



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

DRC - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 23 April 2018

Information on areas which are considered safe from indiscriminate violence

A report published in 2018 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of 2017 points out that:

“Peace and the rule of law remain obstructed by active rebel groups, primarily concentrated in the country’s eastern and southern provinces. The impact of years of fighting on civilians has been catastrophic, with over five million conflict-related deaths since 1998. The population of the affected regions is subject to displacement and violence due to rebel activity and poor discipline among members of the armed forces. The use of child soldiers is common. Continuing fragmentation and changing coalitions among armed groups, as well as between armed groups and the FARDC, obstruct the de-escalation of conflict” (Freedom House (2018) *Freedom in the World 2018, Congo, Democratic Republic of*).

A report issued in April 2018 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of the preceding year notes that:

“Both local and foreign-influenced conflicts continued in parts of the East, particularly in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Ituri, Upper Uele, Lower Uele, Kongo Central, and provinces in the Kasai region” (United States Department of State (20 April 2018) *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Democratic Republic of the Congo*).

In March 2018 the *United Nations Security Council* states in a report that:

“The security situation continued to deteriorate in many parts of the country” (United Nations Security Council (1 March 2018) *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p.4).

A report released in March 2018 by the *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*

“Inter-communal violence continues to increase in several provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)” (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (7 March 2018) *Atrocity Alert, No. 95, 7 March 2018: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Syria and Somalia*).

A report published in March 2018 by the *Carleton University* points out that:

“The current security situation is deteriorating” (Carleton University (8 March 2018) *2018 Conflict Risk Diagnostic: Democratic Republic of Congo*, p.3).

The *UNHCR* in March 2018 notes that:

“UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is working with partner organizations in western Uganda to support a growing number of people, most of them women and children, fleeing horrific inter-ethnic violence and sexual abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)” (UNHCR (16 March 2018) *Congolese flee horrific violence for Uganda*).

This document also notes that:

“While the lack of access to this part of Democratic Republic of the Congo means it is difficult to offer a detailed picture of the situation, UNHCR has received chilling accounts of violence. These include accounts of rape, murder and separation from family members. These are linked to the deteriorating security situation, internal conflicts and inter-communal tensions. Armed men are reported to be attacking villages, looting and burning down houses, indiscriminately killing civilian populations and kidnapping young men and boys. A growing number of reports indicate that the violence is taking on ethnic dimensions as tribal groups engage in retaliatory attacks” (ibid).

In March 2018 the *United States Department of State* points out in a report that:

“Over the last year, violence in the DRC has surged and spread to previously peaceful areas, like the Kasai region. This spike in fighting only adds to the devastation already brought on by two decades of conflict in other parts of the country” (United States Department of State (20 March 2018) *The Democratic Republic of Congo: A Forgotten Crisis*).

Reuters in March 2018 states that:

“The crisis in Kasai is one of several gripping Congo, where President Joseph Kabila’s refusal to step down when his mandate expired in December 2016 inflamed a combustible mix of ethnic grievances and competition over land and mineral resources that has fuelled years of conflict. In all, over 13 million Congolese need humanitarian aid, twice as many as last year, and 7.7 million face severe food insecurity, up 30 percent from a year ago, the U.N. said in a report this month” (Reuters (21 March 2018) *Hunger brings death to Congo's Kasai after guns fall silent*).

A report issued in April 2018 by *Human Rights Watch* notes that:

“Large-scale violence has also continued in eastern Congo’s North and South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces. Today, over 120 armed groups are active in eastern Congo” (Human Rights Watch (9 April 2018) *Overview of the Political Crisis in DR Congo and the Human Rights, Security, and Humanitarian Consequences*).

Norwegian Capacity in April 2018 notes that:

“The 20-year long humanitarian crisis we see today is a result of several conflicts in different pockets of the country. Some have lasted for years, while others are more recent” (Norwegian Capacity (13 April 2018) *We are failing DR Congo – again*).

Human Rights Watch in April 2018 states that:

“Since mid-December, unidentified assailants have killed more than 260 people and burned thousands of homes in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s northeastern

Djugu territory in Ituri province. The atrocities we have documented include massacres, rapes, and decapitation. More than 200,000 people have fled their homes, many to neighboring Uganda. The surge of deadly violence seems to have erupted out of nowhere, tearing through a once-embattled area that had been largely peaceful in recent years” (Human Rights Watch (20 April 2018) *Displaced Congolese Face Being Returned to Harm’s Way*).

A map of the DRC is included in a report issued in April 2018 published by the *International Crisis Group* (International Crisis Group (4 April 2018) *Electoral Poker in DR Congo*, p.22).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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