



Country Conditions: Democratic Republic of Congo

January, 2024

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is in the midst of one of the deadliest armed conflicts in modern history. In late 2022, the [resurgence](#) of the armed group “Mouvement du 23 mars” or March 23 Movement (M23) resulted in fresh fighting with government forces and instability that was further exploited by over a hundred armed groups present in the country and by neighboring Rwanda. Clashes involving militant groups over territory and natural resources, extrajudicial killings by security forces, political violence, and rising tensions with neighboring Rwanda have contributed to the dire situation.

“Rwanda-backed M23 rebels in North Kivu are leaving behind a growing trail of war crimes against civilians,” [said](#) Thomas Fessy, senior Congo researcher at Human Rights Watch. Over five million people have been [displaced](#) in 2023. From October 2023 fighting in the eastern provinces escalated breaking the ceasefire between M23, non-state armed groups (NSAG), and Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC). On December 15, 2023, the United States [announced](#) a two-week extension of the 72-hour ceasefire in eastern DRC. The violence across DRC risks undermining the general elections in December 2023. The renewed [escalations](#) are leading to further mass displacement and an anticipated worsening of the conflict. “This [crisis](#) is on the way to becoming a humanitarian catastrophe.”

DRC is one of the ten countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Torrential rains in May 2023 resulted in over 400 civilians [killed](#), close to 200 [missing](#), and entire villages washed away. Over 3,000 homes were damaged or destroyed in the following floods and landslides. In December 2022, major [flooding](#) affected over 84,000 people in Kinshasa and affected 7,336 homes, of which 806 were destroyed. Today, health concerns remain, as residents continue to [suffer](#) health complications from exposure to harmful gasses as a result of volcanic eruptions.

Over 1400 people have already been killed this year, and 19.6 million people are in dire need of humanitarian [assistance](#). Additionally, outbreaks of Ebola, cholera, measles, polio, yellow fever, monkeypox, and COVID-19 have caused major public health crises. The ongoing conflict and security concerns prevent humanitarian groups’ access and ability to deliver aid. An estimated 6.4 million of those people are [affected](#) by acute [malnutrition](#).

Due to the threat of armed conflict, the U.S. Department of State maintains a [Level 4](#): Do Not Travel advisory. Over 1 million DRC refugees and asylum-seekers have migrated to neighboring countries seeking safety. In the latest [report](#) from Refugee Council USA, DRC ranked highest among countries of origin for refugees resettled in the United States. Of the top five countries – DRC, Syria, Afghanistan, Burma, & Guatemala, DRC is one of the only countries not designated for TPS. In FY23 over 24,000 Africans were resettled, of those [18,000](#) were Congolese. The recent upsurge in violence, climate disasters, and humanitarian crises poses a significant threat to nationals. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, [no improvement](#) in the humanitarian situation is expected in 2023 and 2024. Over 115 organizations led by African Communities Together [urge](#) Secretary Mayorkas to review country conditions and designate TPS for DRC.