

Congo protesters burn US and Belgian flags, target Western embassies

KINSHASA, Feb 12 (Reuters) – Police in Democratic Republic of Congo fired tear gas on Monday to disperse protesters who burned tyres and U.S. and Belgian flags near Western embassies and U.N. offices in the capital Kinshasa, angry about insecurity in eastern Congo.

The protesters, seizing on a new tactic by targeting embassies, say the West supports neighbouring Rwanda, which is accused of backing the Tutsi-led M23 rebellion whose advance is threatening the strategic city of Goma in the east.

Rwanda has denied the accusations. Congo, Western governments including the United States and Belgium, and a United Nations expert group say the rebel group benefits from Rwandan support.

Despite security being stepped up after U.N. staff and vehicles were attacked on Saturday, groups of protesters gathered at the U.S. and French embassies and the offices of the United Nations mission in Congo known as MONUSCO.

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