

Renewed violence has rocked North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), marking a worrying escalation in tensions between the M23 rebel group, the Congolese army (FARDC), and local militias.

Civil society groups report clashes erupting on two fronts this Monday morning, raising concerns about the fragile security situation in the region.

One front of the fighting reportedly unfolded near the city of Sake in Masisi territory, where M23 rebels reportedly attempted to bypass FARDC positions in the Murambi hills

According to local sources, the Congolese army successfully repelled the advance, with heavy gunfire exchanges echoing around the city. Despite the tense atmosphere, some residents in Sake reportedly continue their daily activities.

Reports indicate that a second front of fighting emerged in the Nyiragongo territory, where local militias known as “Wazalendo” engaged in fierce clashes with M23 rebels in the Kihuli sector of the Kibumba grouping.

Information remains unclear regarding the outcome of these clashes, adding to the uncertainty surrounding the broader conflict.

Civil society groups have urged the FARDC to take decisive action to cut off the M23 supply route in the Kabuhanga sector, potentially hindering their operations. However, concerns remain about the potential for further escalation and civilian casualties amidst the renewed fighting.

Escalating violence in Eastern DRC has forced at least about 78,000 children to flee their homes in the past week, with thousands now on the road to Goma, the capital of the eastern province of North Kivu, global charity Save the Children reported.