



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

GENOCIDE EMERGENCY
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
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Genocide Watch is issuing a Genocide Emergency Alert for North and South Kivu and Ituri provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Banyamulenge, Hema, and other groups face a grave risk of genocide ([Stage 9](#)). They are targeted by the false narrative that “Bantu” people are the “indigenous” inhabitants of the DRC, while “[Nilotic](#)” people are “invaders” from the Great Rift Valley. The same narrative was used to justify the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda.

The Banyamulenge are closely related to the Tutsi of Rwanda. Their citizenship has been contested in the DRC since independence in 1960, despite records of their presence in the Congo [in the 19th century](#). The Banyamulenge sided with Rwanda during the Congo Wars (1996-2003). They have been attacked by Mai Mai militias and by Hutus who fled to the DRC after the genocide in Rwanda.

The Banyamulenge have been impoverished by large-scale cattle raiding in the Fizi, Itombwe and Uvira regions since 2016. The Congolese army (FARDC) may support attacks on the Banyamulenge.

The [United Nations \(U.N.\) reports](#) at least 110,000 Banyamulenge were displaced in South Kivu from October 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020. Hate speech has incited massacres of the Banyamulenge by militias from the Bafuliro, Babembe, and Banyindu ethnic groups. The attackers are allied with Hutu militias from Burundi. They are closing in on Minembwe, where thousands of displaced Banyamulenge live.

Lendu militias have also targeted the Hema for being “[Nilotic](#),” based on the same “indigenous vs. invader” narrative used to justify genocidal massacres of the Banyamulenge. A [U.N. report](#) in January 2020 said 701 Hema were killed in attacks between December 2017 and September 2019. Hema women have one of the highest rates of rape in the world.

The “indigenous vs. invader” narrative has also been used to foment attacks on [Kasaians of Luba origin](#). In Ituri province, [the U.N. reports](#) that at least 531 civilians were killed by armed groups between October 2019 and May 2020. The hunter-gatherer [Batwa](#) also face severe persecution.

The rebel Rwandan Hutu militia, the [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda](#), has also massacred the Banyamulenge, Hema, and other Kivu civilians. North Kivu’s insecurity problem has been compounded by attacks on civilians by a Ugandan exile group, the [Allied Democratic Forces](#).

Despite the presence of the largest U.N. peacekeeping operation in the world, MONUSCO, the eastern DRC remains an area of chaos, no effective government, rampant corruption, Ebola and AIDS epidemics, and total insecurity for its people. It is a case study in anarchy. Until the DRC establishes effective government, the Kivus and Ituri will remain a human rights catastrophe.

Genocide Watch urges the U.N. and the DRC government to take forceful action to stop the persecution and extermination of the DRC’s minority groups. The [lack of state security](#) in the DRC has provided fertile ground for scores of murderous militias. They are threats to international peace and security. Defeating them demands disciplined, forceful action by the DRC government, U.N., African Union, and African states in the region.