

The AFC/M23 rebel group has announced the arrest of two suspects linked to the grenade attack that took place on Thursday, February 27, during a successful public gathering it organized in Bukavu. A manhunt is currently underway to track down their accomplices.

Led by the head of the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC), Corneille Nangaa, the rally drew a large crowd before chaos erupted due to explosions, forcing attendees to flee in panic. The exact number of victims has not yet been disclosed.

In a statement, the AFC/M23 condemned the attack, calling it a “cowardly and barbaric act” and accused President Félix Tshisekedi of orchestrating it.

“After their failure on the battlefield, the forces allied with the Kinshasa regime have just attacked the people of Bukavu following the popular gathering organized by the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC/M23),” said the group’s political spokesperson, Lawrence Kanyuka, in a statement expressing condolences to the victims’ families.

The group also claimed that the attack was part of a broader plan to eliminate civilians. “The order to massacre the people of Bukavu was given by Tshisekedi Tshilombo following a meeting with his last governor, who was expelled from Bukavu,” the statement reads.

The AFC/M23 has called on regional and international community, including the European Union, the African Union, the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to “draw all necessary consequences from this heinously atrocious act by the Kinshasa regime.”

The rebel group, which has occupied the city of Bukavu for ten days, has pledged to take all necessary measures to ensure security and prevent any future threats.

Bertrand Bisimwa, the president of the M23 (March 23 Movement), which is part of the AFC, stated on X that “initial investigations conducted at the crime scene indicate that the explosives used in the terrorist attack are the same as those used by the Burundian Army in its operations in the eastern DRC region.”

Bertrand Bisimwa went on to say that Mr. Tshisekedi’s regime has just carried out a threat that had been circulating on social media since yesterday, targeting civilians who would participate in the AFC/M23 rally.

The gathering took place just weeks after the AFC/M23 seized control of Bukavu and

Goma, consolidating its hold on the two largest cities in eastern DRC amid ongoing battles with government forces.

The AFC/M23 rebel group accuses the Congolese government of ethnic persecution against members of the Tutsi, Banyamulenge, and Hema communities, forcing hundreds of thousands of residents to flee to neighboring countries.

During his public rally, Corneille Nangaa vowed to continue his advance southward, promising to capture Uvira within two days and establish a new leadership structure in South Kivu, similar to what the group implemented in North Kivu after taking Goma.