

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is on high alert after the M23 rebel group briefly captured the strategic town of Shasha near Goma, the capital of North Kivu province.

Reports from the capital Kinshasa indicate that President Felix Tshisekedi convened the National Defence Council to address the deteriorating security situation and vowed to defend Goma at all costs.

The M23 advance sparked fears that Goma could be at risk. However, the Defence Council, led by Deputy Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Bemba on Monday, emphasized their commitment to defending the city.

Bemba urged citizens to remain calm and dismissed rumors spread on social media, stating, "The FARDC (Congolese army) which is backed by SADC troops is doing extraordinary work."

The DRC continues to accuse Rwanda of backing the M23, citing economic motives for destabilizing the mineral-rich eastern region. Rwanda vehemently denies these claims.

Locals in Masisi territory, impacted by the fighting, reported disruptions in movement due to M23-imposed road closures. This disruption further strains an already fragile humanitarian situation in the region.

The Defence Council requested the lifting of the moratorium on capital punishment for treason within the military, sparking concerns about potential human rights violations. The situation in eastern DRC remains tense, and international observers urge all parties to prioritize peaceful solutions and respect human rights.