

The G7 foreign ministers have condemned the escalating violence and human rights abuses in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, including reports of conflict-related sexual violence.

In a joint statement issued after their meeting in Canada, the G7 foreign ministers condemned reports of conflict-related sexual violence and urged all sides to protect civilians.

“We are deeply concerned by the ongoing violence and human rights violations in eastern DRC, including sexual and gender-based violence,” the statement said. “Civilians must be protected, and humanitarian access must be guaranteed.”

The ministers, representing Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, also called for accountability for perpetrators and renewed efforts to reduce tensions in the region.

Fighting between Congolese forces and the M23 rebel group has intensified in recent months, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee their homes. Aid agencies say displacement camps around Goma are overcrowded and short of food, clean water and medicine.

The G7 urged all armed groups to lay down their weapons and called on regional partners to support ongoing peace efforts under the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

“Long-term stability will depend on tackling the root causes of conflict,” the ministers said, pointing to the illegal exploitation of minerals and cross-border insecurity.

Analysts say the renewed attention from the G7 reflects growing concern that the crisis in eastern Congo risks being overshadowed by other global conflicts.

“The scale of suffering in eastern Congo is immense, yet it rarely makes international headlines,” one diplomat told the BBC. “The G7 wants to ensure that the humanitarian response and political engagement are not forgotten.”

While the statement stopped short of announcing new sanctions or financial commitments, it adds weight to calls for stronger international coordination to end the decades-long conflict.

For millions of Congolese civilians, the G7's words may offer a glimmer of recognition, but aid workers say what is urgently needed now is action on the ground to halt the violence and allow families to rebuild their lives.