

A somber ceremony unfolded in Goma, North Kivu, on Wednesday, as mourners gathered for the victims of the recent bomb attack on Mugunga camp for displaced people. The DRC government has condemned the attack, which claimed 35 lives, as a “war crime.”

Radio Okapi reported that thirty-five coffins lined Goma’s largest stadium, Burials, for the victims were later held in Kibati, a special cemetery for conflict victims located roughly 10 kilometers north of the city.

The May 3rd attack saw bombs devastate huts in the Mugunga camp, situated on the outskirts of Goma. The displaced population had sought refuge at the camp in Mugunga.

DRC’s Minister of Human Rights, Fabrice Puela, vowed justice during a speech preceding the burials. He emphasized prosecutions through both national and international courts, citing “material evidence” in the DRC’s possession. These actions, Puela stressed, are part of the ongoing transitional justice process.

“This attack targeted a defenseless population,” Puela lamented, highlighting the region’s existing burden of conflict. “The Mugunga camp housed civilians, not combatants.” He declared May 3rd a day of remembrance and reiterated the government’s determination to “drive the enemy out of national territory.”

The attack has ignited a war of words between the DRC and Rwanda. The US State Department condemned the assault on “positions of the Armed Forces of Rwanda and the M23” at the Mugunga camp, a claim vehemently rejected by Rwanda. Rwandan spokesperson Yolande Makolo called the accusations “absurd” and denied any involvement.

North Kivu has long been plagued by fighting between M23 rebels and the Congolese armed forces. The bombing of the Mugunga camp adds a disturbing new chapter to the region’s ongoing conflict.