



## Genocide Emergency: Democratic Republic of the Congo

March 2024

By Sera Mishra, Genocide Watch

There have been up to [6 million conflict-related deaths](#) in the DRC since 1998. The eastern [provinces](#) of Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, Ituri, and Tanganyika, and the southern provinces of Kasai-Oriental, Kasai Central, Kasai, and Mai-Ndombe had genocidal massacres in [2023](#). [6.7 million](#) Congolese are internally displaced. 400,000 women are raped each year in DRC, the highest rate of [sexual violence](#) in the world.

In the [First and Second Congo Wars](#) (1996-97, 1998-2003) from [one to five million](#) civilians died. [100 armed militias](#) continue to commit atrocities in eastern DRC. The M23 militia, supported by Rwanda, [launched a new offensive](#) in 2022, and is the [most active non-state militia](#). The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), claiming allegiance to the Islamic State, killed 1000 civilians in eastern DRC and Uganda in 2023.

[Mass killing](#), kidnapping of children, [mass rape, and torture by militias and government forces](#), and [ethnic conflict](#) plague the DRC. The corrupt DRC government is unable to bring peace or law and order. Since 2003, the [world's largest UN peacekeeping force](#), MONUSCO, has also been unable to stop atrocities despite having up to 21,000 troops in DRC at a cost of over ten billion dollars. Demonstrations in Goma in 2022 demanded that MONUSCO leave the DRC. [MONUSCO will leave DRC by the end of 2024](#).

In the elections of 2018 and 2023, Félix Tshisekedi was elected President. Before 2018, the DRC had [never before had a peaceful political transition](#).

Tens of thousands of Congolese are informally employed by multinational corporations that own cobalt, coltan, and copper mines. The mines have [child labor](#), [life-threatening work conditions](#), [exposure to toxic substances](#), and a lack of any safety precautions.

Local *mai mai* militias, Hutu genocidists from Rwanda (*Interahamwe*), and the Congolese army have driven over 100,000 Congolese Tutsis (*Banyamulenge*) off their land in eastern DRC into refugee camps in Rwanda. The Banyamulenge have been [systematically killed](#) in a 'slow genocide.' Congolese nationalists try to [justify this genocide as revenge](#) for past Tutsi domination, using the same racist ideology that drove the Rwandan genocide.

In February 2024, a Lendu militia, the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO) [massacred](#) dozens of Hema people, a targeted Tutsi minority in Northern Ituri province. Batwa communities residing in or near the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in South Kivu have been [persecuted](#) by park guards and Congolese army soldiers.

Congolese [Tutsis](#) (the Banyamulenge and Hema) and the Batwa people are targets of slow genocides in the DRC. Women, children, the [LGBTQ+ community](#), [people in displaced person camps](#), and [civil society activists and organizations](#) are persecuted.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is at **Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 4: Dehumanization, Stage 5: Organization, Stage 6: Polarization, Stage 8: Persecution, and Stage 9: Extermination.**

### Genocide Watch recommends:

- MONUSCO must not withdraw from eastern DRC, where it is the only non-DRC security force.
- MONUSCO should adopt effective strategies to hunt down and defeat genocidal militias.
- Rwanda must withdraw all its troops from the DRC and end its support for M23.
- The DRC must enforce its laws against hate speech and incitements to genocide.
- The DRC should arrest and prosecute leaders who incite genocide and crimes against humanity.