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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

1140TH MEETING (HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT LEVEL)

17 FEBRUARY 2023

ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/HoSG/COMM.1140 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1140th meeting held at the level of the Heads of State and Government on 17 February 2023, considered the situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region and the deployment of the East African Community (EAC) Regional Force:

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling the Decision [[Assembly/AU/Dec.815 \(XXXV\)](#)] adopted by the Heads of State and Government during the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held on 5 – 6 February 2022, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, welcoming the significant progress in the Great Lakes Region evidenced by the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the signatories of the Agreement on Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (Framework Agreement) for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region;

Further recalling the Decision [[Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.\(XVI\)](#)] adopted during the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, noting with concern the latest developments on the common border between the DRC and the Republic of Rwanda, and mandated the Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to mediate between the two parties and report on the diplomatic efforts;

Faithful to the implementation of its previous decisions and pronouncements on the situation in the DRC and the Great Lakes Region, particularly Communiqués [[PSC/PR/COMM.1103 \(2022\)](#)] adopted at its 1103rd meeting held on 31 August 2022; [[PSC/PR/COMM.1078 \(2022\)](#)] adopted at its 1078th meeting held on 19 April 2022; and [[PSC/PRCOMM.1005 \(2021\)](#)] adopted at its 1006th meeting held on 21 June 2021;

Noting the opening statements by H.E Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the PSC for February 2023, and H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission;

Also noting the statements by H.E. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the DRC and Chairperson of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC); H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda; H.E. Évariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the East African Community (EAC); and H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and ICGLR Chairperson; **Further noting** the statement by H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN);

Reaffirming the unwavering commitment of the AU to respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the DRC and **further reaffirming** the solidarity of the AU with the people and the Government of the DRC in their legitimate aspirations for peace, stability and socio-economic development; and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Expresses grave concern** over the prevailing insecurity and deterioration of the humanitarian and socio-economic development due to violence and human rights abuses committed by the armed groups and negative forces in the eastern DRC; **reiterates its strong condemnation** of the human rights

abuses committed by the M23, as well as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) and other armed groups;

2. **Expresses concern** over the tensions between the DRC and Rwanda; in this regard, **calls** for calm and greater dialogue between the two countries in furtherance of durable peace in the region; **encourages** them to prioritize peaceful means of addressing the challenges between them; **reaffirms** the importance of building confidence and trust in the region;

3. **Reaffirms** that the Framework Agreement remains a viable instrument to support the DRC and institutions in the region to achieve peace and stability, and **calls** for its urgent revitalization; **emphasizes** that signatory countries individually and collectively need to redouble their efforts to fully implement the national and regional commitments enshrined in the Framework Agreement;

4. In this context, **requests** the AU, in collaboration with EAC, ECCAS, SADC, ICGLR, and the UN to urgently work towards the revitalization of the Framework Agreement and report back to Council, within six weeks;

5. **Demands** that all armed groups, particularly the M23, as well as the ADF, and FDLR to immediately cease hostilities and unconditionally withdraw from the eastern DRC; and in this respect, **urges** for the expeditious implementation of the outcomes of the Luanda and Nairobi processes, as well as the Communiqué of the Mini-Summit of Luanda of 23 November 2022;

6. **Endorses** the Final Communiqué of the Mini-Summit of the EAC and ICGLR on Peace and Security in the Eastern Region of the DRC, held on 17 February 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

7. **Emphasizes** the need to support the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM); **calls** for cantonment and disarmament of M23 under the control of the DRC authorities, and the supervision of EAC Regional Force and the Ad Hoc Verification Mechanism, with the collaboration of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO);

8. **Underscores** the need to engage in rehabilitation and community development plans to address the issue of ex-combatants and voluntary return of the IDPs and refugees, among others;

9. **Welcomes** the deployment of the EAC Regional Force to the eastern DRC and **pays tribute** to the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to the EAC Regional Force for their commitment to the promotion of regional peace and security; and **decides** to support its deployment and operations; in this regard, **authorizes** the Council in collaboration with the Commission and the Governance Structures of the AU Peace Fund, to immediately work out modalities for the utilization of the Fund and report back to the PSC within six weeks; **calls upon** the United Nations and other partners to support peace-making efforts in the DRC through the provision of financial and technical expertise;

10. **Strongly condemns** the recent attacks against MONUSCO, which resulted in casualties amongst peacekeepers and civilians, the obstruction of access to humanitarian assistance to populations in dire need, and **expresses** its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the respective Governments; **reiterates** its call for cooperation, coordination and complementarity of efforts between MONUSCO, *Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) and the EAC Regional Force;

11. **Welcomes** the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2667 (2022) that lifted the arms embargo on DRC, which enhances its capacity in the fight against armed groups and protection of its citizens;

12. **Applauds** H.E. João Manuel Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, the Chair of ICGLR and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation, and H.E. Évariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, for facilitating dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda, and for their concerted efforts in accompanying the DRC in its pursuit of stabilizing the eastern parts of the country; **commends** H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya as the EAC Facilitator for the DRC for his peace efforts since his appointment; and

13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the situation in the Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes Region.