



# Security Council

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## Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2765 \(2024\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report every six months on the implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and its linkages with the broader security situation in the region.<sup>1</sup> It provides an overview of peace and security developments since the previous report ([S/2024/700](#)), covering the period from 16 September 2024 to 27 March 2025.

#### II. Major developments

##### A. Security situation

###### *Democratic Republic of the Congo*

2. The security situation in parts of the Great Lakes region deteriorated significantly, in particular in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In North Kivu Province, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), supported by the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), stepped up its military offensive in January and seized control of Sake and Goma on 23 and 28 January, respectively. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) was supported by the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC), the Burundi National Defence Force (FDNB) and other foreign and local armed groups.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, the region refers to the 13 signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors of the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations.



3. In response to advances by M23, supported by RDF, towards Sake on 23 January, which included the use of heavy artillery, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) enhanced information-sharing and joint tactical planning with FARDC. MONUSCO also activated Operation Springbok III to bolster its posture in Goma.
4. M23 also advanced in areas in Lubero, Masisi, Nyiragongo, Rutshuru and Walikale territories. In South Kivu Province, it took control of Minova on 21 January, followed by Kavumu airport and Bukavu on 14 and 16 February, respectively, while advancing further towards Uvira.
5. As a result of the advances by M23 and the ensuing fighting, several thousand people were reportedly killed between January and the end of the reporting period. At least 19 SAMIDRC soldiers and several FARDC commanders were killed. In addition, three MONUSCO peacekeepers were killed during the offensive.
6. The fighting also led to the displacement of thousands of civilians inside and outside the country. A rise in human rights violations and abuses was also reported, affecting already vulnerable populations, notably women and children.
7. In areas under its control, M23 carried out household identification and census operations, installed its own parallel police, customary and administrative personnel and continued to levy taxes while pursuing military recruitment amid reports of increased abductions and forced recruitment of children.
8. Meanwhile, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) were reportedly responsible for 150 security incidents in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces between September 2024 and February 2025, with 498 civilian fatalities, including 78 women and 21 children. In Ituri Province, ADF expanded further into Mambasa territory.
9. The Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) remained active and was reportedly responsible for several attacks against civilians during the reporting period, resulting in at least 35 fatalities. It also intensified its collaboration with other armed groups operating under the Wazalendo/Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP) label. On 23 and 24 September, FARDC launched an operation against FDLR, as agreed under the Luanda process (see sect. II.B), which resulted in the arrest of 18 FDLR elements. In a press release issued on 1 March, RDF stated that the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC)/M23 had handed over at the Grande Barrière border post a group of fighters from FDLR that had been captured during military operations in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a statement, FARDC later refuted the claims and described the handover as a “set-up”.
10. In South Kivu Province, several clashes between the Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi (RED Tabara) and FDNB and allied groups were reported, allegedly resulting in over 90 FDNB fatalities. While FDNB did not react to each allegation, its spokesperson refuted the allegations in two instances, stating that RED Tabara had suffered significant casualties. On 6 February, RED Tabara, in a press release, demanded that the President of Burundi, Évariste Ndayishimiye, accept “inclusive negotiations” to resolve the “Burundian conflict or leave power”.
11. On 17 February, in a communiqué posted on social media, the creation of the Front burundais de libération in Musigati, Bubanza Province, was announced. The new movement called on Burundians to join its ranks to “rid the country of the criminal [Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie] system”.

*Cross-border security incidents*

12. Several cross-border security incidents were reported during the period under review. On 22 November, the Congolese armed group Twigwaneho accused FDNB of providing logistical support to the Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie-Forces de libération nationale, which the latter refuted. On 23 November, FDNB stated that its mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was to “combat all negative forces, whether national or foreign”.

13. On 26 December, an FARDC spokesperson stated that a Rwandan soldier had been arrested on Congolese territory on 21 December. Rwanda dismissed the claims. On 27 January, the RDF spokesperson accused FARDC of having shelled Rubavu District, Rwanda, killing 16 Rwandan civilians and injuring 35 others. Meanwhile, Congolese authorities continued to accuse Rwanda of spoofing and jamming global navigation satellite systems in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

14. On 29 January, elements of foreign private security companies working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were repatriated through Rwanda following their surrender. Rwandan officials accused the Democratic Republic of the Congo of recruiting “mercenaries”, in violation of continental and international conventions.

*Regional security efforts*

15. On 20 November, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), during an extraordinary summit, extended the mandate of SAMIDRC until December 2025. On 9 December, the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation underscored the need for harmonized military and diplomatic efforts. On 11 December, the Organ reportedly discussed the appointment of the SAMIDRC Head of Mission, among other issues. On 25 January, SADC condemned attacks against SAMIDRC by M23 and RDF. During an extraordinary summit on 31 January, SADC called for the urgent repatriation of deceased and wounded SAMIDRC personnel, which has since been concluded. The summit further mandated the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation to engage all State and non-State parties to the conflict on a ceasefire process.

