



INTERNATIONAL PEACE INFORMATION SERVICE

WEEKLY BRIEFING 25TH APRIL - 1ST MAY 2013

IPIS is an independent research institute which focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa.

Our studies concern three core themes: arms trade, exploitation of natural resources and corporate social responsibility.

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EDITORIAL

As the UN's [Special Envoy for the Great Lakes](#), Mary Robinson, toured the region this week, the [M23 appeared to be under increasing pressure](#). With [Kampala talks](#) effectively at a stalemate, the M23 has withdrawn its delegates and is reported to be mobilising around Rutshuru and Beni. Unconfirmed rumours state that the group has made a pact with other militias in the area, fuelling concerns that the arrival of the intervention brigade may spark a serious re-escalation of conflict. Nevertheless, the M23 has reportedly seen 87 defections to the MONUSCO demobilisation team since the start of the month, including over 12 officers. The losses appear to have led the M23 to set up positions outside the MONSUCO camp in Kiwanja to ward off would-be defectors, reportedly disaffected by difficult living conditions. Indeed, extortion by the M23 in North Kivu continues to be reported, including the abduction of a hydro plant manager for a 3,000 US dollar ransom. Meanwhile, former M23 elements in Rwanda have reportedly begun the process of renouncing combatant status in favour of refugee status.

Stability in Eastern DRC remains elusive with FARDC offensives continuing against armed groups in Aru Territory ([Province Orientale](#)) and the MDRC reportedly menacing Beni and Oicha in [North Kivu](#).

In the [Central African Republic](#) the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation has prompted a statement of strong concern by the Security Council. Bangui remains plagued by insecurity and there are reports of widespread Seleka abuses against civilians, particularly affecting children. The country's instability is said to have precipitated a devastating spike in elephant poaching. Meanwhile, Tiangaye continues his diplomatic endeavours – this week seeking to repair the CAR's relations with South Africa with a visit to Pretoria.

[Global Witness](#) has just released a report on the abuse of logging permits in Africa, which has been found to seriously undermine efforts to prevent deforestation and illegal logging. The report comes within a week of the group filing criminal charges against one of timber manufacturer [Danzer Group](#)'s senior managers for aiding and abetting human rights violations against a forest community.

The UN has this week officially characterised international wildlife and timber trafficking as serious organised crime.