

The international community has severally accused Rwanda of backing the M23 rebels to capture territory in eastern DRC.

BY ANDREW BAGALA

The United States' deputy ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr Ian McCary accompanied by the US defence attaché, Col Chad Brinton yesterday met Congolese Defence minister Guy Kabombo. They agreed to intensify sharing intelligence as Congolese battle several armed groups including M23 rebels.

"The discussions centred on intensifying military cooperation through intelligence sharing, the implementation of training programmes, and the participation of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in joint military exercises in the coming months," reads a statement by the Congolese Defence Ministry.

The Congolese forces are in an intense battle with M23 rebels in the eastern part of the DRC. Two days ago, the Congolese used drones to strike M23 rebels positions, killing the rebel spokesman, Lt Col Willy Ngoma and his entourage in mineral-rich Rubaya Town.

This month, the DRC government gave the US access to mining sites in areas occupied by North Kivu, especially Rubaya where coltan is mined. Rubaya holds one of the world's largest coltan deposit, which is used to produce tantalum, a key component in the manufacture of electronics.

In a statement yesterday, the M23 rebels said attacks on their positions have intensified despite a ceasefire agreement with the DRC government. "The Congolese people and the international community are invited to take note, with the utmost attention, of the re-

US, DRC to share intel



Fallen M23 rebel group spokesman Willy Ngoma (left) sits outside their position amid conflict between M23 rebels and the Armed Forces of the DR Congo on January 29, 2025.

PHOTO/REUTERS

peated violations of the ceasefire perpetrated by the Kinshasa regime. This gravely undermines de-escalation efforts and impose a dynamic of total war against the Alliance Fleuve Congo/Mouvement du 23 Mars (AFC/M23)," the M23 statement reads.

The West and international community has severally accused Rwanda of backing the M23 rebels to capture territory in eastern DRC. On December

AGREEMENT

Since the signing of a deal between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the US, the latter has doubled down pressure on Rwanda and the M23 rebels. The US accuses Rwanda of carrying out military operations in the DRC, an allegation Kigali neither denies nor confirms.

4, 2025, the presidents of Rwanda and DRC signed a US-brokered agreement dubbed the Washington Accord that would end the conflict in eastern DRC,

with M23 rebels obliged to withdraw.

Last year, the US and the DRC signed a strategic partnership in which the Washington committed to cooperate with Kinshasa "in security, defence, and protection of critical infrastructure, in safeguarding the integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's territory and strategic mineral reserves, in promoting regional stability, and in supporting peace and security across Central Africa, consistent with applicable international law and the domestic frameworks of both parties."

Under the US pressure, the M23 rebels were forced to withdraw from a Congolese Township, Uvira, they had captured.