16. On 2 February, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda characterized SAMIDRC as “central to the conflict”. On 5 February, the President of Malawi, Lazarus Chakwera, ordered preparations for the withdrawal of Malawian troops deployed in SAMIDRC. At an extraordinary summit on 13 March, the SADC Heads of State and Government terminated the mandate of SAMIDRC and directed the commencement of a phased withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They reiterated the need for a political and diplomatic solution with all parties for the restoration of peace and security.

*Bilateral security efforts*

17. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda extended the mandate of Operation Shujaa against ADF until September 2025. On 31 January, the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces (UPDF) announced the adoption of a “forward defensive posture” in response to the deteriorating security situation. The decision was followed by the deployment of over 3,000 additional UPDF troops between 31 January and 2 March to North Kivu and Ituri Provinces. On 28 February, the UPDF Chief of Defence Forces, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, stated that UPDF would focus not only on ADF but also on the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO). In a press release dated 21 March, UPDF stated that it had inflicted heavy casualties on CODECO after repulsing an attack by the group on UPDF positions in Fataki, Ituri Province.

18. Meanwhile, FDNB remained present in South Kivu Province under a bilateral security cooperation agreement between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## **B. Political developments**

### *Luanda and Nairobi peace processes*

19. As part of the Luanda process, the President of Angola, João Lourenço, in his capacity as the African Union-designated Mediator, pursued efforts to address the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

20. The Minister for External Relations of Angola, Tété António, convened ministerial meetings in Luanda on 12 October, 25 November and 14 December, with the participation of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner and Olivier Nduhungirehe. The Ministers reviewed the harmonized plan for the neutralization of FDLR and the disengagement of forces/lifting of Rwandan defensive measures and discussed a draft peace agreement previously submitted by Mr. Lourenço. They also agreed on a concept of operations and decided to designate liaison officers for the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism. The mechanism was launched in Goma on 5 November following a meeting on 31 October of defence and security experts from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, facilitated by Angola. It was not operationalized, however, as Rwanda did not deploy its officers, citing safety concerns.

21. On 14 December, the seventh ministerial meeting convened to prepare a tripartite summit planned for 15 December concluded without consensus following disagreement among the parties over the request by Rwanda for direct talks between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23. Mr. António, in a press statement dated 15 December, subsequently announced the postponement sine die of the tripartite summit. The President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, who was already in Angola, met Mr. Lourenço in Luanda on 15 December, together with the Facilitator of the East African Community (EAC)-led Nairobi process, the former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta. They reportedly discussed perspectives for the regional peace processes. On 18 December, in Kigali, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, who did not travel to Luanda, received Mr. António, who delivered a message from Mr. Lourenço.

22. In separate statements on 7 and 29 January, Mr. Lourenço condemned the M23 offensive, including the capture of Goma, as a violation of the ceasefire of 4 August 2024.

23. On 11 March, the Presidency of Angola announced the imminent launch of direct negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23. The announcement followed a meeting between Messrs. Lourenço and Tshisekedi in Luanda on the same day. While direct negotiations were scheduled to begin on 18 March, AFC/M23 cancelled their participation in the proposed talks on 17 March, citing sanctions imposed by the European Union the same day. On 18 March, in a press release, Mr. António stated that it was not possible to hold the scheduled talks between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 “for reasons and circumstances of force majeure”. The Presidency of Angola subsequently announced, on 24 March, that Mr. Lourenço would relinquish his role as Mediator of the Luanda process in view of his responsibilities as Chair of the African Union. The statement also expressed his support for direct negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23. Mr. Kenyatta travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola in November and December, respectively, for consultations with national authorities,

and engaged with the President of Kenya, William Ruto, on 9 December. Mr. Kenyatta submitted his conclusions on the status of the Nairobi process to the EAC and SADC secretariats ahead of the joint EAC-SADC summit on 8 February.

24. Meanwhile, AFC/M23 continued to demand direct dialogue with the Congolese authorities and called for the withdrawal of SAMIDRC, FDNB, FDLR and “mercenaries”. Following the capture of Goma and Bukavu, AFC/M23 reiterated their political objective of regime change in Kinshasa and threatened to “overthrow” the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a letter to Mr. Lourenço dated 22 October, FDLR called for direct dialogue between the Government of Rwanda and opposition groups, including FDLR.

#### *Bilateral relations*

25. Relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda deteriorated significantly, with diplomatic ties breaking down in January. In view of RDF support for the M23 offensive, the Democratic Republic of the Congo recalled its diplomats from Kigali on 24 January, requesting that Rwanda do the same. On 26 January, Mr. Nduhungerehe stated that the last Rwandan diplomat had left Kinshasa. On 11 February, Congolese authorities banned all aircraft registered or based in Rwanda from flying over Congolese territory.

