

CONGO-RAWAND SIGNED PEACE DEAL: INTERNATIONAL RELATION

NEWS: Rwanda, DR Congo sign peace deal in U.S. after rebel sweep

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo signed a peace deal in Washington D.C. on June 27, 2025, to end decades of conflict in eastern Congo, focusing on troop withdrawal, joint security, and economic cooperation in the mineral-rich region. The agreement, brokered by the Trump administration, also aims to attract Western investment and stabilize the volatile area.

Context and Overview

- On June 27, 2025, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) signed a landmark peace agreement in Washington D.C.
- The deal, brokered by the Trump administration, aims to end decades-long conflict in eastern Congo, which has resulted in massive displacement, deaths, and instability in the mineral-rich region.

Key Highlights of the Peace Agreement

- **Troop Withdrawal:** Rwanda agreed to withdraw its troops from eastern Congo within 90 days as part of the peace process.
- **Economic Integration:** A new regional economic framework will be established to boost trade and investment between both countries, with a focus on securing mineral supply chains involving cobalt, copper, and gold.
- **Penalties:** U.S. President Donald Trump warned of severe penalties against either country if they violated the agreement's terms.
- **Security Mechanism:** Both countries will set up a joint security coordination mechanism within 30 days to tackle armed groups like the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda).
- **International Mediation:** Parallel talks are ongoing in Doha to address the M23 rebel issue, which is crucial for advancing the economic and security components of the peace deal.

Background of the Ongoing Conflict and Humanitarian Crisis

- **Human Impact:** Eastern Congo has witnessed thousands of deaths and displacement of hundreds of thousands due to the ongoing conflict.
- **Resource Exploitation:** Mineral-rich areas in eastern Congo have been at the center of violence, with armed groups exploiting cobalt, copper, gold, and other resources to finance conflicts.

Origins of the Conflict

- **Rwandan Genocide (1994):** Around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by extremist Hutu forces. Many Hutu militants fled to Congo (then Zaire), destabilizing the region.
- **Hutu Militias in Congo:** Armed Hutu refugees in eastern Congo posed a security threat to Rwanda, causing rising tensions between the two nations.
- **First Congo War (1996–1997):** Rwanda intervened militarily, backing Laurent-Désiré Kabila to overthrow Mobutu Sese Seko, ending in 1997 but laying the ground for further wars.
- **Second Congo War (1998–2003):** Known as “Africa’s World War,” involved multiple African countries; Rwanda backed rebel groups, citing threats from Hutu militants, while Congo received support from Angola, Zimbabwe, and others. The war caused millions of deaths.

M23 Rebellion and Armed Groups

- **Formation:** M23 emerged in 2012, composed largely of former CNDP soldiers, many of them Tutsis.
- **Activity:** Active in North Kivu province, with an estimated 8,000 fighters, they seized key cities and resource-rich areas.
- **Objective:** Claim to protect Congolese Tutsis and minorities from Hutu rebel groups.
- **Support Allegations:** Rwanda is accused by the UN and DRC of providing weapons, training, and troops to M23.

Geography and Overview of Rwanda

- **Location:** Landlocked country in east-central Africa, part of the Great Rift Valley region.
- **Borders:** Shares borders with Burundi (south), Tanzania (east), Uganda (north), and DRC (west).
- **Terrain:** Known as the “land of a thousand hills,” characterized by hilly and mountainous landscapes including the Albertine Rift and Virunga Mountains.
- **Rivers:** ~80% of rivers drain into the Nile Basin (via Lake Victoria), ~20% into the Congo Basin (via Rusizi River). Major rivers include Nile, Congo, Kagera, Nyabarongo, Ruzizi, Luhwa, Akanyaru.
- **Lakes:** Lake Kivu (bordering DRC) is the largest; others include Burera, Cohana, Ruhondo, Muhazi, Rweru, Ihema.
- **Population:** Predominantly Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups; high population density (~1,000 people per square mile).

Geography and Overview of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- **Location:** Central Africa; second-largest country in Africa after Algeria.

- **Borders:** North - Central African Republic and South Sudan; East - Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania; West - Republic of the Congo and Angola; South - Zambia.
- **Coastline:** Has a small Atlantic Ocean coastline.
- **Climate:** Tropical, with the Equator crossing the country twice.
- **Rivers:** Dominated by the Congo River, one of the world's deepest and second-longest in Africa.
- **Minerals:** Rich in cobalt, copper, coltan, gold, coal, iron ore, and lithium. Home to extensive tropical peatlands (with Brazil and Indonesia).

Strategic Importance of the Peace Deal

- Aims to stabilize eastern Congo, which has suffered from decades of conflict.
- Seeks to ensure secure mineral supply chains vital for global industries including electronics and electric vehicles.
- Intended to attract Western investment into the region and reduce China's dominance over mineral trade.
- Could pave the way for longer-term peace, security, and economic cooperation in Central Africa.

Conclusion

- The agreement marks a significant attempt to address security and economic challenges in the conflict-ridden region.
- Effective implementation and addressing lingering rebel threats, particularly from M23 and FDLR, will be crucial for sustainable peace and development.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/rwanda-dr-congo-sign-peace-deal-in-us-after-rebel-sweep/article69748728.ece>