

M23 rebels have seized control of the strategic city of Uvira in South Kivu on Wednesday, December 10, prompting Burundi to close its border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The latest offensive by M23 alleged comes despite a U.S. mediated peace agreement signed [last week by the Congolese and Rwandan Presidents in Washington](#).

The accord did not include the rebels, who are negotiating separately with the Congo and agreed earlier this year to ceasefire that both sides accuse the other of violating.

Burundi, a key ally of the DRC and host to thousands of displaced Congolese from Uvira, said the move was necessary to protect its territory from potential incursions. The closure could worsen the humanitarian situation, leaving civilians fleeing the fighting unable to reach safety.

After more than a week of heavy clashes in the Ruzizi Plain, M23 fighters entered Uvira on Wednesday morning. Security sources report the first rebels appeared around 11:30 a.m., following operations against Wazalendo soldiers who had refused to withdraw.

The Congolese army reportedly pulled out of the city the previous day, moving toward Swima, Makobola, and Baraka in Fizi territory.

Residents in Uvira confirmed the presence of M23 troops, while the rebels themselves stated they had taken up positions in the city by early afternoon. M23 has said its fighters are supported by Rwanda.

Rwanda denies the allegations.

Marafiki Masimango, a representative of Uvira civil society, confirmed that M23 rebels entered the city late Tuesday night, prompting some government soldiers to flee. He added that he and many residents have also left the town.

The fall of Uvira comes as the United States and the European Union have called on [M23 and Rwanda to immediately halt their offensive in eastern DRC](#).

In a statement on Tuesday night, the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes (ICG), an informal monitoring body made up of several countries including the

U.S. and EU, expressed concern over the renewed offensive and its proximity to the Burundi border, warning that it “risks destabilizing the whole region.”

Earlier this year, M23 seized Goma and Bukavu, two key strategic towns in eastern DRC, marking a major escalation in the ongoing conflict.