

Around 11 deaths in DR Congo fighting: UN

By: AFP

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Around 11 people were killed after fresh fighting between government forces and a militia in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations said Monday.

UN spokesman Eduardo del Buey said the APCLS militia suffered the reported fatalities, while a soldier from the DR Congo army was injured during the skirmishes in Kitchanga, in North Kivu province.

The situation in the area was reported as calm on Monday, but approximately 1,500 civilians remained under the protection of MONUSCO, the UN's peacekeeping mission in DR Congo, which has a base in Kitchanga.

The APCLS is an armed group of the ethnic majority Hunde under the command of Janvier Buingo Karairi.

The latest fighting comes after lethal clashes between DR Congo soldiers and the militia in February and March which left 80 people dead and forced thousands of civilians to flee.

Del Buey said the UN was still awaiting official notification from Kinshasa of actions to be taken against two army battalions accused of carrying out at least 126 rapes as government forces retreated during an assault by M23 rebels in the region last November.

The UN last week issued a one-week deadline for the Congo government to act on the crimes, during a meeting between UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous and DR Congo Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda last week.

Del Buey said the deadline was due to expire later Monday at midnight.

"While a number of appropriate actions have reportedly been taken by the Congolese government, MONUSCO has still to receive official notification of these actions," Del Buey said.

The United Nations has threatened to stop working with the troops accused of the crimes unless those responsible are sanctioned.

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