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Festive display is mistaken for raging gun battle Fireworks terrorize war weary Congo town



Officials had organized the display to highlight efforts to end more than a decade of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Goma, CONGO (Reuters)

Independence day fireworks in Goma sent terrified Congolese sprinting for cover on Tuesday in fear that war had broken out again in their eastern city.

Officials had organized the display to highlight efforts to end more than a decade of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to show a sign of normal life returning to the region, where a peace deal took hold in January.

But residents feared it was a raging gun battle.

"I hit the ground not knowing what was going on," said 23-year-old student Aminata Kavugho.

Around 5.4 million people have died as a result of Congo's 1998-2003 war and the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, making it the world's deadliest conflict since World War II.