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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.¹ The report provides an overview of peace and security developments since the previous report ([S/2025/202](#)) and covers the period from 28 March to 15 September 2025.

II. Major developments

A. Security situation

Democratic Republic of the Congo

2. The security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained highly volatile.
3. After its rapid offensive in January and February, the Alliance Fleur Congo/ Mouvement du 23 mars (AFC/M23), supported by the Rwanda Defence Force, consolidated its control of territory and expanded further into the Lubero, Masisi and Walikale territories of North Kivu Province and Kabare, Kalehe, Mwenga, Shabunda, Uvira and Walungu territories in South Kivu Province.
4. Hostilities among M23, Wazalendo and other armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued during the reporting period, including

¹ 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.



an attack in April by the Collectif des mouvements pour le changement-Forces de défense du peuple on M23 positions on the outskirts of Goma. AFC/M23 also pursued efforts to strengthen its forces through training and rearmament. In mid-May, M23 intensified illegal detentions of perceived opponents in Goma and Sake, including suspected soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, police officers and members of Wazalendo. Clashes between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and members of Wazalendo were also reported, including in Uvira, South Kivu Province.

5. In addition, clashes between M23 and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) intensified. According to first-hand accounts received by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, at least 319 civilians were killed by M23 between 9 and 21 July in Rutshuru territory, in North Kivu Province.

6. In North Kivu and Ituri, attacks on civilians by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) increased significantly, despite continued pressure from joint military operations by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces as part of Operation Shujaa. ADF reportedly restructured its operational units into three main groups, commanded by Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku), Ahmad Mahmood Hassan (alias Abuwakasi) and Seka Umaru, respectively, and has used drones for reconnaissance and attacks. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces signed two memorandums of understanding in April and June, respectively, further strengthening their cooperation and expanding the geographical scope of Operation Shujaa. The peace agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on 27 June (see para. 14) reportedly includes provisions for coordinated security efforts to facilitate rehabilitation works along the Kasindi-Beni-Butembo road. The intensification of joint operations of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces prompted an escalation of retaliatory attacks by ADF and a subsequent rise in civilian fatalities in North Kivu. An ADF attack in Lubero territory on 9 September resulted in at least 72 people being killed and more than 100 people abducted.

7. In South Kivu, clashes continued between Burundian armed groups, in particular Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi and the Burundi National Defence Force (Force de défense nationale du Burundi (FDNB)). New armed movements, such as the Front burundais de libération, emerged, further complicating the security landscape. The security situation around Uvira remained tense and volatile.

Cross-border security incidents

8. Cross-border tensions and security incidents continued to affect regional stability, with accusations of incursions, shelling and support to armed groups. In Kampala in March, Thomas Lubanga and Innocent Kaina, both of whom are nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under United Nations sanctions, established the Convention pour la révolution populaire (CRP) and the Coalition nationale pour la libération du Congo, respectively, with the declared objective of opposing the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the reporting period, CRP clashed repeatedly with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Ituri, displacing civilians, and attempted to form coalitions with other Ituri-based armed groups.

9. In a communiqué issued on 17 April, the armed group Twirwaneho, which is based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, alleged that FDNB, alongside the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Wazalendo, were directly involved in attacks targeting civilians of the Banyamulenge community in the high plateau of Fizi, South Kivu.

10. Between March and May, fighting between FDNB and the Rwandan armed group Forces de libération nationale in the Kibira forest, Cibitoke Province, along the border between Burundi and Rwanda, reportedly resulted in 100 fatalities in the latter group.

11. In June, the Ugandan authorities stated that they had “neutralized” suspected ADF suicide bombers in Kampala. That development underscored the transnational threat posed by armed groups in the region. On 11 July, the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces claimed that it had captured an ADF camp in Apakwang, Ituri, which was believed to have been under the control of Seka Baluku.

12. On 9 August, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, and the Chief of Defence Forces of the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, met in Juba to discuss security incidents along their shared border, following a clash over demarcation issues that occurred in late July between the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces and elements of the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces.

Regional security efforts

13. Following the decision taken on 13 March by the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to terminate the mandate of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC), the Mission’s withdrawal was completed on 29 June.

