

M23 Captures Uvira

What's next for the DRC, Wider Region, and Peace Talks



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Key Takeaway

M23 rebels captured Uvira town with significant Rwandan army support, marking the defeat of the Congolese government in South Kivu province and heightening the risk of a regional war. M23 can use Uvira to support future offensives, while the fall of Uvira is Burundi's gravest national security threat in years.

Defeat for the DRC

- **Loss of South Kivu:** Uvira was the last major government foothold and FARDC military hub in South Kivu. Its loss cuts FARDC supply routes and severely constrains if not cuts vital Burundian support.
- **Political Pressure:** The loss of Uvira could cause a legitimacy crisis for the Congolese president, increasing the momentum of opposition groups and elevating the risk of a coup.

M23's Next Moves

- **Consolidate Control in Uvira:** M23 will likely focus on securing and consolidating control over Uvira in the short-to-medium term. The group still faces resistance from militia insurgents and short-term political and capacity constraints to further offensives.
- **Kalemie, Tanganyika Province (South):** Uvira was the last major defensive FARDC position before Kalemie, which is a key logistic hub that connects the eastern DRC to the former mineral-rich Katanga region in the south.
- **Kindu, Maniema Province (Southwest):** Uvira could function as a logistic hub to support offensives toward Kindu, the administrative and commercial capital of Maniema province and an important FARDC command center.

Peace Process Outlook

- **DRC Obstinace:** The Congolese government still does not face an existential military threat from M23 and will likely refuse to make major concessions.
- **M23 Leverage:** M23 will use control of surrounding areas as a bargaining chip in peace talks.
- **Rwanda Faces Backlash:** M23 and Rwanda are facing international backlash, including potential sanctions, which has previously contributed to de-escalation.

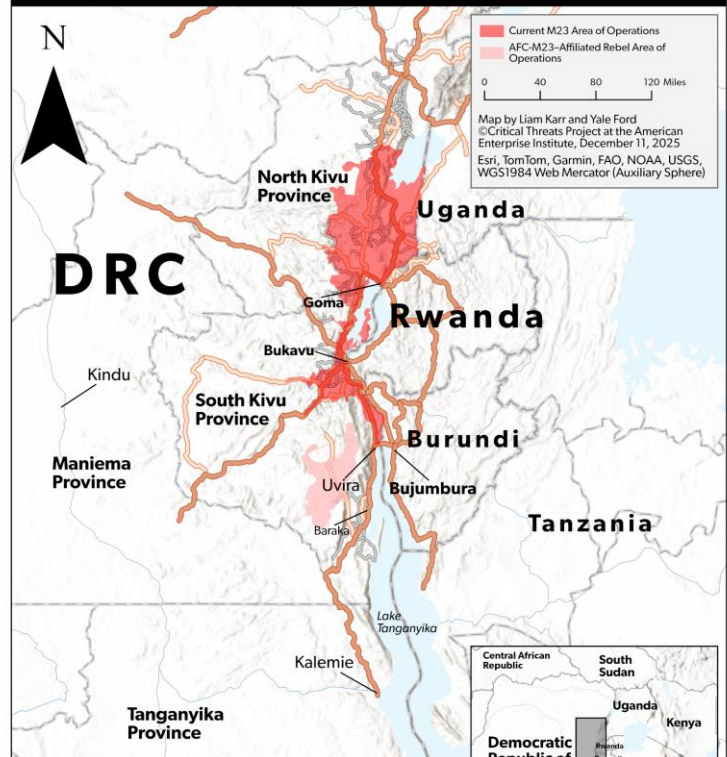
M23 Expands from the Kivu Provinces

M23 Advances in 2025

(Click to enlarge)

M23 Expands from the Kivu Provinces

Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo



Threat to Burundi

- **End of détente:** Burundi has partnered with the DRC, partially due to its rivalry with the Rwanda, although the two countries deconflicted in early 2025 when M23 initially encroached on the Burundian border.
- **Burundian Withdrawal:** The FDNB initiated a full withdrawal and extraction of its roughly 18,000 troops from South Kivu and closed its two main border posts with the DRC.
- **Security Threat:** The closure of the border and the eviction of its forces from South Kivu will likely significantly degrade Burundi's ability to prevent cross-border attacks from DRC-based Burundian rebels.
- **Economic Risk:** Burundi relies heavily on the Bujumbura–Uvira corridor to transport the 90 percent of its total exports to the DRC.