26. Meanwhile, mutual accusations and belligerent rhetoric increased on both sides. Congolese authorities continued to call for sanctions against Rwanda and demanded accountability for alleged human rights violations by Rwandan soldiers on Congolese territory. Rwandan authorities insisted on direct talks between M23 and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, called FDLR an “existential threat” for Rwanda and underscored the need to address the root causes of the conflict. Both countries also accused each other of intending to overthrow their respective Governments.

27. In his address to the nation on 29 January, Mr. Tshisekedi warned of an “escalation with unpredictable consequences” and called on citizens to mobilize against the Rwandan “war of aggression”. Congolese authorities reiterated calls for sanctions against Rwanda, including the exclusion of Rwanda as a troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions, an embargo on the purchase of arms and the termination of international sports partnerships with Rwanda.

28. On 4 February, Mr. Nduhungerehe stated that Rwanda had evidence of an imminent attack on its territory. He identified four conditions for sustainable peace: the neutralization of FDLR, the withdrawal of all foreign forces, direct talks between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 and long-term security guarantees along the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

29. With regard to Burundi-Rwanda relations, on 31 October, the Minister of State for Regional Cooperation of Rwanda, James Kabarebe, reiterated his country’s willingness to extradite Burundian nationals allegedly involved in the attempted coup d’état in Burundi in 2015, provided that they would be given protection by a third party. In response, on 4 November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation of Burundi, Albert Shingiro, stated that the individuals concerned would be treated in accordance with the law. On 27 December, Mr. Ndayishimiye rejected earlier accusations by Mr. Nduhungerehe of collaboration between Burundi and FDLR.

30. On 31 January, Mr. Ndayishimiye warned of a “regional war” and a possible attack by Rwanda against Burundi. He accused Rwanda of arming Burundian refugees in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Nduhungerehe refuted the claims. On 17 February, Mr. Shingiro stated that his country had a “peace plan” to

propose to avoid a regional conflict. On 21 February, a Burundian delegation reportedly travelled to Kigali for bilateral engagements with Rwandan military and intelligence representatives. Another meeting between Burundian and Rwandan intelligence representatives reportedly took place in Kirundo, northern Burundi, on 11 March.

31. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda took steps to strengthen bilateral relations. On 30 October, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, and Mr. Tshisekedi met in Kampala to discuss regional security and economic cooperation. However, following statements by the UPDF Chief of Defence Forces on the use of “white mercenaries” by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner summoned the Chargé d’affaires of the Ugandan embassy in Kinshasa on 18 December, requesting official clarification. On 30 January, Mr. Museveni, reportedly reaffirmed his support for direct dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and armed opposition groups. Ugandan authorities reiterated their availability to participate in regional peace initiatives. On 21 February, Mr. Museveni stated that UPDF reinforcements in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were tasked not with combating M23 but with countering ADF and protecting the construction of the Kasindi-Beni-Butembo road. The statement added that UPDF had secured permission from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to deploy in Lubero and Bunia.

32. Relations between Rwanda and South Africa were also affected by the fighting in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during which 14 South African soldiers deployed in SAMIDRC were killed. After a telephone conversation between Mr. Kagame and the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, on 28 January, during which they reportedly agreed on the need for a ceasefire and the resumption of peace talks, senior government officials on both sides engaged in confrontational rhetoric. On 30 January, on social media, Mr. Kagame accused South African officials of distorting the contents of his conversation with Mr. Ramaphosa. He also accused South Africa of sending troops to secure access to minerals in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The spokesperson of the Government of Rwanda further alleged on 2 February that South Africa was intent on “destabilizing” Rwanda. South African officials noted the role of Rwanda in recent fighting. In statements on 3 and 10 February, Mr. Ramaphosa underscored his support for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, while noting that a conflict in Africa was the “business of all Africans”.

## C. Humanitarian situation

### *Impact of the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

33. The escalating crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo led to an alarming surge in humanitarian needs. Since January, close to 600,000 people have been displaced, adding to the 4.6 million already internally displaced in North and South Kivu Provinces. Numerous displacement sites were looted, destroyed or abandoned, raising concerns about the involuntary departure of many displaced persons from the sites. Humanitarian access was severely limited, notably in M23-controlled areas. The capture of Goma and Kavumu airports by M23 further affected humanitarian operations.

34. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as at 7 March, more than 63,000 Congolese refugees had arrived in Burundi. On 19 February, the Government of Burundi announced its decision to grant prima facie status to all Congolese refugees who had arrived since 1 January. In Uganda, more than 13,000 Congolese refugees had arrived since January.

35. On 30 and 31 October, the third technical-level tripartite meeting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and UNHCR, held in Addis Ababa, adopted an updated road map for the voluntary repatriation of Congolese and Rwandan refugees.

*Other developments in the region*

36. More than 7.9 million internally displaced persons were reported in Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania continued to host approximately 219,000 Burundian refugees.

37. Food insecurity remained a major challenge. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme, more than 28 million people in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were acutely food-insecure as at 13 February.

