

DR Congo: UN chief deeply concerned about clashes between Government troops, rebels
By UN News Centre
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18 July 2013 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed deep concern about the latest round of hostilities between the M23 rebel group and the national armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) known as the FARDC.

“The Secretary-General urges all parties to exercise utmost restraint and prevent an escalation of the conflict and a deeper humanitarian crisis,” his spokesperson said in a statement.

Renewed fighting north of Goma, in the North Kivu area of eastern DRC, has uprooted tens of thousands of people in recent days.



FARDC and MONUSCO reinforce their presence in and around Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, following clashes between M23 and national troops. Photo: MONUSCO/Clara Padovan

According to the statement, the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, known as MONUSCO, has been on high alert and is prepared to intervene, including through the Force Intervention Brigade created in recent months to carry out targeted offensive operations with or without the FARDC, against armed groups that threaten peace in the eastern part of the country.

The Secretary-General underlined the importance of pursuing a political solution to address the root causes of conflict.

“He calls on all signatory countries to respect their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the

region,” according to the statement.

The Framework was signed in February by 11 African leaders, and aims to end the cycles of conflict and violence in eastern DRC and to build peace in the wider region.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ban has also noted his concern over reports of the FARDC seriously mistreating M23 detainees.

According to the reports, M23 detainees have not just been victims of human rights violations, but their corpses have also been desecrated by members of the national armed forces.

“The Secretary-General calls on the DRC to bring the perpetrators of these reported acts to justice and underlines that mistreatment of detainees is a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law,” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said in a statement issued last night.

The statement said MONUSCO has raised the issue of mistreatment of detainees with the FARDC, and is also reviewing its support to FARDC units suspected of being involved in these incidents.