

Unburied: The Rubona Hill and Birambizo Body-Disposal Pattern in the Bukombo Corridor

Bwito Chiefdom, Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu, DRC

1°10'08.4"S, 29°08'02"E

Published: 16 July 2026 by DRC Desk

Incident Date: 1996-Present

Fatalities: UNK

Injured: UNK

Victim(s) Profile: Civilian and local militias

Aggressor(s): Multiple over time: AFDL/RPA forces (1996–97); M23, in the context of recurrent clashes with FARDC and Wazalendo self-defense forces (2023–present)

This is a recurring pattern rather than a single event: because clashes between M23 and local militias in the Bukombo-Rutshuru corridor occur frequently and with little warning, civilian and combatant bodies are often left unrecovered, and are unable to be buried in a safe or dignified manner. Bodies are instead left at religious and health sites. Rubona Hill and its adjacent Catholic church are named as a recurring site for this, attributed to the hill's strategic location along local transit routes.

Rubona Hill sits within the wider Bukombo groupement of Bwito Chiefdom, Rutshuru Territory, the same administrative unit as the two dated killings reported separately. Birambizo, cited elsewhere in reporting on this area as the chef-lieu (administrative and religious center) of Bukombo groupement, hosts both a Catholic parish and the Birambizo General Referral Hospital; a July 2025 OCHA situation report notes that displaced residents fleeing fighting in Bukombo have sought refuge at this same hospital and parish,

corroborating the source page's identification of these sites as focal points during periods of violence.

- No specific date, named casualties, or independently verified count of unburied bodies is available for this pattern; it should be treated as a documented practice rather than a discrete, citable incident.
- No independently sourced GPS coordinates for Rubona Hill itself were identified in this review. It should be geolocated (ideally via satellite imagery cross-referenced with the Catholic parish structure described) before being used for mapping or evidentiary purposes.
- The pattern is corroborated in general terms (recurrent displacement to Birambizo's hospital and parish during clashes) by a July 2025 OCHA report on the wider Bwito chiefdom, though that report does not itself describe unburied remains.







Catholic Church, Rubona

References

- “Rutshuru: l'accès des populations à leurs champs demeure restreint... (OCHA),” Actualite.cd, 15 July 2025,
<https://actualite.cd/2025/07/15/rutshuru-laces-des-populations-leurs-champs-demeure-restreint-cette-situation-aggrave>.
- “RDC: à Rutshuru, l'armée s'empare de la localité de Bukombo...,” Actualite.cd, 12 March 2021,
<https://actualite.cd/2021/03/12/rdc-rutshuru-larmee-sempare-de-la-localite-de-bukombo-apres-son-occupation-pendant-17>.