38. The incidence of communicable diseases increased. On 30 January, the Ministry of Health of Uganda declared an outbreak of the Sudan virus disease (Ebola). To date, there have been 10 cases and two deaths. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 420 cases of cholera and one death were reported in Goma between 3 and 15 February.

## **D. Human rights and the rule of law**

*Impact of the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

39. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo documented 1,858 human rights violations and abuses in the country between September and March, affecting at least 5,371 victims. Security and logistical challenges, however, affected the Office's ability to document and verify violations and abuses, suggesting that the actual figures are likely significantly higher. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, there was an increase in summary executions, including executions of children, as well as conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. There was also a rise in the targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and judicial personnel. Jailbreaks in Goma and Bukavu raised significant security concerns.

40. Armed groups remained the main perpetrators of documented human rights violations and abuses. M23 combatants were involved in 250 alleged incidents of human rights abuses, including the killing of 196 people. ADF combatants reportedly committed 214 human rights abuses, including killing 468 people, while FDLR was responsible for 49 abuses. In Ituri, MONUSCO documented 92 violations and abuses between 15 and 22 January affecting at least 164 victims, conducted primarily by armed groups (95 per cent), with 5 per cent committed by State agents.

41. On 5 February, a military court in Kinshasa issued international arrest warrants for the AFC leader, Corneille Nangaa, and Jean-Jacques Mamba Kabamba, for war crimes and treason.

42. During the reporting period, the Human Rights Council discussed the situation of human rights in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 8 October and in a special session on 7 February. By its resolution [S-37/1](#) of 7 February, the Council decided to urgently establish a fact-finding mission on serious human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in North and South Kivu Provinces and an independent commission of inquiry to continue the work undertaken by the High Commissioner's fact-finding mission following the submission of its comprehensive report, with the same mandate as the fact-finding mission.

43. On 14 October, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, announced that he had decided to renew the investigative efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a priority focus on any alleged crimes under the Rome Statute occurring in North Kivu since January 2022. Following the Office's assessment of the second referral by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Prosecutor's determination that the latest episodes of violence in North Kivu since 2022 were interconnected with patterns of violence and hostilities that had plagued the region since at least 1 July 2002 and that therefore any alleged crimes under the Rome Statute committed in North Kivu since 1 January 2022 would fall within the remit of the ongoing investigation opened in June 2004,<sup>2</sup> he launched an urgent call for information and cooperation in regard in February 2025.<sup>3</sup> He subsequently visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 24 to 26 February.

44. On 2 December, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights held a hearing following a filing by the Democratic Republic of the Congo against Rwanda over the latter's alleged support of M23. The first hearing took place on 12 and 13 February. A similar case was ongoing before the East African Court of Justice, which held a hearing on 26 September.

#### *Other developments in the region*

45. With regard to Burundi, the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 57/22, urged the country's Government to hold all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses accountable, regardless of their affiliation or status, including members of defence and security forces and of the ruling party's youth league, Imbonerakure. The Council called on the Government to implement fully the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi and the commission of inquiry on Burundi in their reports, as well as those accepted in the context of the universal periodic review, and to cooperate fully with the special procedures of the Council and relevant treaty bodies.

46. In Kenya, the National Commission on Human Rights, in a statement on 24 January, expressed grave concern about the "escalating human rights violations across parts of the country" and called for urgent action to restore human rights and security.

47. In Uganda, the leader of the People's Front for Freedom opposition party, Kizza Besigye, was allegedly "kidnapped" in Kenya on 16 November and sent back to Uganda, where he was held in military detention. On 21 February, his case was transferred from a military to a civilian court, where he was charged with treason.

### **III. Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework**

#### **A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

48. On 5 November, the National Oversight Mechanism of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework organized a workshop in Kinshasa to harmonize approaches on the repatriation of Burundian ex-combatants from South Kivu Province identified by the Contact and Coordination Group on non-military measures.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-situation-democratic-republic-congo-and-renewed](https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-situation-democratic-republic-congo-and-renewed).

<sup>3</sup> See [www.icc-cpi.int/drc/call-for-information-drc](https://www.icc-cpi.int/drc/call-for-information-drc).

49. In statements made on 19 December and 1 and 24 February, the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism, Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, called for the participation of M23 in the Nairobi process. He also called for an emergency meeting of the guarantors and the holding of the second quadripartite summit under the aegis of the African Union.

50. In January, the Catholic and Protestant churches of the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented a “social pact” for peace in the country and the region. Following a meeting with Mr. Tshisekedi on 3 February and engagements with Congolese opposition leaders, they also met AFC/M23 representatives on 12 February. From 13 February to 11 March, they held regional consultations and met with the Presidents of Angola, the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

## **B. Commitments of the region and engagements by the guarantor institutions**

### *Regional efforts on the escalating crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

51. On 28 January, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, during a ministerial-level meeting, called for enhanced support by the African Union Commission for Mr. Lourenço’s mediation efforts and the resumption of the Nairobi process. The Council also directed the Commission to urgently convene the second quadripartite summit and to deploy a fact-finding mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting was preceded by the Council’s 1,254th meeting in Kinshasa on 18 November, which focused on the implementation of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes, among other issues.