B. Political developments

Efforts to achieve peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

14. In March, in consultation with Qatar, the United States of America launched an initiative to facilitate a political solution to the crisis between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The process culminated in the signing in Washington, D.C., on 27 June, of a peace agreement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The agreement built on a declaration of principles signed by the two Ministers on 25 April and a concept of operations for the harmonized plan for the neutralization of FDLR and the disengagement of forces, which was elaborated in October 2024 in the framework of Luanda process, which was led by Angola. The parties committed to: a prohibition on hostilities; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both States; the cessation of support for armed groups; the disengagement, disarmament and conditional integration of non-State armed groups; peaceful dispute resolution; the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; and the establishment of a joint security coordination mechanism and a joint oversight committee. Under the agreement, the parties also committed to advancing the implementation of Security Council resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#). It is to be complemented by agreements on natural resources among the United States, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and by a framework for regional economic integration.

15. The parties held the inaugural meeting of the Joint Oversight Committee in Washington, D.C., on 31 July, and that of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 7 and 8 August. In a Statement of Tenets published on 1 August, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda announced their intent to establish a regional economic integration framework, with energy, infrastructure, mineral supply chains, national park management and tourism, and public health as areas of focus. In Washington, D.C., on 3 September, the Joint Oversight Committee held its second meeting, to discuss progress in the implementation of the 27 June peace agreement and related challenges.

16. Over the same period, Qatar facilitated discussions in Doha between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23, following a tripartite meeting of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, and the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, held on 18 March. In Doha, on 19 July, the Government of Qatar facilitated the signing of a declaration of principles, in which the parties committed to upholding their commitment to a permanent ceasefire, creating favourable conditions for dialogue and facilitating the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, among other commitments. On 19 August, the parties returned to Doha to pursue negotiations and agreed, in September, on a mechanism for the release of detainees.

17. On 11 April, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union appointed the President of Togo, Faure Essozima Gnassingbé, as the new mediator between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, succeeding the President of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço. The Assembly instructed the African Union Commission to develop a unified road map for the mediation process, building on progress achieved through the Luanda and Nairobi processes, and reaffirmed the leadership of the African Union in conflict resolution on the continent.

18. In April, the President of Togo, as mediator, visited Kinshasa, Kigali, Luanda and Kampala for consultations with the authorities of each country. In Doha on 30 April, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo participated in a consultative meeting alongside representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Rwanda and the United States. The meeting was aimed at enhancing coordination among the ongoing peace initiatives.

19. On 17 May, the Panel of Facilitators, comprising the former Presidents of Botswana (Mokgweetsi Masisi), the Central African Republic (Catherine Samba-Panza), Ethiopia (Sahle-Work Zewde), Kenya (Uhuru Kenyatta) and Nigeria (Olusegun Obasanjo), travelled to Lomé for working sessions and a coordination meeting with the President of Togo. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Huang Xia, attended the open segment of the meeting, together with the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union.

20. Between April and August, Mr. Obasanjo, in his facilitation role, travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and other countries in the region to discuss the way forward in the context of the peace process facilitated by EAC and SADC. On 11 July, Mr. Kenyatta was received by the President of Rwanda. From 13 to 20 July, Ms. Samba-Panza and Ms. Zewde visited Kinshasa jointly for consultations with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and civil society representatives. The consultations yielded recommendations for enhanced coordination and greater inclusivity of the ongoing peace processes, an inclusive national dialogue, the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and justice-related matters, including reparations for victims of the ongoing conflict.

21. At a joint meeting of EAC and SADC with the Panel of Facilitators, held in Nairobi on 1 August and co-chaired by the Chairpersons of EAC and SADC, a framework was adopted for the merger of the facilitation led by EAC and SADC with the mediation led by the African Union, the terms of reference of the facilitators, a design for the mediation process, the structure of a secretariat, and a framework for resource mobilization. On 13 August, the merger was endorsed at a summit of EAC and SADC, along with the terms of reference of the consolidated African-led process. The African Union Commission was called upon to lead the implementation of the merger.

Bilateral relations

22. Relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda remained strained, despite the peace agreement of 27 June. That situation included divergent views over the implementation of the concept of operations for the concept of operations for the neutralization of FDLR and its associated groups, and disengagement of forces or the lifting of defensive measures by Rwanda. At the second meeting of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism, on 17 and 18 September, the parties negotiated an operational order to advance the concept of operations, and agreed to begin implementing the order on 1 October.

