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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(08 February 2025)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- **CONFLICT IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**
- **VERY SHORT RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS (VSHORADS)**
- **MCQs**

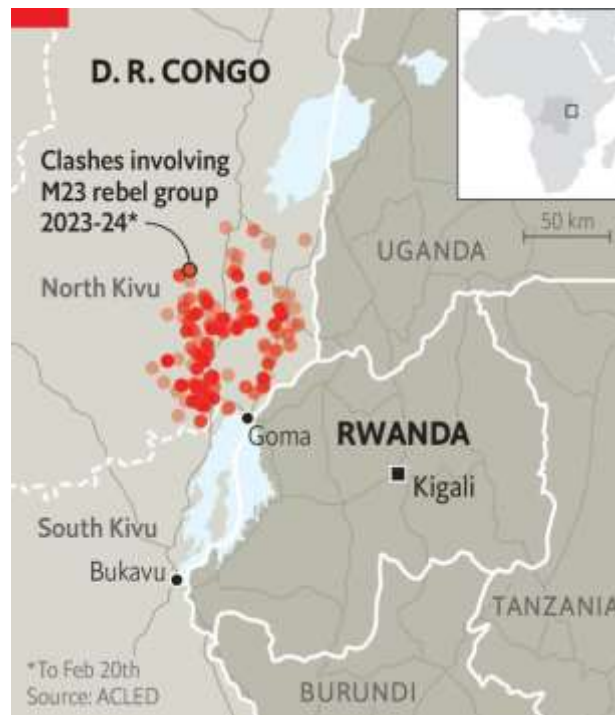


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CONFLICT IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



What is Happening in Congo?

- The **M23 rebels**, a group led by ethnic **Tutsis**, have launched a major attack in eastern Congo.
 - **Tutsi** are an ethnic group primarily inhabiting **Rwanda and Burundi** in the **Great Lakes** region of Africa
- They took over the city of **Goma** in **North Kivu** province on **January 27, 2025**, and are now moving southward toward the capital of South Kivu, **Bukavu**.

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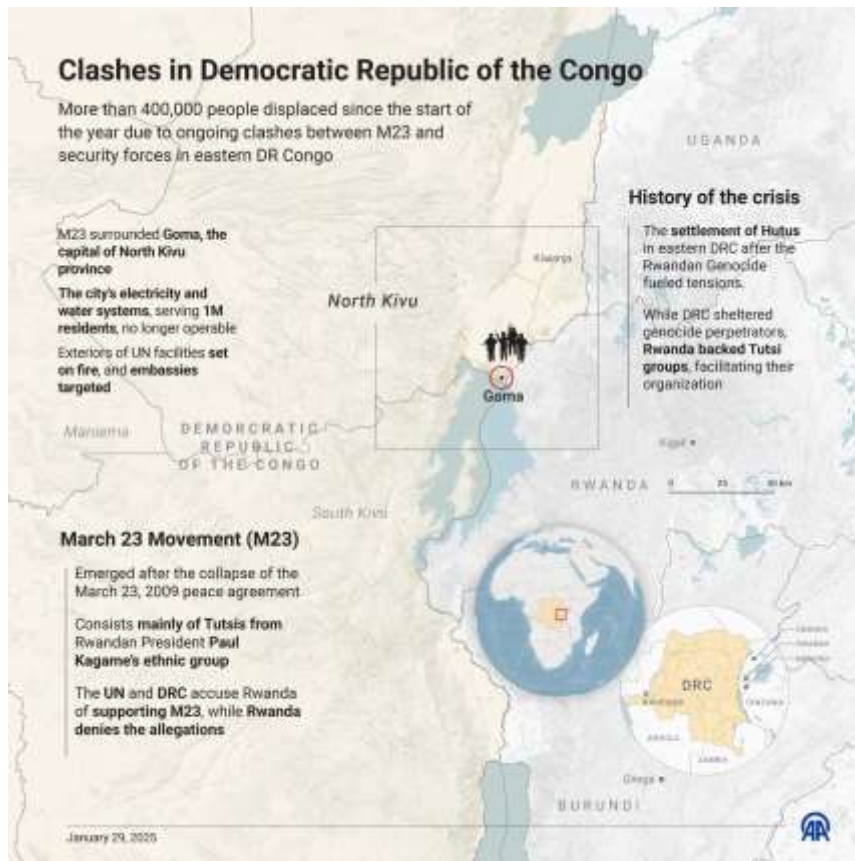
- By January 30, **Goma was fully controlled by the rebels**, with many civilians fleeing the city due to the violence.
- The fighting has also **spilled into nearby areas, with soldiers from Rwanda and Burundi reportedly involved**, raising concerns that the conflict could spread.
- Thousands of people have been **forced to leave their homes, adding to the millions already displaced by earlier fighting**. This has made an already difficult humanitarian situation even worse.

