

The cities of Bweremana in Masisi territory, North Kivu, and Minova in Kalehe territory, South Kivu, have fallen under the control of M23 rebels following intense fighting.

The clashes, which began on Monday, January 20, and continued into Tuesday morning, saw heavy exchanges of fire between the rebels and the Congolese army, supported by allied forces.

Sources on the ground report that the rebels launched a major offensive in the mountains surrounding the chiefdoms of Bahunde (North Kivu) and Buhavu (South Kivu). By early Tuesday, around 6 a.m., the M23 fighters had taken control of the center of Minova after a fierce exchange lasting approximately an hour.

In Bweremana and Minova, acts of reprisal reportedly followed the rebel advance, with at least ten individuals, including those linked to the Wazalendo fighters, losing their lives.

On Monday, Amnesty International highlighted the devastating impact of recent violence on civilians, reporting a significant rise in attacks on civilian areas by both sides over the past month. The organization called for immediate action to protect non-combatants caught in the crossfire.

Meanwhile, the most recent peace talks, originally scheduled for December 15 between the leaders of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, were canceled at the last minute due to unresolved differences between the two nations.

The situation remains precarious in the region. Artillery fire was heard early Tuesday morning in the Mugunga district, west of Goma, and on the hills near Sake. Although Sake remains under the control of the Congolese army, the situation is described as volatile.

The unrest has disrupted daily life, with schools in the Mugunga district sending children home as a precautionary measure. Authorities and humanitarian organizations are closely monitoring the situation as fears of further violence grow.

The President of DRC, Félix Tshisekedi said, "We will never engage in talks with the terrorist group M23."

Address Duringing diplotes during a New Year's reception on Saturday, President Tshisekedi declared that he will never agree to hold talks with the M23 group, which

opposes his government.

He stated: “Engaging in talks with the terrorist group M23 is a red line we will never cross. Asking us to negotiate with this group is like asking us to legitimize actions that violate our laws and principles, which we consider completely unacceptable.”

This statement comes as security continues to deteriorate in many parts of Kivu Province due to the group’s activities.