



BALANCE



of the a.s.b.l.

Congolese Initiative for Justice and Peace

WEEKLY INFORMATION PAPER ON THE SITUATION OF JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PEACE IN SOUTH KIVU N° 257 of
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MEMBERS OF THE CNP SUPPRESS A PEACEFUL PROTEST AGAINST THE TAKING OF GOMA BY M23

What is the real target?

The morning of Wednesday, 21 November 2012, youths on motorbikes and on foot mobilized and protested in Bukavu in the province of South Kivu against the taking of Goma yesterday by M23. The protest was suppressed by members of the Congolese National Police (PNC). Some protesters chanted anti-government slogans.

During the day on Tuesday, 20 November 2012, everyone was surprised to learn that the city of Goma, the capital of the province of North Kivu in the DRC, fell into the hands of the M23. The position of the Congolese government and MONUSCO were not clear to those of us who followed the events. We had to wait until the evening to reassure ourselves of the situation.

According to the information in our possession, M23 have officially installed themselves in North Kivu. They are organizing themselves on the ground in the absence of the government and the official army. Part of the population has been displaced and those that remain live in fear. MONUSCO is also there.

Some radio stations continue to broadcast. Actors of civil society are not visible. Maybe they are still observing the situation and considering their strategies. Some of them are in hiding, others have been relocated...

Given the context, civil society in South Kivu launched a radio broadcast to invite people to march this morning. The march will begin at the MONUSCO office, where a memorandum will be delivered. The Mayor of Bukavu has also broadcast a message to stop the protest.

It seems that this was a decision of the Security Council in the province, which is associated with several members of the civil society of South Kivu.

At the same time, we have learned that the Minister of National Defense currently visiting Bukavu has had meetings with some members of the civil society of South Kivu on the way to behave with respect to the situation. Also, members of civil society had concerns with respect to this issue.

In principle, all these precautions should help civil society, the city, the province, and the national government to prevent skirmishes between the police and the population. Instead of directing weapons at enemies, the tendency is to direct them towards the population and the innocents.

It is difficult to reconcile the balance sheet at a time when the real target is not well known but instead is contemplated. The police used tear gas, batons, stones...in their vehicles, we could see that civilians were being trampled by certain policemen who were bringing them forcibly to their offices.

This is why the Congolese Initiative for Justice and Peace calls for caution, civic responsibility, and humane methods of action at a time when the country is in difficulty.

ICJP demands that the voice of law and justice overcomes force for a lasting peace at all levels.

ICJP recommends that all forces propose agendas to help the government, including the fight against impunity.

While waiting for the government and the police, army and other security services to restore the public trust, the ICJP reiterates its recommendation to the public to demand more security and for authorities at all levels to collaborate with state services for the effectiveness of such security.

Bukavu, 21 November 2012

ICJP

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No to Impunity, Yes to Justice for Peace