

## 12 Congolese Militias Agree To Ceasefire

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A dozen pro-government militias in the DR Congo's Sud-Kivu province have agreed to stop fighting and will start disarming at the weekend, a top provincial official said Thursday.

"The disengagement of these troops will begin in (Sud-Kivu's capital) Bukavu on Sunday in the presence of Defence Minister Charles Mwando Nsimba," the deputy governor Jean-Claude Kibala said, following accords signed late Wednesday.

The militias, which include several tribal Mai-Mai groups and total more than 50,000 men, will go to special centres before being disarmed following years of conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Kibala said.

However, one of the main militias in Kivu, the Federalist Republican Forces, did not sign the accord, added the deputy governor, but talks were under way.

The militias decided to disarm after a top Congolese rebel leader, Laurent Nkunda, was captured in Rwanda last month. His force has held sway over tracts of the north and south Kivu provinces.

Most of the commanders of his group, the National Congress for the Defence of the People, have abandoned Nkunda and the CNDP has become a political party.

On Sunday it signed the basis of a peace pact due to be validated this week by mediators in Nairobi.