52. On 29 and 31 January, respectively, EAC and SADC convened two extraordinary summits. The EAC extraordinary summit called for a ceasefire, urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage directly with M23 and other armed groups and reiterated its call for a merger of the Luanda and Nairobi processes, as proposed during its 24th ordinary summit on 30 November. The SADC extraordinary summit mandated the SADC Organ Troika to engage all State and non-State parties to the conflict on a ceasefire process, among other decisions (see sect. II.A).

53. On 7 February, the Economic Community of Central African States reaffirmed its support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes and the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework while condemning Rwandan support for AFC/M23. It also called for the holding of the second quadripartite summit.

54. On 8 February, a joint EAC-SADC summit directed the merging of the Luanda and Nairobi processes and mandated the Chairpersons of EAC and SADC, in consultation with the African Union, to appoint additional facilitators to strengthen the “Luanda/Nairobi process”. The summit directed the resumption of direct negotiations and dialogue with all State and non-State parties, including M23, and the development of modalities for the withdrawal of “uninvited foreign armed forces” from Congolese territory. The summit also called on the Chiefs of Defence Staff of EAC and SADC member States to identify modalities for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, the provision of humanitarian assistance, the securitization of Goma and surrounding areas, the opening of main supply routes in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the immediate reopening of Goma airport. On 12 February, Congolese authorities stated that they deplored the ceasefire violations, drew the attention of the international community to continued attacks by “Rwanda and its proxies” and called for an urgent EAC-SADC

meeting to evaluate the situation, with a view to setting up a monitoring and verification mechanism. A high-level Congolese delegation was received by Mr. Ruto, as Chairperson of EAC, on 19 February.

55. On 14 February, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union endorsed the decisions of the joint EAC-SADC summit and requested that the African Union Commission, together with EAC and SADC, set up a joint African Union-EAC-SADC coordination mechanism to provide support to the Luanda and Nairobi processes, in close coordination with the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

56. In follow-up to the joint summit, the EAC and SADC Chiefs of Defence Staff met on 24 February. In addition, the SADC Council of Ministers convened in Harare on 12 and 14 March and the EAC Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence met in Nairobi on 15 March to discuss, among other issues, preparations for a joint EAC-SADC ministerial meeting. Both meetings reportedly underscored the need for a unified regional approach in support of peace and stability in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

57. The EAC-SADC ministerial meeting took place in Harare on 17 March and concluded with the adoption of an outcome report outlining a series of measures to implement the decisions of the joint EAC-SADC summit of 8 February. Ministers recommended, inter alia, that the Co-Chairpersons of the joint EAC-SADC summit (Kenya and Zimbabwe), supported by the SADC Organ, engage the African Union and the leaders of the Luanda and Nairobi processes on the need to “expedite the merger of the processes by 31 March”. They also called for the finalization of appointments to the “expanded Panel of Facilitators” to support mediation efforts, taking into consideration gender and language aspects.

58. The second joint EAC-SADC summit, held remotely on 24 March, adopted the outcome report of the ministerial meeting and directed the commencement of the implementation of the report and its road map, which details immediate-, medium- and long-term measures to attain sustainable peace and security in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The summit also appointed the members of the Panel of Facilitators, namely Mr. Kenyatta and the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, the former President of the Central African Republic, Catherine Samba Panza, and the former President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde.

#### *Other regional cooperation efforts*

59. On 28 and 29 October, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region hosted a workshop in Nairobi on the development of a conflict early warning system. On 4 and 5 November, the International Conference convened the twenty-ninth meeting of the Regional Committee on the Fight against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in Juba. From 6 to 8 November, it organized a regional forum on mineral value addition and cross-border trade, also in Juba.

60. On 3 November, Mr. Lourenço, as Chair of the International Conference, formally requested that the African Union recognize the International Conference as a regional mechanism.

61. On 24 November, the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee of the International Conference, during its eighteenth meeting in Luanda, discussed regional security and humanitarian challenges as well as progress made through the International Conference’s women and youth forums. The meeting followed separate meetings in early November of the ministers in charge of gender of the States members of the International Conference in Luanda, the ministers in charge of mines in Juba and the

ministers in charge of defence in Luanda, and a business integration dialogue held by the International Conference's private sector forum in Nairobi.

#### *Bilateral cooperation efforts*

62. Several bilateral joint permanent commissions convened during the reporting period, including between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia on 4 November and between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo on 13 November. In September, the Democratic Republic of the Congo discussed border demarcation issues separately with South Sudan and the Congo and signed a memorandum of understanding on the matter with South Sudan on 30 October. On 12 December, the Presidents of Angola and South Africa agreed to establish a binational commission. Several other countries also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including Angola and the Congo, Angola and Kenya, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda and South Sudan.

