

A fragile calm has finally settled over the rural commune of Lubutu this Monday morning, following a weekend of intense, terrifying violence between the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and a local “Wazalendo” militia led by the self-proclaimed General Alfani Bukuyu.

The aftermath of the clashes, which took place roughly 365 kilometers from Kindu in Maniema province, is grey. The United Nations sponsored Radio Okapi, which is monitoring the situation reported that six people are confirmed dead, multiple others are nursing severe injuries, and hundreds of panicked families have been forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge deep in the surrounding forests.

According to local security and administrative sources, cited by the UN radio, the chaos erupted when Wazalendo militants launched a blatant, targeted incursion into Lubutu. Their primary objective was clear: storm the military’s weapons depot and loot its arsenal.

However, the FARDC dug in and fought back, triggering a fierce firefight that thwarted the raid. The immediate clash left two militia fighters and one government soldier dead. Frustrated by their failure, the retreating militia turned their weapons on the very population they claim to protect, firing indiscriminately into residential areas.

Two civilians were reported killed instantly in the crossfire, and a third succumbed to fatal injuries on Monday morning. Maniema’s provincial Minister of the Interior confirmed to the UN radio, the rising toll, noting that the heavy gunfire sowed widespread panic across the territory.

The timing of this latest security breakdown could not be worse for local youth. The violence exploded right on the eve of the National Selection and Orientation Test for School and Vocational Education (TENASOSP), a critical academic landmark for local students.

Maniema’s Interior Minister strongly condemned the militia’s actions for pushing school children into an unnecessary state of terror. However, provincial authorities are working around the clock to ensure the academic calendar isn’t derailed.

“Our children are in the middle of preparing for their TENASOSP exams, and yet Mr. Bukuyu is still out there causing chaos, launching incursions, and terrorizing our people,” the Minister stated to local reporters. “We urge the population to remain

calm and the students to keep studying. We are already coordinating with education officials to secure the area so these children can sit for their exams in peace.”

Meanwhile, the humanitarian fallout documented by the UN broadcast points to a severe crisis just across the border. Hundreds of displaced families are currently exposed to the elements in the dense equatorial forests, entirely cut off from food, clean water, or medical assistance.

Stanislas Oleko, an honorary national deputy representing Lubutu, pleaded for both provincial and national lawmakers to immediately travel to the ground to initiate direct talks with the militia leader.

“Elected officials need to get to Lubutu right now and confront Mr. Bukuyu,” Oleko urged. “These politicians carry the mandate of the people of Lubutu—the very people who are currently suffering out in the forest, sleeping in the mud and the bad weather without a single piece of aid, while others are being buried and treated for bullet wounds.”

While provincial security forces insist they are actively restoring public order, local civil society groups and community elders are pushing for a permanent fix. Based on the local appeals monitored via Radio Okapi, they are demanding that the central government in Kinshasa step in decisively to resolve the systemic issue of “Wazalendo” armed factions, which continue to destabilize this vulnerable corridor of Maniema province.