23. Relations between Burundi and Rwanda continued to fluctuate, with, on the one hand, persistent tensions over the activities of AFC/M23 in South Kivu and, on the other hand, increased bilateral engagements between the two Governments. In interviews on 25 March and 30 April, the President of Burundi, Evariste Ndayishimiye, reiterated earlier accusations that Rwanda was planning an attack on Burundi. The Government of Rwanda characterized his remarks as “unfortunate”, stating that defence officials of Burundi and Rwanda were continuing to cooperate to de-escalate the conflict. On 20 June, senators from Burundi and Rwanda met in Kigali to strengthen interparliamentary cooperation.

24. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda continued to take steps to strengthen their bilateral relations. On 10 May, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sent the former Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Vital Kamerhe, to deliver a message to the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, on the sidelines of the third African Regional Interparliamentary Conference, held in Entebbe, Uganda. On 21 June, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo received the Chief of Defence Forces of the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces in Kinshasa. Their discussions were focused on extending Operation Shujaa in Ituri. In July, the Democratic Republic of the Congo demanded an explanation from Uganda after the reported reopening of border posts adjacent to areas occupied by AFC/M23.

C. Humanitarian situation

Impact of the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

25. The crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation. As at 31 August, some 5.3 million people were internally displaced, including 3.6 million in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. Incidents of forced internal displacement by non-State armed groups, which violate international humanitarian law, continued to be reported. Humanitarian access remained significantly disrupted in some areas, leaving displaced populations in desperate need of assistance. In addition, over 139,000 people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo sought protection across borders between January and April, almost double the total number of new arrivals recorded for 2024.

26. Some 1,798 individuals were repatriated to Rwanda from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the support of the National Commission for Refugees, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners, after leaving their homes due to cordon and search activities carried out by AFC/M23. Those movements are considered to be “returns under adverse circumstances” and do not conform to the principles of voluntary repatriation under international law.

27. Efforts to advance the voluntary repatriation of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda continued. A tripartite meeting of representatives

of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and UNHCR was held for that purpose in Addis Ababa from 22 to 24 July. The Office of the Special Envoy attended the deliberations and committed to continue working with UNHCR towards the voluntary repatriation of refugees. According to the joint communiqué issued after the meeting, returns of Rwandan refugees restarted after a pause between May and August. According to UNHCR, 4,529 Rwandan refugees returned to Rwanda between January and September 2025.

Other developments in the region

28. Food insecurity remained a major challenge in the region; in June, there were more than 30.6 million acutely food-insecure people in Burundi (1.2 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (27.7 million), the United Republic of Tanzania (242,000) and Uganda (1.4 million).

29. Climate-linked natural disasters and recurring communicable diseases, such as cholera, Ebola and mpox further worsened the humanitarian situation in the region. In April, severe floods affected about 1.5 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

30. Humanitarian responses remained significantly underfunded owing to severe cutbacks in donations from international partners, with the 2025 humanitarian responses of UNHCR and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs funded at 33 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively, as of September.

D. Human rights and the rule of law

Impact of the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

31. The human rights situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained deeply concerning. Between 28 March and 12 August, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo documented 2,309 human rights violations and abuses. While that number represents a 3 per cent decrease compared with the previous reporting period, the number of victims increased by 15 per cent, from 6,812 to 7,819. That trend reflects the continued heavy toll on civilians despite a reduction in the number of documented incidents.

32. Armed groups remained the main perpetrators, allegedly bearing responsibility for 1,628 cases (70 per cent) of documented human rights violations and abuses. M23 combatants were reportedly responsible for 812 alleged incidents of human rights abuses, followed by Wazalendo (193), ADF (116), various Mayi-Mayi factions (108) and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (95).

33. Information received by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office indicated a sharp increase in human rights abuses committed by AFC/M23 in areas under its control. According to that information, since 28 March, M23 has allegedly killed at least 833 individuals and abducted at least 1,436 others, including for purposes of forced recruitment. The Office also documented a resurgence of deadly attacks by ADF in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces.

34. State actors were responsible for 652 human rights violations in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo during the period under review. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were allegedly responsible for 273 of those violations, the Congolese National Police for 259 and other State actors for 72.

35. On 9 September, the report of the fact-finding mission on the situation in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo ([A/HRC/60/80](#)) was presented to the Human Rights Council. In its conclusions, the mission referred

to the gravity and widespread nature of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict, including acts that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. In its report, the mission also found widespread conflict-related sexual exploitation and violence. In addition, it found that the conflict further narrowed the space for human rights defenders, civil society and the media, and that incidents of hate speech and mob violence had increased.