63. Bilateral cross-border security cooperation continued, including between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, Kenya and Uganda, and Rwanda and Uganda.

64. Efforts to advance economic cooperation and trade also continued. On 24 September, Angola and Zambia signed agreements on the Lobito railway project. Kenya and South Sudan signed a memorandum of understanding on customs cooperation on 21 October.

### **C. International commitments**

65. International partners increased their diplomatic engagements in support of a de-escalation of the crisis, culminating in the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#) on 21 February. At the nineteenth Francophonie summit, held in France on 4 and 5 October, Member States condemned, inter alia, all armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called for the withdrawal of unauthorized foreign forces from Congolese territory. Rwanda submitted reservations in writing. On the margins of the summit, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, met separately with Messrs. Kagame and Tshisekedi with a view to defusing tensions.

66. On 15 October, the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region convened in The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands, for a conference on supporting regional peace initiatives in the Great Lakes region attended by experts from the African Union, international institutions and other organizations. Discussions focused on the Group's role in enhancing support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes, including vis-à-vis the implementation of agreed decisions under the Luanda process. In subsequent virtual meetings, Group members continued to coordinate their efforts in support of the region, which led to the issuance of two statements on the deteriorating situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 27 January and 19 February.

67. In response to the renewed offensive by M23, supported by RDF, several Member States and regional organizations condemned the occupation of territory in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the armed group and called on Rwanda to cease its support for M23. Some Member States and regional organizations adopted measures aimed at putting pressure on Rwanda in view of the support provided to M23 by RDF. On 20 February, the United States of America imposed sanctions on Mr. Kabarebe, as well as on the senior member and spokesperson of AFC/M23, Lawrence Kanyuka, and two of his companies. On 24 February, the

European Union suspended defence consultations with Rwanda and decided to review its memorandum of understanding with the country of 2024 on sustainable raw material value chains. On 25 February, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland announced a partial pause on bilateral financial aid to Rwanda, among other measures. Canada and Germany also decided to partially restrict their bilateral cooperation with Rwanda, on 3 and 4 March, respectively. Meanwhile, on 18 February, Rwanda suspended its development cooperation with Belgium, claiming the latter's "aggressive campaign" against Rwanda. On 17 March, the European Union listed five senior members of M23, including its leader, Bertrand Bisimwa, three RDF commanders and the chief executive officer of the Rwanda Mines, Petroleum and Gas Board and the Gasabo Gold Refinery.

68. Meanwhile, on 18 March, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, brought Messrs. Kagame and Tshisekedi together for a trilateral meeting in Doha. In a joint statement, they "welcomed the progress of the Luanda and Nairobi processes, as well as the outcomes of the joint EAC-SADC summit" of 8 February. They reaffirmed their commitment, along with all parties involved, to an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire", as decided at the summit, and agreed on the need to continue the discussions initiated in Doha to establish a solid foundation for sustainable peace, as envisioned in the now "merged and/or aligned" Luanda and Nairobi processes.

#### **D. Revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework**

69. Efforts to revitalize the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework continued. On 10 January, representatives of the guarantor institutions reiterated the importance of respecting the commitments under the Framework and reaffirmed their willingness to support the signatory countries in the revitalization process to address the root causes of recurrent violence. The guarantor institutions called for the urgent convening of the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism and the second quadripartite summit. Strongly condemning the escalation of violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, they urged the parties to exercise restraint and protect civilian populations and called for dialogue through the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

#### **E. Good offices and political engagements of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa**

70. In response to the escalating security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa intensified his good offices efforts, calling on leaders to find political solutions through the regional peace processes. In this connection, he conducted missions to Angola, Burundi, the Congo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania and met with Kenyan authorities. In meetings with senior government officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, he called for an immediate de-escalation to avoid a regional war, as well as a return to the negotiating table.

71. The Special Envoy also continued to advocate for enhanced complementarity between regional peace initiatives. In meetings with EAC representatives, he expressed the commitment of the United Nations to continue to support the regional peace processes. He continued his advocacy at the twenty-fourth EAC ordinary summit, the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the joint EAC-SADC summit.

72. Following the joint EAC-SADC summit on 8 February, the Special Envoy met the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, and discussed potential United Nations support for the implementation of the summit decisions. He also explored opportunities for United Nations support for the EAC-SADC joint oversight and coordination mechanism tasked with monitoring the implementation of the joint summit decisions.

73. The Special Envoy engaged with officials in Belgium, France, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Switzerland and the United States, in addition to regular exchanges with members of the International Contact Group, including the Special Representative of the European Union for the Great Lakes Region. In all these engagements, he discussed approaches and synergies of actions to reach an immediate de-escalation and facilitate a political solution.

