

DRC turns to SA for help in fighting rebels

The Democratic Republic of Congo has asked for South Africa's help in resolving conflict in the east of the country, where a United Nations report has fingered Rwanda and Uganda for supporting rebels.

Congolese Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda hoped his country's close relations with South Africa would help them face common security challenges, he told reporters before meeting his South African counterpart Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.

"I am referring here to the security in the eastern DRC where we hope to arrive at specific results with the help of South Africa," Tshibanda said in the South African capital Pretoria, without giving any more details.

Eastern DR Congo has been in the grip of fresh unrest since the eruption of a rebellion launched by the Congolese Revolutionary Army (ARC), formerly known as the M23.

The group, formed by army mutineers, has been accused by rights groups of raping women and girls and carrying out summary executions as it battles the regular army.

It was formed in May by former fighters in an ethnic Tutsi rebel group that was integrated into the military under a 2009 peace deal whose terms the mutineers claim were never fully implemented.

A confidential United Nations report said Rwanda and Uganda are arming and supporting the rebels. Both deny the accusations.

Tshibanda spoke at the start of regular trade talks between DRC and South Africa, ahead of a meeting between President Joseph Kabila and South Africa's President Jacob Zuma on Tuesday.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge