

Rwanda

From the joint interviews of 11 self-declared defectors from M23 forces, the following significant elements emerged:

- a. From the moment the subjects reported to MONUSCO premises on 20 May 2012, no fact-finding mission was deployed to verify the genuineness and accuracy of their testimonies. No Rwandan official was contacted to assist in such verifications. Therefore, it was objectively impossible to establish:
 - That the subjects were Rwandan citizens residing in Rwanda.
 - That the subjects were conscripted from Mudende, Rubavu, Western Province. (This was not verified in their alleged communities of origin)
 - That their alleged itinerary on Rwandan territory from Mudende to Runyoni was accurate, considering that they, self-admittedly, never used the same route before.
 - That their alleged recruiters could be identified as Rwandan citizens with possible links with the RDF or the Rwandan government
 - That their alleged itinerary from M23-controlled area to MONUSCO position in Rugari and the time-frame involved, were technically conceivable.

- b. Not a single element in the subject's testimonies supports the claim of any direct involvement of Rwandan Government officials.
 - The subjects claimed that they were recruited by two civilians (in plain clothes), transported in civilian vehicles. No government official, vehicle or facilities are referred to at any point.
 - They did not encounter any uniformed personnel until they met armed individuals wearing FARDC uniforms in the Virunga National Park. No RDF uniform is mentioned at any point.
 - The subjects received boxes of ammunition, petrol and tents from these FARDC-uniformed individuals in the forest

- c. Several elements in the subjects' testimonies are self-defeating, contradictory or highly dubious. These include the following:
 - That they were conscripted between February and April 2012. Yet it is a fact that M23 did not have any presence in the Runyoni area until second week of May 2012. Runyoni was still under full control of FARDC.
 - That all subjects, despite having been recruited on different dates and by different individuals claim to have used the exact same route, namely Mudende – Bigogwe Market – Ruhengeri - Hotel Bishokoro- Virunga National Park – Runyoni.
 - That they were conscripted by two unarmed civilians who somehow managed to shepherd and control 23 recruits from their home area all the way to Virunga National Park without any means of coercion.

- That the subjects, despite having recently gone through military training and served as M23 combatants were unable to provide elementary details on their training: weapon details, identity of instructors, identity of M23 junior or senior commanders under whom they served.
- That a Congolese government official (Mugwata Locality Chief) confronted with M23 fighters on 19th May 2012, chose to hand them over to MONUSCO rather than the nearest FARDC position.
- That the number of 12 conscripts from Mudende whom the 11 defectors claimed to have left behind in Runyoni surprisingly corresponds to another group of so called "Rwandan defectors" who are reportedly under FARDC custody. It is a dubious coincidence that the 23 alleged conscripted Rwandans would all find their way to Goma through MONUSCO and FARDC.