36. On 26 June, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights delivered a ruling concerning its jurisdiction and the admissibility of a case submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo against Rwanda in August 2023. The Court dismissed the objections of Rwanda to its having jurisdiction in the matter and declared the case admissible, thereby paving the way for a full hearing against Rwanda for alleged human rights violations committed in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2022. Rwanda was ordered to submit its response on the merits of the case within 90 days.

37. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 22 August, the military prosecutor sought the death penalty for former President Joseph Kabila on charges including war crimes and treason over his alleged support for AFC/M23. The former President, who went on trial in absentia in July, was stripped of his immunity, his assets were seized and the activities of his political party were suspended. As of 15 September, the trial was ongoing.

Other developments in the region

38. Human rights violations and abuses were also reported in other countries in the Great Lakes region, including harassment, arbitrary arrests, deprivation of liberty, enforced disappearances, torture, unlawful killings and restrictions on freedom of expression.

39. Restrictions on civic space and intimidation of opposition figures in pre-electoral contexts were reported in Burundi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

40. With regard to Burundi, United Nations independent human rights experts noted an increase in serious human rights violations, including attacks against civil society and political opponents. They further expressed deep concern over forced voter registration and election violence ahead of the legislative and local elections on 5 June, which resulted in the ruling party, the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie – Forces pour la défense de la démocratie, securing all seats in the National Assembly and Senate, as well as 98 per cent of seats in communal councils.

41. In the United Republic of Tanzania, United Nations human rights experts observed a pattern of enforced disappearances and torture in the lead-up to the country's upcoming general elections in October.² In April, the main opposition party, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema), was barred from participating in the elections over its refusal to sign a code of conduct, and its leader, Tundu Lissu, was arrested and charged with treason and spreading disinformation. On 30 July, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in the United Republic of Tanzania, calling on the Government to "ensure respect of regional and international human rights standards in general, and particularly in relation to the elections scheduled to be held in October 2025".³

42. In Uganda, the leader of the People's Front for Freedom, Kizza Besigye, remained in pretrial detention, while over 50 supporters of the National Unity Platform were

² See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/tanzania-un-experts-alarmed-pattern-enforced-disappearance-and-torture.

³ See <https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/640-achprres640-lxxxiv-2025>.

reportedly subjected to human rights violations, and planned political rallies of that party were reportedly curtailed. At the same time, primary elections held within the ruling National Resistance Movement in July and August were reportedly marked by violence and intimidation.

43. In Kenya, nationwide anti-government protests held on 25 June and 7 July resulted in at least 57 fatalities and 661 casualties, according to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. There were reports of excessive use of force by national police and security forces, and of enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings.

III. Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

44. The authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo engaged in dialogue and reconciliation initiatives with community representatives in the eastern part of the country. Following local consultations in North Kivu and Ituri in late March, the President received representatives of the Provincial Assembly of North Kivu and religious leaders in Kinshasa on 10 April to discuss community dialogue initiatives and reintegration programmes for former combatants.

45. Representatives of the Catholic and Protestant churches of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued their consultations on a “social pact for peace and harmonious coexistence” in the country and the region. On 21 June, they submitted a report on their consultations to the President, who agreed to establish a working group to define the next steps, including a national dialogue. On 25 August, church leaders and other religious representatives presented a four-phase road map, including a proposal for measures leading to an international conference for peaceful coexistence in the Great Lakes Region.

46. In a separate development, on 29 June, the Aru II dialogue among armed groups active in Ituri concluded with the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement by six major armed groups. The dialogue brought together members of armed groups, traditional chiefs, community leaders and groups of women and young people. The newly-formed CRP did not participate in the dialogue.

47. On 22 July, the Independent National Electoral Commission announced that elections of local officials would be held in October or November 2025.

48. On 8 August, the President reshuffled his Cabinet, which now comprises 53 ministers, including 18 women and some moderate opposition figures and civil society leaders.

49. From 10 to 12 September, the National Oversight Mechanism of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework organized a workshop in Kinshasa, with the participation and support of the Office of the Special Envoy, to discuss possible synergies between the action plan for the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, the 27 June peace agreement and the declaration of principles signed in Doha.

