



Rwandan Refugees Watch – Weekly Briefing

1. Forced Transfers of Rwandan Refugees From M23-Controlled Areas Raise Alarm Over Possible War Crimes

2. Rwandan Refugees Must Be Given a Voice in Peace Negotiations

3. Growing Human Rights Concerns in Rwanda: HRW Highlights Widespread Abuses.

All For Rwanda is a global movement committed to supporting Rwandan refugees, defending their rights, and working toward dignified solutions that will one day allow their safe and massive return home. Through this weekly newsletter, we share key updates on Rwanda and its region, the situation of refugee communities, and a snapshot of our own actions. All of this is guided by a clear vision: a better Rwanda, a peaceful Great Lakes region, and a future where prosperity is shared by all. Our goal is to keep you informed, engaged, and part of a community that believes in justice, protection, and hope for Rwandan refugees worldwide.

1. .Forced Transfers of Rwandan Refugees From M23-Controlled Areas Raise Alarm Over Possible War Crimes

New reports from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reveal deeply troubling patterns involving the **forced transfer of Rwandan refugees and Congolese civilians** from territories controlled by the M23 armed group into Rwanda. These movements described by survivors as **night raids, intimidation, destruction of documents, and family separations** raise serious concerns about possible **war crimes** and the coercive role of an armed group widely understood to be backed by Rwanda.

According to testimonies gathered by independent investigators, these transfers

cannot be considered voluntary. Refugees report being threatened, rounded up during the night, and transported across the border against their will. Human Rights Watch has warned that M23's abuses targeting Hutu communities may amount to **ethnic cleansing**, further heightening the urgency of international scrutiny.

Because Rwanda is reported to exert operational and strategic influence over M23, the **forced displacement of Rwandan refugees** could constitute a grave violation of the **Geneva Conventions**, which strictly prohibit the deportation or forced transfer of protected populations.

All for Rwanda's Position

All for Rwanda expresses **deep alarm** at the targeting, intimidation, and forced return of Rwandan refugees individuals who fled persecution and are entitled to international protection. These actions represent an escalating threat to refugee safety and regional stability.

We urgently call on the international community including **UN member states, the African Union, EAC mechanisms, and global human rights institutions** to:

- ✓ Launch an **independent, impartial investigation** into the forced transfers;
- ✓ Ensure **immediate protection measures** for Rwandan refugees at risk of forced return;
- ✓ Demand accountability for those responsible for unlawful deportations and rights abuses;
- ✓ Prevent any further coercive transfers from M23-controlled areas.

The safety of Rwandan refugees and the integrity of international refugee protection norms depends on swift, coordinated global action.

Reference

The New Humanitarian, “*UN faces scrutiny over refugee transfers from rebel-held DRC to Rwanda*”

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2025/11/13/un-faces-scrutiny-over-refugee-transfers-rebel-held-dr-congo-rwanda>

2. Community Cries for Justice After Church and School Destruction.

Recent peace discussions between **the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** and the **M23 rebel group** held in Doha with facilitation from Qatar have raised international attention as the region searches for a path toward stability. According to *The New Arab*, M23 leaders and the DRC government have begun indirect negotiations, with regional actors urging a political solution to the conflict.

However, while these talks seek to address root causes of violence in eastern Congo, **a critical group has been completely excluded: Rwandan refugees.**

Why Rwandan Refugees Must Be Included

For more than two decades, over 200,000 Rwandan refugees have lived in DRC and other African countries after fleeing political repression, intimidation, enforced disappearances, and persecution in Rwanda. Yet these refugees continue to be:

- ✓ **Wrongly labelled as collaborators of armed groups,**
- ✓ **Used as political justification for Rwanda's repeated involvement in DRC,**
- ✓ **Denied the right to speak for themselves** in any formal peace process.

Multiple reports including those from Human Rights Watch, UN experts, and The New Humanitarian show that the **Government of Rwanda continues to exploit the refugee issue to justify military actions and destabilisation** in eastern DRC. This manipulation leaves Rwandan refugees vulnerable, silent, and exposed to forced repatriations, intimidation, and statelessness.

All for Rwanda's Position

All for Rwanda strongly calls for the Doha peace framework to formally include the voices of Rwandan refugees. Their participation is essential for four key reasons:

1. To explain the real causes of their exile

Refugees must be able to share testimonies of political persecution, repression, and threats that forced them to flee Rwanda.

2. To counter Rwanda's political narrative

The Rwandan government frequently portrays refugees as “security threats” to justify interference in DRC yet most refugees have no link to armed groups.

3. To expose ongoing abuses

Including forced repatriations, identity manipulation, family separation, and threats issues highlighted in reports like *The New Humanitarian* (2024).

4. To ensure the refugee crisis is treated as a political and human rights issue

Not as a military problem that can be solved through force or secret deals.

A Call to the International Community

All for Rwanda calls upon **Qatar, the United Nations, the African Union, ICGLR, EAC, and key diplomatic partners** to:

Establish a formal consultation mechanism for Rwandan refugees within the Doha process.

Peace cannot be durable or legitimate if those whose rights and lives are directly impacted and who are routinely used as political scapegoats are denied a seat at the table.

Reference: *The New Arab – “DR Congo, M23 rebel group to hold indirect talks in Doha”* (<https://www.newarab.com/news/dr-congo-m23-rebel-group-hold-indirect-talks-doha>)

3. Growing Human Rights Concerns in Rwanda: HRW Highlights Widespread Abuses.

Recent findings from **Human Rights Watch (HRW)**, submitted ahead of Rwanda’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), paint a troubling picture of the country’s human rights situation. HRW reports that Rwanda continues to engage in **widespread abuses**, including torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and systematic impunity for security forces. According to the submission, critics of the government—both inside the country and abroad—face severe intimidation, including threats, arrests, torture, and harassment, creating a widespread climate of fear.

HRW further emphasizes **transnational repression**, noting that families of government critics who live abroad are often targeted inside Rwanda. This strategy silences dissent not only domestically but across the global Rwandan diaspora. Parallel reports from other independent media highlight a growing number of **abductions and disappearances by unidentified assailants**, with strong indications of security-service involvement and almost no transparent investigations or accountability.

All for Rwanda’s Concern

These persistent patterns of repression are eroding the foundations of democratic governance in Rwanda. Political opposition is suppressed, civic space is shrinking, and independent oversight bodies lack the autonomy to ensure justice for victims. The targeting of activists, journalists, and ordinary citizens—both within Rwanda and across borders—discourages public participation and undermines basic freedoms.

All for Rwanda calls on the international community to act urgently by:

- ✓ Demanding the release of **Victoire Ingabire** and all political prisoners.
- ✓ Insisting on **independent and credible investigations** into torture,

- ✓ disappearances, and transnational repression.
- ✓ Strengthening support for civil society and media freedom in Rwanda.
- ✓ Conditioning international cooperation on measurable human rights reforms.

The situation requires immediate attention. Silence from the international community risks enabling continued abuses and deepening fear among Rwandans who seek justice and democratic space.

References

Human Rights Watch (HRW) – Submission to Rwanda’s UPR

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/14/rwanda-universal-periodic-review-submission>

Human Rights Watch – Reports on Transnational Repression

<https://www.hrw.org>

IPP Media – Reports on Abductions and Disappearances in Rwanda

<https://www.ippmedia.com>.