

Congo gives UN council 'proof' of Rwanda incursion

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By Louis Charbonneau

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Democratic Republic of Congo on Friday gave the U.N. Security Council nearly three dozen photographs which it said supported its accusation that Rwandan government soldiers invaded and attacked eastern Congo this week.

Rwanda has denied making an incursion into Congolese territory but U.N. peacekeepers in Congo, known as MONUC, are investigating the allegation that Rwandan army troops crossed into North Kivu province to help insurgents led by renegade Tutsi General Laurent Nkunda.

The 34 photographs, obtained by Reuters, showed weapons Congo says it recovered at the site of the attack, along with ammunition, Rwandan money, a Rwandan military medical insurance card, a military satchel labeled "RWANDA DEFENCE FORCES" and other items.

In addition to the photographs, Congo's U.N. Ambassador Atoki Ileka sent a letter to Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yesui, the president of the Security Council this month, reiterating Kinshasa's fear that Rwanda may be planning a major attack and asking the council to pass a resolution condemning Rwanda.

It was not possible to confirm the origin the items shown in the photographs, some of which might raise questions. The medical insurance card had expired at the end of 2007 and the birthday of its 22-year-old holder was January 1.

Several U.N. officials speaking on condition of anonymity said the recovery of Rwandan military items alone would not represent incontrovertible proof that regular Rwandan troops had been on Congolese territory.

Nkunda's rebels, active in eastern Congo, wear Rwandan uniforms and speak Kinyarwanda, a language used on both sides of the border.

Nkunda's fighters said on Wednesday they had captured a government army base at Rumangabo, 40 km (25 miles) north of Goma. The fighting there killed or wounded dozens of Congolese soldiers, according to MONUC.

Ileka's letter also called for the removal of Rwandan General Karezi Karake from his position as deputy commander of the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region.

Karake was indicted earlier this year by a Spanish court along with 39 other Rwandan officers on war crimes he is alleged to have committed in the 1990s.

The United Nations had originally asked Rwanda to replace the general but backed down after Rwandan president Paul Kagame threatened to withdraw 3,000 peacekeepers from Darfur unless the general's contract was renewed. The loss of the Rwandans would have crippled the 10,000-strong force.