UNHCR (24 November 2023) UNHCR and UNICEF express grave concern over the humanitarian toll on civilians in eastern DR Congo*).

In November 2023 the *United States Agency for International Development* notes that:

“A March 23 Movement (M23) offensive in North Kivu, located in eastern DRC, and related clashes with the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and other armed groups since October 1 have resulted in dozens of civilian deaths, damage to civilian houses and infrastructure, and the displacement of more than 450,000 people from North Kivu's Masisi, Nyiragongo, and Rutshuru territories as of November 14, according to the UN” (United States Agency for International Development (24 November 2023) *Democratic Republic of the Congo – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1 2024 [Key Developments]*, p.2).

Agence France Presse in November 2023 states that:

“Dozens of armed groups plague the mineral-rich eastern DR Congo, a legacy of regional wars that raged in the 1990s and 2000s. The Tutsi-led M23 has seized swathes of territory in North Kivu province since taking up arms again in late 2021 after years of dormancy. According to the United Nations, 450,000 people have been forced to flee their homes over the past six weeks, of whom 200,000 are cut off from humanitarian aid” (*Agence France Presse* (25 November 2023) *DR Congo won't extend regional force mandate: EAC*).

The *Associated Press* in November 2023 states that:

“Armed violence in eastern Congo has been simmering for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities...” (Associated Press (25 November 2023) *Militants with ties to the Islamic State group kill at least 14 farmers in an attack in east Congo*).

In November 2023 *Agence France Presse* points out that:

“The DRC is in the grip of unrest, with dozens of armed groups active in its resource-rich east...” (*Agence France Presse* (28 November 2023) *Political clashes leave one dead in DR Congo's east*).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Report Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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