

Ndosho Hospital Overwhelmed: Civilian Casualty Surge in Goma

Ngosho, Goma, North Kivu, DRC

1°40'43.91"S, 29°13'28.44"E

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Incident Date: 1 October 2023 – 29 February 2024, with acute surge in February 2024
Fatalities: 342
Injured: 112

Aggressor(s): March 23 Movement (M23) and Rwanda RDF

Victim(s) Profile: ~40% civilian, ~60% local militias

In February 2024, CBCA Ndosho Hospital in Goma, the only facility in the city capable of life-saving surgery at the time, received roughly six times its normal patient load, forcing it to double its capacity and to transfer overflow patients by boat across Lake Kivu to the ICRC-supported provincial hospital in Bukavu. According to ICRC staff on the ground, approximately 40% of these patients were civilians wounded by heavy artillery used in urban areas, including near displacement camps on Goma's outskirts: a marked shift from earlier in the conflict, when the majority of casualties in the region were combatants.

Roger Mburano, the ICRC's surgical project manager at Ndosho Hospital, said the facility had handled around 60 patients a month through 2023, but recorded 342 cases in February 2024 alone. Between 1 October 2023 and 29 February 2024, 112 people wounded in clashes were transferred from Ndosho to the Bukavu provincial hospital, with the ICRC using boat transport across Lake Kivu to relieve pressure on Goma's facilities as road routes remained contested or cut. ICRC director-general Robert Mardini, visiting the country, described treating an infant wounded by shrapnel and characterized the influx as marking a new and troubling turn in the conflict. Medical staff described a range of injuries consistent with both small-arms fire and explosive weapons used in populated areas.

This period coincides with documented strikes on populated neighborhoods on Goma's western outskirts: Human Rights Watch documented a 122mm rocket, attributed to Rwandan and M23 forces, that struck less than 100 meters from Nengapeta primary school in the Mugunga neighbourhood on 2 February 2024, injuring a man and a young girl and damaging houses – illustrative of the type of urban artillery use the ICRC identifies as driving the Ndosho surge, though it is one strike among many rather than the sole cause of the February caseload.

- Figures (342 cases; 112 transfers; ~40% civilian/artillery share) are drawn directly from named ICRC staff statements to the ICRC's own newsroom and are internally consistent with independent wire reporting (Xinhua) describing the same hospital as overwhelmed in mid-February 2024.
- The 40% civilian-artillery figure describes the patient population at one hospital in one month; it should not be extrapolated as a citywide or conflict-wide casualty ratio without further sourcing.
- This hospital again became severely overwhelmed during the January 2025 capture of Goma, per subsequent ICRC reporting – that later surge is a distinct event from the February 2024 one described here and should be treated as a separate incident if documented.

References

“DRC: the influx of civilians wounded by heavy weapons overwhelms hospitals in the Kivus,” ICRC Newsroom, 6 March 2024, <https://www.icrcnewsroom.org/story/en/765/drc-the-influx-of-civilians-wounded-by-heavy-weapons-overwhelms-hospitals-in-the-kivus>.

“Healthcare overwhelmed, economy struggles in eastern DR Congo amid escalating conflict,” Xinhua, 17 February 2024, <https://english.news.cn/20240217/2774653d25bd488b861d85e080e18b7a/c.html>.

“DR Congo: Rwandan Forces, M23 Rebels Shell Civilians,” Human Rights Watch, 26 September 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/26/dr-congo-rwandan-forces-m23-rebels-shell-civilians>.