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WHO ARE M23 REBELS?



- The **M23 (March 23 Movement)** group gets its name from a 2009 peace agreement that ended a previous rebellion.
- The **current rebellion began in 2022**, with M23 accusing the Congolese government of not keeping promises made in that peace deal, such as including Tutsis in the army and government.
- The group mainly represents the Tutsi ethnic group, which has faced persecution in the region.

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- M23 wants to protect Tutsis from violent attacks **by another group called the FDLR, which is made up of Hutus responsible for violence against Tutsis** in both Congo and Rwanda.
 - The **Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)**, or the **Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda**, is a Hutu armed group operating in the **eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**.
- In addition to their political and ethnic concerns, **M23 has also gained control of important mining areas, which generate a lot of money from minerals like coltan.**
This funding helps support their efforts.

WHY IS RWANDA INVOLVED?

- **Rwanda is accused of supporting the M23 rebels, providing them with weapons and soldiers.**
- A **UN report from 2022 suggests Rwanda is involved in the fighting**, although Rwanda denies it.
- The Rwandan government says it's only **protecting itself from the FDLR**, which has long been a **threat to Tutsi communities.**

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- Rwanda also claims that the **Congolese government is working with the FDLR.**
- The conflict between **Tutsi and Hutu groups goes back to the 1994 Rwandan genocide**, when **Hutus killed nearly a million Tutsis.**
- Many of the people involved in the genocide fled to Congo, and some formed the FDLR, continuing their attacks on Tutsis.

WHY ARE THE M23 REBELS FIGHTING?

- The **M23 rebels are fighting because they feel the government has not kept its promises from the 2009 peace deal.**
- These promises included including Tutsis in the military and government, which hasn't happened.
- They also **want to protect Tutsis from attacks by the FDLR.**
- Another major reason for the fighting is **control over the region's valuable minerals, like coltan, cobalt, and gold, which are in high demand worldwide.**

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL IMPACT

- The violence has caused a huge amount of suffering.
- More than a million people have had to leave their homes, and many have sought refuge in **neighboring countries like Uganda and Rwanda.**

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- The destruction of infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools, is making life even harder for those who remain.
- There is a risk that this conflict could escalate into a wider regional war, especially with Rwanda and Burundi involved. Tensions between these countries and others in the region are high because of the instability in eastern Congo.
- **International Response Global organizations like the UN, the EU, and the US have condemned the violence** and called for a ceasefire.
- The UN has sent peacekeeping troops, but the situation remains tense, and diplomatic efforts have struggled to make a lasting impact.
- The ongoing fighting has disrupted Congo's mining industry, which is crucial for both the country's economy and the global market.

CONCLUSION

The conflict in Congo is a complex mix of ethnic tensions, political struggles, and control over valuable resources. M23's rebellion, the failure of peace agreements, and the involvement of neighboring countries like Rwanda and Burundi have made the situation even more dangerous. Despite global efforts to stop the violence, finding a lasting solution remains difficult due to the deep-rooted issues at play.