B. Commitments at the regional level and engagement on the part of the guarantor institutions

Twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism

50. Efforts to revitalize the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework continued during the reporting period. On 28 May, the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was held in Entebbe. The meeting was hosted by the President of Uganda, as incoming Chair of the Mechanism, and resulted in the adoption of the action plan for the revitalization of the Framework. The gathering was preceded by a ministerial meeting, held on 27 May. The thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth meetings of the Technical Support Committee, convened on 20 and 26 May, respectively, helped to lay the groundwork for the ministerial and high-level discussions.

51. On 9 July, Ugandan authorities, representatives of the African Union and the Office of the Special Envoy held a coordination meeting, in follow-up to the high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism. The guarantors of the Framework, namely, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, SADC and the United Nations, also held consultations.

Regional cooperation efforts

52. In Kinshasa in early August, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held the nineteenth meeting of national coordinators to prepare for the next summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference, which was postponed from August to October.

53. An earlier meeting between representatives of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and AFC/M23 leaders, held in Goma on 2 June, elicited sharp criticism from the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 3 June, the National Oversight Mechanism and the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Burundi strongly condemned the meeting as contrary to the mandate of the International Conference and requested further clarifications from the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference.

54. In a separate development, on 7 June, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda announced the country's withdrawal from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), citing the alleged "instrumentalization" of ECCAS by the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the support of "certain Member States".⁴ The decision came amid objections raised by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi to the assumption of Rwanda as the Chair of ECCAS, in view of its involvement in an ongoing conflict with another State member of ECCAS. The President of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as Chair of ECCAS, was designated to engage with Rwanda on its decision to withdraw from the regional body. In a communiqué, published on 7 September at the conclusion of an extraordinary meeting of ECCAS in Sipopo, Equatorial Guinea, the participating Heads of State and Government commended the efforts undertaken in the context of the Washington, D.C., and Doha peace processes and the African Union mediation to restore stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

55. The forty-fifth summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC, held in Antananarivo on 17 August, was preceded by a meeting of the Council of Ministers of SADC, held from 12 to 14 August. In the communiqué issued at the summit, participants reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of SADC to promoting peace,

⁴ www.minaffet.gov.rw/updates/news-details/rwanda-withdraws-from-eccas.

security and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and welcomed the joint mediation efforts undertaken by the African Union Commission, SADC and EAC, and the process integrating the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes. Participants also acknowledged the urgent need for the complementarity and harmonization of Africa-led processes with other initiatives, including the agreement reached in Washington, D.C., in 2025 and the declaration of principles adopted in Doha. They condemned misinformation regarding the deployment of SAMIDRC and reiterated that the deployment had been conducted in full compliance with regional and international principles and obligations, with the objective of supporting States members of SADC in responding to external aggression.

Bilateral cooperation efforts

56. Several countries in the region continued to strengthen bilateral security cooperation during the period under review. Examples include cooperation between: Angola and the United Republic of Tanzania; Burundi and Uganda; the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa; the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda; Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania; Rwanda and Uganda; and South Africa and Uganda.

57. Burundi and Kenya, on the one hand, and Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, on the other, held meetings of their bilateral joint permanent commissions on political cooperation, in April and July, respectively.

58. With regard to economic cooperation and trade, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania signed several economic cooperation agreements on 10 May in Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. On 16 May, the President of Uganda hosted a tripartite meeting with delegations from the Central African Republic and South Sudan, which resulted in an agreement on a major road project to enhance connectivity and trade among the three countries. On 22 July, the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced the construction of four one-stop border posts in South Kivu to facilitate trade with Burundi. Kenya and Uganda also signed several bilateral cooperation agreements in July, followed by a bilateral ministerial meeting on cross-border trade, which was held on 30 August.

C. International commitments

59. Between 25 March and 5 April, United States officials held consultations with delegations from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda as part of the process that led to the signing of the 27 June peace agreement (see para. 14). The signing of the agreement was witnessed by the Secretary of State of the United States, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo. Following his appointment to the position on 1 April, the United States Senior Adviser for Africa visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda for consultations.

60. The International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region pursued its coordination efforts in support of African-led peacemaking initiatives in the region. On 17 March, the Group issued a joint statement on the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, expressing support for the call by the President of Angola, as mediator, for a cessation of hostilities, and urging the parties to engage in earnest in the peace process and the implementation of Security Council resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#).

61. During the reporting period, the European Parliament continued to call upon the European Commission to suspend bilateral agreements with Rwanda. During a visit to Kinshasa from 27 to 30 May, members of the European Parliament called for a

review the memorandum of understanding concluded between the European Union and Rwanda concerning critical minerals.