74. The Special Envoy also called upon parties to adhere to the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and conclude the ongoing process for the Framework's revitalization as an agreed platform to resolve the root causes of conflict in the region. In this regard, he pursued his engagements with the outgoing and incoming Chairs of the Framework, Burundi and Uganda, on convening a ministerial-level meeting to review and adopt the action plan for the Framework's revitalization as well as on holding the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism.

#### **IV. Implementation of the action plan of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region**

75. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to lead efforts to advance the implementation of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region. On 14 January, the Special Envoy, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), hosted an exchange among the Regional Directors of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes involved in the implementation of the action plan for the Strategy. The meeting contributed to enhancing collaboration, synergy and buy-in across political, programmatic and operational areas in the updated action plan for 2025–2027.

##### **A. Reducing the threat posed by foreign armed groups**

76. Following a verification mission of the Operational Cell of the Contact and Coordination Group in early September, which led to the identification of ex-combatants willing to return to their country of origin, the Office of the Special Envoy supported efforts by the Operational Cell to facilitate their repatriation from the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Burundi. From 8 to 11 October, the Office of the Special Envoy and the Coordinator of the National Oversight Committee consulted Burundian authorities and partners in Bujumbura on options for accelerating the repatriation of the foreign ex-combatants. The Operational Cell continued to follow up to ensure the safety of the ex-combatants in the current crisis context.

77. From 10 to 12 December, the Office, together with other United Nations partners and with support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy, organized a workshop in Bujumbura, which resulted in the development of a legal framework for the

repatriation of the ex-combatants. The draft legal framework was subsequently submitted to the Burundian authorities for consideration.

## **B. Promoting the sustainable and transparent management of natural resources, trade and investment**

78. From 14 to 17 October, the Office of the Special Envoy took part in the fifth round of consultations in Addis Ababa to draft the African Union model law on mineral resources development, which is expected to contribute to the transparent governance of minerals and related targets under Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption, in particular target 12.2 on the sustainable management and use of natural resources, and 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

79. On 8 November, the Special Envoy participated in the seventh meeting of the Ministers of Mines of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in Juba, calling on stakeholders to align their efforts with International Conference initiatives to combat the illicit exploitation and trade of minerals. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a harmonized regional approach for mineral value addition and cross-border trade.

## **C. Finding durable solutions to forced displacement**

80. On 10 and 11 December, the Office of the Special Envoy participated in a peer learning event on durable solutions for refugees, organized by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in Nairobi. The event facilitated exchanges on successful approaches to refugee responses and ways to advance the development of a regional strategy on comprehensive durable solutions for refugees, as called for by the International Conference ministers in charge of refugees during a meeting in Kampala on 7 March 2019.

81. With regard to the sustainable reintegration of Burundian returnees, one of the flagship initiatives under the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region, IOM supported areas of return with access to shelter, vocational training and social cohesion activities, and contributed to the development of a national strategy for the reintegration of displaced populations.

## **D. Advancing the inclusion, participation and empowerment of women and young people**

82. To strengthen the role of women and young people in the region's mining sector, the Office of the Special Envoy, in collaboration with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Congolese authorities and donors, organized a workshop on best practices in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 5 to 6 December. The Office further contributed to the development of the Burundian national strategy for mainstreaming gender in the mining sector, which was endorsed in Gitega on 20 December.

83. On 18 and 19 October, the Office took part in a high-level regional women's forum convened in Luanda by Mr. Lourenço. Participants called for the mobilization of women leaders in support of the Luanda process and recommended the establishment of a trust fund for women working on peace and security. The forum's conclusions were presented during the sixth ministerial meeting under the Luanda process on 25 November.

84. With regard to the women and peace and security agenda, the Office, in collaboration with the International Conference and other partners, organized a workshop in Dar-es-Salaam on 30 and 31 October to validate a report of the regional gender barometer, which was endorsed by the International Conference ministers in charge of gender on 12 November.

85. Between January and March, the Office facilitated several exchanges among civil society representatives on regional dynamics and related impacts on women, girls and other vulnerable groups.

## **E. Promotion and protection of human rights, and the fight against impunity**

86. From 9 to 19 October, the Office of the Special Envoy, together with the secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Chair of its Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network, conducted a joint mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to engage national authorities on the draft common criminal policy on cross-border crime, developed in 2023 in follow-up to the Kinshasa Declaration on Enhancing Judicial Cooperation in the Great Lakes Region, adopted in 2022. They also discussed emblematic cases that have an impact on cross-border cooperation, as well as training and capacity-building needs.

87. On 10 and 11 December, the Office and the International Conference organized the eighth meeting of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network in Nairobi. Participants discussed progress in the implementation of the Kinshasa Declaration and adopted the draft common criminal policy, which is expected to be submitted to the Ministers of Justice of States members of the International Conference in due course.