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VERY SHORT RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS



Overview

- On **1st February 2025**, the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully conducted **three successive flight trials** of the **Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)** off the coast of **Odisha**, at **Chandipur**.
- These trials marked a significant milestone in the development of an **indigenous** air defence system designed to counter threats from aerial targets, particularly **low-flying drones**.

FLIGHT TRIALS & OBJECTIVES

- The flight trials were aimed at testing the **VSHORADS missile system** against **high-speed targets** flying at **very low altitudes**, simulating the characteristics of **low-flying drones**.

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- The primary objective was to demonstrate the system's capability to intercept and destroy targets with **reduced thermal signatures**.
- The system successfully **neutralized drones** and other aerial threats under varying flight conditions.

The trials were conducted in the **final deployment configuration**, with two field operators responsible for:

- **Weapon readiness**
- **Missile firing**
- **Target acquisition**



This configuration ensures that the system is ready for deployment in real-world operational environments.

KEY OUTCOMES OF THE FLIGHT TRIAL

- **Success of All Three Tests:** In all three trials, the VSHORADS missile intercepted and completely destroyed the targets.
- **Pinpoint Accuracy:** The trials demonstrated the system's **precision** in engaging low-flying aerial threats.

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- **Data Capture and Analysis:** Various **range instruments** such as **Telemetry, Electro-Optical Tracking System (EOTS)**, and **Radar** were deployed at the **Integrated Test Range, Chandipur**, to capture flight data.
- The captured data confirmed the **accuracy** of the missile system, establishing its **unique capability** to neutralize **drones** and other aerial threats in different flight conditions.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

- **VSHORADS** is a **Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPADS)** that has been **indigenously developed** by **Research Center Imarat (RCI)**, with collaboration from other DRDO laboratories and development partners.
- The system is designed to provide air defence for the **Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force** against a wide range of aerial threats, especially those coming at low altitudes.
- The system is lightweight, **portable**, and capable of being operated by a single soldier, making it effective in **close-range defence** operations.

SIGNIFICANCE & STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- **Counter to Drone Threats:** The successful trials have validated the system's ability to counter the growing threat of **low-flying drones**, a concern that is becoming increasingly important in modern warfare.

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- **Indigenous Defence Capability:** The development of VSHORADS is a step toward enhancing India's **self-reliance** in defence technology under the "**Atmanirbhar Bharat**" initiative.
- The system strengthens the air defence capabilities of the **Indian Armed Forces** and is critical in providing **close-in protection** against a variety of aerial threats.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

- The successful trials pave the way for **operational induction** of VSHORADS into the Indian Armed Forces.
- With further refinement and integration, the missile system is expected to be a critical asset in India's **air defence strategy**, particularly in dealing with new-age threats such as drones, **loitering munitions**, and other **low-flying aerial targets**.

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MCQs

1. How many of these countries share a boundary with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)?

1. South Sudan
2. Angola
3. Sudan

- (A) Only 1 country shares a boundary with DRC.
- (B) Only 2 countries shares a boundary with DRC.
- (C) All these country share a boundary with DRC.
- (D) None of them share a boundary with DRC

Ans. (B)

2. Which of these minerals are found in DRC?

1. Gold
2. Coltan
3. Cobalt

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- (A) Only 3
- (B) Only 2 & 3
- (C) Only 1 & 2
- (D) All of the above

Ans. (D)

3. Very Short Range Air Defence System is:

- (A) A drone
- (B) A counter drone defence equipment
- (C) A Short Range attack missile.
- (D) None of the above

Ans. (B)

4. Consider the following Assertion & Reasoning statements and mark the correct ones:

Assertion (A): The M23 group is spreading violence in Congo.

Reasoning (R): The demands of the M23 group have been unfulfilled by the government since peace agreement signed in 2009.

- (A) Both A & R are true & R is the correct explanation of A
- (B) Both A & R are true & R is not the correct explanation of A
- (C) A is true R is False
- (D) A is false R is true

Ans. (D)

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