

The eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is once again on edge after a spate of rebel attacks, just as a fragile peace agreement with Rwanda enters its implementation phase.

On Saturday evening (8 November), the government Forces of the DRC (FARDC) reported that the M23 rebel group carried out multiple assaults across North and South Kivu over the previous 72 hours. Key locations included Bulambula, Kibandamangobo, Tuwe Tuwe, Kasopo, Kajinga, and an attempted takeover of Mount Irimwi. Kinshasa has accused Rwanda of supporting M23, a charge the Rwandan government denies.

The current peace process stems from a deal brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington D.C. on 27 June 2025. It pledged both nations would respect territorial integrity, halt hostilities, and disarm non-state armed groups. Despite these commitments, FARDC warned that M23's continued offensives threaten the agreement and called on international mediators to act swiftly.

M23 rebels have also accused the FARDC of deploying drones and a Sukhoi-25 war-plane in recent strikes on its positions, a claim the rebel group says is further proof that both sides are undermining the Doha-mediated peace accord.

Adding to the international spotlight, French President Emmanuel Macron announced last week that Goma International Airport will soon reopen, a move aimed at speeding up humanitarian aid to the region. The airport has been closed since January 2025, after M23 captured the city and retreating government forces caused significant damage.

Macron stressed, "reopening the airport is crucial for delivering food, medical care, and shelter to displaced communities, particularly women and children."

The United Nations has repeatedly raised alarms about the humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC.

M23 swiftly pushed back against Macron's announcement, calling it "inopportune" and insisting that such steps should be tied to ongoing peace talks in Doha. The group also claimed there is "no longer any humanitarian emergency" in areas it controls and warned France to avoid actions that could "revive memories of its difficult past" in the Great Lakes region.

While the attacks and political tensions intensify, diplomats are also looking to economic progress. On 7 November 2025, the DRC and Rwanda signed a Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF) aimed at linking the DRC's mineral wealth, including cobalt, copper, lithium, and tantalum, to regional infrastructure projects and foreign investment.

Analysts caution, however, that security and justice measures will need to be credible if economic promises are to reach communities on the ground.

For local residents, the stakes are immediate. Even as leaders sign deals and broker agreements, families in the Kivus remain displaced, aid is slow to arrive, and the shadow of violence persists. How the DRC, Rwanda, and the international community respond in the coming weeks may well determine whether the fragile promise of peace turns into reality, or slips back into conflict.