

## **Uganda: Fleeing Congolese Refugees Allege Rape and Killings**

**By Patson Baraire**

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The rebels say they are fighting to make the Government uphold a past peace agreement and that they are prepared to take the regional capital. Congo nationals fleeing the war in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have alleged that there is widespread rape, mass killings, and looting in the towns that have been captured by the rebels loyal to Gen. Bosco Ntaganda.

The Chairman of Kiwanja town near Rusthuru, which was captured Sunday evening, Ndorera Bilamba confirmed the allegation after he and his entire family of eight crossed to Uganda through the border town of Ishasha the same day.

"We are running away for our lives are in great danger since the rebels are not sparing anything they come across including raping our women and looting our property," Bilamba speaking in French told New Vision through an interpreter.

Bilamba said that he walked 65km from his home in Kiwanja after it became clear that the rebels were heading northwards from Rusthuru to capture more areas after the Congolese soldiers fled to Uganda.

The flight of the Congolese soldiers out of DRC left the civilian population at the mercy of the marauding rebels.

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Two Ugandan women who were in Congo to sell their merchandise confirmed that the situation in Congo was tense and they could not be allowed to continue to Kiwanja where they normally sell their fish.

"We were told that we would risk our lives if we continued to Kiwanja because it would fall to the rebels any time," one of the women only identified as Namagembe Faith said.

At Ishasha border post the Uganda authorities led by Kanungu Resident District Commissioner, Ben Rullonga on July 9 received 81 Congolese nationals who escaped to Uganda and were forwarded to Nyakabande Refugee transit center in Kisoro where they can be better managed

But another group of 260 who arrived in the evening are still at Ishasha border post.

Rullonga asked the fleeing Congolese to make sure that they remain in the provided areas because other criminals from Congo may join them and cause chaos in Uganda.

"We are aware that some wrong elements want to use the advantage of refugees fleeing to Uganda to start criminal activities here but our security is on the lookout. We are asking the refugees to remain in camps so that they are not inconvenienced," He said.

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