62. In a declaration issued on 2 June, several international partners, including Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States and the European Union, expressed concern at the worsening situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the declaration, they called for the swift withdrawal of uninvited foreign forces, including the Rwanda Defence Force, from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and enhanced coordination between regional and international peace efforts.

63. From 2 to 6 June, the International Organization of la Francophonie deployed a mission to Kinshasa, in response to a call for solidarity from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in follow-up to its nineteenth summit, held on 4 and 5 October 2024 in France. The mission was aimed at enhancing support for regional initiatives undertaken by EAC, SADC and the African Union, and identifying steps to bolster cooperation between the Organization and its States members.

64. On 12 August, the United States Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on entities linked to armed violence and the illegal sale of critical minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais-Force de frappe, Cooperative des artisanaux miniers du Congo, East Rise Corporation Limited and Star Dragon Corporation Limited.

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

65. In response to the worsening situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and persistent tensions between some signatories of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, the Special Envoy continued to extend his good offices, urging leaders to enhance coherence, complementarity and coordination of international and regional peace efforts, and offering the support of the United Nations. In meetings with senior officials from Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, he called for renewed cooperation, trust-building and dialogue among signatories, and urged them to uphold their commitments under the Framework.

66. The Special Envoy also stepped up his engagements with key stakeholders in regional and international peace efforts on eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In April, May and August, he met members of the Panel of Facilitators, and with the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, to discuss the next steps in regional peace efforts and the provision of international support, including by the United Nations. At the request of the Togolese authorities, he also sent a technical team to Lomé to advise the team of the President of Togo, including to support preparations for a meeting with Panel of Facilitators, which was held on 17 May.

67. In April, the Special Envoy travelled to Doha, where he met the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo and the United States Senior Adviser for Africa. The discussions were focused on the various peace initiatives under way in relation to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Envoy stressed the importance of aligning all international efforts with African-led initiatives and building on the gains made in the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

68. Also in April, the Special Envoy met the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. In April and July, he met the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace

and Security of the African Union. They discussed regional developments, joint support provided by the United Nations and the African Union for the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and coordination to support the implementation of the 27 June peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

69. In meetings with international partners, including members of the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region and the special envoys for the Great Lakes region of Belgium, France, Slovenia and the European Union, the Special Envoy advocated sustained support for peace efforts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

70. On 30 May, the Special Envoy spoke at the Global Forum for International Mediation, held in Hong Kong, China, sharing lessons from peace efforts and highlighting the importance of coordination among regional and international actors.

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

71. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to spearhead efforts to support the implementation of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region. On 15 April, the Special Envoy convened a virtual meeting of the Senior Policy Group for the Strategy to discuss recent political, security and humanitarian developments, including regional peace efforts, and to review and adopt the 2025–2027 action plan for the Strategy. The Office of the Special Envoy gave a briefing on the 10 flagship initiatives set out in the action plan and the steps ahead.

A. Reducing the threat posed by foreign armed groups

72. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to support the activities of the Contact and Coordination Group on non-military measures. Following the development in 2024 of a legal framework for the reintegration of former members of Burundian armed groups, the Office of the Special Envoy continued to engage the authorities of Burundi in preparation for the adoption of that framework. Once enacted, the legal framework is expected to facilitate the repatriation of former combatants to Burundi and their reintegration into civilian life.

73. The Office of the Special Envoy facilitated the procurement and installation of a mobile radio unit at a rehabilitation centre for former members of ADF in Kasese, Uganda, to enhance the capacity of the centre to conduct cross-border awareness campaigns targeting active ADF members in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

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

74. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to promote the sustainable and transparent governance of natural resources in the region through advocacy, collaboration and engagement with stakeholders. In April, the Office supported the twenty-sixth meeting of the Audit Committee of the International Conference on the Great Lakes and the thirtieth session of the Regional Committee on Natural Resources,

both held in Nairobi. Participants examined a formal request submitted on 21 March by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for an investigation into the alleged smuggling of minerals from areas under the control of AFC/M23, invoking the International Conference Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. They recommended the establishment of an ad hoc commission of inquiry, along with possible follow-up measures to be based on the findings of the inquiry. The commission of inquiry was subsequently endorsed at an extraordinary meeting of ministers of mining of the International Conference, held on 2 May in Lusaka.

