

Wazalendo fighters allied with the Congolese army (FARDC) recaptured several villages from AFC/M23 rebels in Masisi territory's Bahunde chiefdom this week, though fresh clashes were reported Wednesday as the fighting continued, according to the UN sponsored Radio Okapi.

The fighting resumed early Wednesday in Kasake, a few kilometres from Remeka on the road to Ngungu. Village leaders told Radio Okapi that around five Wazalendo armed groups, backed by FARDC, are involved; this figure could not be independently verified.

The groups are trying to retake ground lost to AFC/M23 during heavy fighting between August 15 and 20, village leaders said.

On Tuesday, after clashes that ran from around 2am until after 6pm local time, the Wazalendo coalition retook the towns of Remeka, Katuunda, Miko and Kareta, along with surrounding areas in the Ufamandu I grouping.

Major Dieudonné Kasereka, spokesman for the Congolese army's 34th military region, said the recaptured positions include areas in Ufamandu, in Bahunde chiefdom, as well as the Katoyi and Oso-Banyungu sectors of Masisi territory. Other localities in the Luberike grouping, in neighbouring Walikale territory, were also reportedly retaken.

No casualty figures have been given by any side, and none could be independently confirmed.

AFC/M23 could not immediately be reached for comment on the Wednesday fighting in Kasake or the loss of the Ufamandu I villages.

The group has, however, made public statements on related clashes in Masisi in recent days. On Tuesday, September 15, AFC/M23 spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka said on X that DRC government forces had launched attacks that morning in the Ntekomiko and Point-Zéro areas, resulting in deaths and forcing civilians to flee. He said AFC/M23 forces "continue to protect and defend civilians." That statement concerned a separate incident from the one reported here and pre-dates Wednesday's fighting in Kasake.

More than 277,000 people had been displaced in Masisi territory alone, according to OCHA's mid-June 2026 situation report, part of a wider total of 1.83 million people

displaced across North Kivu province as of May 31. OCHA did not give a death toll specific to Masisi in that report, and these figures pre-date this week's fighting in Kasake and the Ufamandu I villages.

The fighting comes as DRC and Rwandan officials reconvened in Geneva on September 16 and 17 for the latest round of talks on implementing the 2025 Washington Accords, the US-backed peace framework between the two countries. The two-day meeting of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism brought together representatives of both governments alongside mediators from the United States, Qatar, Togo and the African Union Commission.

The talks are meant to assess progress on key commitments, including the DRC's obligation to neutralise the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and Rwanda's disengagement of forces along the border. The renewed clashes in Masisi underscore how, more than a year after the original peace agreement was signed in Washington, fighting in eastern DRC has continued largely unabated.

Fresh clashes have also been reported around Bibatama, Mitimongi and Katoyi-Centre, in the Katoyi area.

Village leaders describe the security situation there as still worrying. The continued insecurity is preventing many displaced families from returning home, forcing them to remain in the Waloa area of Walikale territory.