

The once bustling artery connecting Goma, Sake, and Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) now lies silent, severed by the chilling grip of conflict.

Fighting between the M23 rebels and the government forces (FARDC), alongside local militias, has choked the life out of National Route 2, leaving cities like Goma and Minova gasping for breath.

Reports indicate that Shasha, a village barely nine kilometers from Sake, sits at the heart of this strangled passage. Captured by the rebels on Saturday, it now bears the weight of a barrier separating lives and livelihoods. Food supplies from Minova and Bweremana, staples for many in Goma and Sake, are cut off, leaving a gnawing hunger in their wake.

The echoes of clashes from Ngingwe and MureMure, strategic hills seized by the M23, paint a grim picture.

Civil society in Masisi paints it in stark numbers saying that two civilians silenced forever, eight more bearing the physical wounds of war, and a tide of displaced people driven from their homes by the storm of violence. Even Kirotshe hospital couldn't offer sanctuary, its patients forced to flee their beds and seek shelter in the face of the advancing threat.

Across the provincial border, the specter of fear stalks Minova. News of Shasha's capture triggers a wave of panic, driving residents from nearby villages like Nguba, Kirotshe, Kiluku, and Bweremana to seek refuge in Minova. Others, with nowhere else to go, trudge towards Sake, further straining the resources of a city already burdened by conflict.

Since the week began, Masisi has become a battleground, each clash etching another mark on the canvas of human suffering. Homes become rubble, dreams turn to dust, and the cost of violence mounts inexorably.