

The World Bank

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) assists disarmed FDLR ex-combatants crossing the border

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Kigali, October 13, 2005 – The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) Secretariat at the World Bank announces that some 24 disarmed FDLR (*Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*) ex-combatants and 46 civilians, of whom are several children crossed the border from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Rwanda yesterday.

Gromo Alex and Harald Hinkel, both of the MDRP team, together with teams from the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), and officials from the DRC witnessed the event. “However insignificant the numbers repatriated yesterday may be, there is some hope that this may be the beginning of a process of increased voluntary homecoming of Rwandese refugees, combatants and their dependents from eastern DRC,” said Hinkel.

The voluntary disarmament of the ex-combatants was carried out by MONUC at the FDLR assembly area in Luvungi, South Kivu, and soon after, repatriation followed under their escort. The FDLR group leader, Maj.Gen. Bizimungu followed the convoy to the border post of Kamanyola (RDC) / Bugarama (Rwanda), and before going back to the RDC, stated that he would encourage more to come back to Rwanda.

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) awaited the group at Bugarama and provided transport to the Ntendezi transit centre for ex-combatants and the Nyagatare transit centre of UNHCR / Rwanda Ministry of Local Government, where they received assistance for their basic needs (food, water, bed, basic healthcare etc). “We certainly welcome this group, but we really hope that this is only the beginning of a series of much bigger batches,” added Harald Hinkel who co-facilitated much of the inter-agency coordination for this repatriation process.

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About MDRP

The MDRP is financed by the World Bank and 11 donors -- Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Seven countries receive active support under the MDRP: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. For more information, please visit: www.mdrp.org .