

Fighting has continued between the Congolese army and M23 rebels in Uvira, South Kivu in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

According to reports, the Democratic Republic of Congo, (FARDC) claims to have bombed two speedboats used by M23 rebels on the morning of Friday, December 26, on Lake Tanganyika, at the port of Kalundu, the boats were reported to be carrying military equipment, including weapons and other supplies.

Lieutenant Reagan Kalonji, spokesman for Operation 2 for Congolese army in South Kivu, confirmed to Radio Okapi, during an interview, that during an offensive carried out over the last four days around Uvira, at least 13 rebels were captured and 11 weapons of all calibers were recovered.

The officer specifies that the “firepower” of the Armed Forces of the FARDC, forced rebels to relocate their headquarters, first to Utema near the former MONUSCO military base, then to Kiliba, more than ten kilometers from the center of Uvira.

He emphasizes that this is not a voluntary withdrawal, but a forced withdrawal: “This is not a voluntary withdrawal, but a forced withdrawal under military pressure from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, (FARDC) ,” the officer stated, specifying that these military vessels were hindering the progress of loyalist forces.

Lieutenant Kalonji reiterated that the army is determined to drive the rebels out of Congolese territory. He also called on the population to remain calm, vigilant, and to continue trusting the army, which remains deployed day and night to defend the country’s interests, territorial integrity, and citizens’ property.

Calm is said to have returned to Bule, in the territory of Djugu (Ituri) after fighting between FARDC and the Convention for the Popular Revolution (CRP) rebels led by Thomas Lubanga on Friday 26, December.

Loud detonations from small and heavy weapons were heard from the early hours of the morning.

According to local sources, the first shots were fired around 7 a.m., coming from the Mbi River, where the FARDC reportedly received reinforcements before launching an assault against the CRP positions.

This offensive aimed to retake control of the Bule shopping center, still partially

occupied by the rebels. Local civil society, however, fears a higher death toll. The authorities confirmed the discovery of the body of a civilian and another wounded person, likely killed by stray bullets during the exchange of fire.

The humanitarian situation is also deteriorating as a result of the recurring clashes. Twenty-eight civilians, including nine children and seven women, have sought refuge at the MONUSCO base to escape the violence.

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers deployed there were not spared: one of them was wounded in the shoulder when the camp was fired upon. He received immediate medical treatment. The UN base has since been placed on high alert.