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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1203RD MEETING

4 MARCH 2024
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1203 (2024)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1203rd meeting held on 4 March 2024, on Consideration of the Situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC).

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling all its previous decisions and pronouncements on the situation in the Eastern DRC, particularly Communiqués [PSC/PR/COMM.1145 (2023) adopted at its 1145th meeting held on 31 March 2023 and [PSC/HoSG/COMM.1040 (2023)] adopted at its 1140th meeting held at Heads of State and Government level, on 17 February 2023;

Further recalling the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in which the Heads of State and Government of the AU pledged their determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Continent, to make peace a reality for all of Africa's citizens and not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to future generations;

Deeply concerned by the scourge of conflicts on the Continent and their impediment to socio-economic development and **reaffirming** commitment to realise Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects, including Silencing the Guns by 2030;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Emilia Mkusa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Namibia to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for March 2024 and the introductory statement by Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Director of the Conflict Management Directorate on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security; **also noting** the statement by H.E. Christophe Lutundula Apala Pen'Apala, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. Ambassador Rose Sakala, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia, representing the SADC Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, as well as Professor Kula Ishmael Theletsane, Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs;

Reaffirming the unwavering commitment of the AU to respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the DRC and 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. **Commends** the people and the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the successful conduct of elections in December 2023 and **congratulates** H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo on his re-election as the President of the DRC for a second term;
2. **Expresses deep concern** over the resurgence of the March 23 Movement (M23) in the eastern DRC; **strongly condemns** the human rights abuses committed by the M23, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), and other negative forces and armed groups active in the Eastern DRC;
3. **Also expresses grave concern** over the worsening insecurity due to the debilitating activities of M23, ADF, FDLR, other negative forces and armed groups in the eastern DRC and the resultant dire humanitarian situation that continues to adversely impact the population in affected communities; **calls on** the AU Commission, Member States, in position to do so, and the international community to

contribute towards the provision of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the affected population;

4. ***Calls for*** the immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, as well as the creation of humanitarian corridors to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected population; and ***also calls*** for the urgent cantonment and disarmament of M23, ADF, FDLR and all other armed groups active in the eastern DRC;

5. ***Reaffirms*** the continued relevance of the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, as a viable framework for addressing the perennial insecurity in the Eastern DRC and the Region; ***calls*** for its revitalisation; and ***encourages*** the signatory countries and the international community to redouble their efforts to fully implement their commitments;

6. ***Reiterates*** that there can be no sustainable military solution to the situation in eastern DRC and, in this respect, ***stresses*** the importance of the Nairobi and Luanda processes which are aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict; in this regard, ***applauds*** the efforts by H.E. João Manuel Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation, in mediating between the two sisterly countries through the Luanda Process; ***calls*** for an urgent follow-up meeting to continue the diplomatic efforts in this regard;

7. ***Also applauds*** the mediation efforts of H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya and Facilitator of the EAC-led Nairobi Process; and ***reiterates*** the importance for all parties to respect and implement decisions of the Summit and obligations agreed upon in previous meetings of Heads of State and other established instruments in resolving the situation in eastern DRC;

8. ***Stresses the need*** for the implementation of the outcome of the Quadripartite Summit of the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGLR) and SADC, under the auspices of the AU, held on 27 June 2023, in Luanda, Republic of Angola; ***underscores*** the imperative of enhanced coordination of efforts within the framework of the Quadripartite Mechanism; and ***requests*** the AU Commission to convene a second Quadripartite Summit to follow up on progress on the implementation of commitments made during the 1st Summit of the Quadripartite;

9. ***Takes note*** of the Communiqué of the Extraordinary Organ Troika Summit, plus SADC Troika and Force Brigade (FIB) troop-contributing countries (TCCs) held on 8 May 2023, approving the deployment of a SADC Force, within the framework of the SADC Standby Force as a regional response in support of the DRC to restore peace and security in the DRC, and the subsequent deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission (SAMIDRC) on 15 December 2023; ***endorses*** the deployment of SAMIDRC in the eastern DRC; and ***requests*** the AU Commission to mobilise requisite support for SAMIDRC, including from the AU Peace Fund Crisis Reserve Facility;

10. ***Also requests*** the AU Commission to expedite the transfer of the equipment donated to SADC, which is still at the AU Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to support in efforts of ensuring effective implementation of SAMIDRC mandate;

11. ***Pays tribute*** to the SAMIDRC Troop contributing countries (TCCs), namely Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania, for their commitment to promoting peace, security and stability in the region; ***also pays tribute*** to the forces who have paid the supreme price; ***expresses sincere condolences*** to their bereaved families and Governments and ***wishes*** a speedy recovery to those nursing injuries;

12. **Requests** the AU Commission, working in close collaboration with SADC, to devise practical modalities of AU support to SAMIDRC and to provide regular briefings, at least every quarter, to the Council on the activities of SAMIDRC;
13. **Also requests** the AU Commission to transmit this Communique to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for information and to request the UNSC to provide the required material and financial resources to enable SAMIDRC to effectively discharge its mandate; and
14. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.