The simmering pot of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) boils over as South Africa pledges 2,900 troops to join a regional force tackling armed groups.

In a move announced by the South African government on February 12th, the South African military will join the Congolese army (FARDC) in escalating clashes between rebels and government forces.

The office of President Cyril Ramaphosa said it ordered the deployment in line with fulfilling South Africa's international obligation towards the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission to support the DRC.

South Africa joins the Southern African Development Community (SADC) force, contributing the largest contingent of 2,900 soldiers.

The deployment which kicked off December 2023, and runs for a year, will cost South Africa 2 billion rand ($105.75 million).

Malawi and Tanzania also contributed troops to the SADC force, aiming to support the Congolese army in combating armed groups.

As a result of numerous armed groups competing for land and resources in the eastern DRC, millions have been displaced and hundreds of thousands have died.

The recent resurgence of the M23 rebels, threatening the North Kivu provincial capital Goma, prompted regional intervention.

With logistical and operational hurdles in the vast and volatile region, effective coordination, addressing root causes, and civilian protection are crucial for the mission's success.

Observers say, if successful, the SADC force could bring much-needed stability, reduce violence, protect civilians, and pave the way for dialogue and solutions.

However, the complex conflict and numerous armed groups present significant challenges. This deployment marks a significant escalation in regional efforts to quell violence in eastern DRC.

Experts say while the path ahead remains fraught with challenges, the combined force offers a glimmer of hope for a more peaceful future in the war-torn region.

SADC is re-entering the eastern DRC a decade after its first intervention to fight the same enemy.