

## DR Congo Rebel Nkunda arrested

By [Global Research](#)

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The leader of a Tutsi rebel group based in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been arrested in neighbouring Rwanda, the command of a Rwandan-Congolese joint force says.

Laurent Nkunda, who is head of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), was captured after he tried to resist an operation by Congolese-Rwandan forces.

“The joint operations command ... informs the public that the ex-general Laurent Nkunda was arrested on Thursday, January 22 at 2230 hours while he was fleeing on Rwandan territory after he had resisted our troops at Bunagana with three battalions,” a Congolese-Rwandan official statement said on Friday.

Nkunda’s CNDP has led a Tutsi rebellion in eastern DR Congo since 2004.

The Congolese government welcomed the news of Nkunda’s arrest by the joint force, which is tasked with hunting down Rwandan Hutu fighters based in DR Congo.

“Talks are under way ... I am sure that today the government of Congo will connect with the government of Rwanda to see how Nkunda can be presented to Congolese authorities,” Mende Omalanga, DR Congo’s communications minister, told Al Jazeera.

“When you are implicated in mass killings, such as in the case of Nkunda ... you must respond to the judges of our country.”

Kinshasa has an arrest warrant against Nkunda and accuses him of war crimes in the eastern province of South Kivu, which CNDP forces captured in June 2004.

Amini Kakule, a Congolese journalist based in the east of the DR Congo, told Al Jazeera that news of Nkunda’s arrest came as a surprise.

He said it was not clear yet whether the renegade general would be extradited by the Rwandan government to Kinshasa.

‘Bleak future’

“Nothing has been announced; nothing has been declared at the moment,” he said.

Al Jazeera’s Yvonne Ndege, reporting from Dungu in eastern DR Congo, said the future for Nkunda “looks very bleak”.

“He is in the hands of the Rwandan military who are going to face increasing pressure to hand him over to the Congolese. When that does happens, he will face charges of war

crimes in the Congolese capital Kinshasa," she said.

"The evidence against Nkunda is great. I am sure he will be found guilty and he is likely to spend a very long time in prison."

More than 3,500 Rwandan troops have crossed into DR Congo in recent days to work alongside Congolese government forces trying to disarm members of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), another rebel group.

The FDLR, which emerged in the wake of the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus, is commonly seen as the cause of more than a decade of instability in east DR Congo.

The CNDP has in the past claimed that the Congolese government has not done enough to protect Tutsis living in the east of the country.

#### Defections

Late last year, Nkunda led his forces in an offensive against Congolese government forces in North Kivu province.

More than a quarter of a million civilians fled their homes to escape the fighting.

But in recent days several senior CNDP commanders have defected and joined the ranks of Congolese forces, saying that their war against Kinshasa has ended.

Bosco Ntaganda claims to have taken over as the leader of the CNDP and says he has directed his fighters to work alongside the Rwandan-Congolese joint effort against the FDLR.

Fighters loyal to Nkunda, who has not commented on news of last week's defections, have been accused of war crimes by international human rights groups.

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