## **V. Partnerships with regional organizations and mechanisms, and United Nations system entities**

### **A. Regional organizations and mechanisms**

88. The Special Envoy continued to prioritize collaboration with regional organizations, notably EAC and SADC, as well as with Mr. Lourenço in his capacity as the African Union-designated Mediator of the Luanda process and Mr. Kenyatta as Facilitator of the Nairobi process, with a view to reviving regional peace processes. In addition, the Office of the Special Envoy implemented several joint initiatives with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as outlined above.

### **B. Other United Nations system entities**

89. From 2 to 4 October, the Office of the Special Envoy participated in a workshop on climate, peace and security in Central Africa, organized by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in Ntoum, Gabon.

90. The Special Envoy and his Office also engaged with IOM, MONUSCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNHCR on regional dynamics and options for joint initiatives. On 3 December and 28 February, respectively, the Special Envoy discussed with the international team of experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals options for strengthening collaboration on regional judicial cooperation.

91. From 27 to 29 November, the Office of the Special Envoy participated in the fifty-eighth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa in Bangui. The Office also attended a coordination meeting of United Nations entities convened by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa on 28 November.

## VI. Observations

92. The renewed offensive by M23, supported by RDF, and the ensuing fighting continue to threaten the stability of the Great Lakes region and reverse the gains made through the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I am appalled at the escalating crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and by the terrible suffering of civilians, including alarming levels of conflict-related sexual violence inflicted on Congolese women and children, who continue to bear the brunt to the violence. The catastrophic humanitarian impact and increase in human rights violations and abuses linked to the violence and the possibility of a regional conflagration are of grave concern.

93. I condemn in the strongest terms the offensive and advances of M23, supported by RDF, in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces.

94. In line with Security Council resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#), I call on M23 to immediately lay down its arms, dismantle illegitimate parallel administrations, withdraw from all controlled areas and commit to constructive dialogue. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected, and RDF must withdraw. I urge the parties to conclude an immediate ceasefire – as called for by the EAC and SADC Heads of State and the African Union – and take immediate steps to implement all relevant provisions of the joint EAC-SADC communiqué of 8 February, including reopening Goma airport and humanitarian supply routes.

95. I am deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict, including alarming levels of conflict-related sexual violence inflicted on Congolese women and children. I am deeply concerned by reports of abductions, killings and the involuntary return of internally displaced persons by M23, as well as reports of serious human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by FARDC and armed groups operating under the Wazalendo/VDP label. I strongly condemn the continued attacks against civilians and related human rights abuses perpetrated by ADF, CODECO, FDLR, Zaire and other armed groups. I welcome the decision of the Human Rights Council to urgently establish a fact-finding mission on the serious human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All parties to the conflict must ensure that human rights and international humanitarian law are respected.

96. With a view to restoring peace, I urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to return to the negotiating table to find a political solution to the crisis. I welcome in this regard the efforts undertaken in the context of the EAC-SADC peace process, as well as the mediation initiative between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda conducted by the Emir of Qatar.

97. I take note of Mr. Lourenço's decision to step down from his role as the African Union-designated Mediator between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and I commend him for his unrelenting efforts and significant achievements over the past few years.

98. I reaffirm the unwavering support of the United Nations for the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes. Looking ahead, it will be critical to build on the gains achieved so far under the leadership of Messrs. Lourenço and Kenyatta and to ensure the complementarity of efforts towards the shared goal of peace in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I call on international partners to support the resumption of dialogue. The Special Envoy will continue to assist in harmonizing regional peace efforts and promoting concerted support from international partners.

99. I encourage Burundi and Rwanda to continue to address their differences constructively and return to the previous path of bilateral rapprochement.

100. The crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its regional dynamics demonstrate once again the critical importance of building trust among countries in the region. All the elements for effectively addressing mistrust are enshrined in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which constitutes the most comprehensive agreement to date for addressing conflict root causes. I therefore call on the signatory countries to support the Framework's revitalization process at this critical time. Adhering to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and desisting from tolerating, aiding or supporting armed groups must form the very basis of this revitalization effort.

101. The issue of accountability remains crucial in addressing recurring cycles of violence in the region. I applaud the adoption of the draft common criminal policy in December. The draft policy provides critical impetus to addressing impunity for cross-border crimes.

102. I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Office of the Special Envoy to promote the inclusion of women and young people in mineral supply chains. I also applaud the commitment by the Ministers of Mines of the International Conference to develop a regional approach to boosting mineral value addition and formal cross-border trade.

103. The meaningful participation of women in political and peace processes remains key for sustainable peace. All opportunities must be seized to strengthen their role. The high-level regional women's forum hosted by Mr. Lourenço marks an important step in this direction.

104. Lastly, at this time of crisis, I urge the international community to provide the funds necessary to address the humanitarian needs, as well as to create opportunities to strengthen resilience and address key drivers of instability through investments in sustainable development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in the region.

105. I thank the Special Envoy and his Office for their tireless support in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, as well as their continuing assistance to regional confidence-building mechanisms and the resumption of region-led mediation processes.