75. On 5 May, on the margins of the Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains, organized in Paris by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Special Envoy co-chaired a high-level round table with the European Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes region on the topic “Developing incentives for durable economic perspectives in the Great Lakes Region”. The round table brought together representatives of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, regional bodies, financial institutions and development partners to discuss tangible economic incentives to support peacebuilding.

76. On 11 June, the Special Envoy delivered a virtual keynote address at the twentieth Mining Week conference in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, emphasizing the strategic role of the mining sector in promoting peace, stability and sustainable development. He called for stronger regional cooperation and value chain integration in order to ensure that mineral wealth contributed to long-term economic transformation in the region.

C. Finding durable solutions to forced displacement

77. From 24 to 26 June, the Office of the Special Envoy participated in a meeting of the Regional Advisory Group on advancing durable solutions for refugees in the Great Lakes region, held in Kampala. The meeting was organized by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in partnership with the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, the European Union and UNHCR. Participants updated the road map and timeline for the drafting of a regional strategy on comprehensive durable solutions for refugees, which is expected to be submitted in 2026 to the ministers of States members of the International Conference responsible for refugees.

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

78. To strengthen the voice of women in dialogue and peace processes, the Office of the Special Envoy, together with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and international partners, organized a meeting with women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Nairobi on 2 and 3 April. The meeting resulted in a road map outlining steps for consulting women in dialogue processes.

79. On 19 May, the Special Envoy and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security convened a meeting of the Advisory Board for Women, Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region to discuss options for revitalizing the Board, including its formal recognition within regional peace processes and the governance mechanisms of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

80. On 28 May, the Office of the Special Envoy facilitated the delivery of an advocacy message on behalf of women and young people at the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism. In a communiqué, participants committed to

strengthening the involvement of women, young people and civil society in monitoring the implementation of the Framework and agreed to establish a group of women mediators to support peace processes, including at the local level. The Office of the Special Envoy also supported the stakeholder consultations held in Kinshasa in July by the co-facilitators, Ms. Samba-Panza and Ms. Zewde, including by assigning a senior gender adviser to the consultations.

81. In March, the Office of the Special Envoy assisted the Government of Burundi with developing and validating a national gender strategy in relation to mining, with the aim of strengthening the role of women and young people and addressing persistent gender inequality in the sector. On 11 July, the Special Envoy hosted a virtual meeting with civil society organizations and women's networks from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo on ways to make political processes more inclusive.

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

82. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to engage with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Chair of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network of the International Conference, in follow-up to the eighth meeting of the Network, held in Nairobi on 10 and 11 December 2024. Efforts towards the adoption of a common criminal policy by the Ministers of Justice of States members of the International Conference are ongoing.

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

A. Regional organizations and mechanisms

83. The Special Envoy continued to strengthen collaboration with EAC, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, SADC and the African Union towards revitalizing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and coordinating regional peace initiatives, including in the context of his participation in the meeting of EAC and SADC on 1 August.

B. United Nations system entities

84. The Special Envoy placed strong emphasis on fostering collaboration with other United Nations entities in the region. Following the signing on 27 June of the peace agreement facilitated by the United States, the Office of the Special Envoy, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Office to the African Union and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa further enhanced their coordination to support the implementation of the agreement. In parallel, the Office of the Special Envoy and MONUSCO held meetings to discuss the ongoing peace initiatives, in particular the mediation provided by the President of Togo and the facilitation extended by EAC and SADC.

85. The Office of the Special Envoy also convened two political coordination meetings, bringing together United Nations political affairs officers and peace and development advisers serving in the region. The meetings offered a platform to jointly analyse recent developments in peace and security, at both the national and the regional levels, review and assess the impact of United Nations support for ongoing

peace efforts, and explore opportunities for enhancing joint analysis, messaging and engagement.

VI. Observations

86. I am encouraged by the renewed diplomatic efforts towards peace in the region and welcome the signing on 27 June of the United States-facilitated peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as well as meetings of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism and Joint Oversight Committee established under the agreement. I also commend the mediation role of Qatar and welcome the signing of a declaration of principles by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23 in Doha on 19 July, and the agreement on a mechanism for the release of detainees.

87. I commend the steadfast efforts of leaders of the region to help find a peaceful solution to the crisis, notably engagements by the President of Togo, as the African Union-designated mediator, and by members of the Panel of Facilitators of EAC and SADC. I am encouraged by the outcomes of the joint visit to Kinshasa by Ms. Samba-Panza and Ms. Zewde.

88. At the same time, I am deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the unrelenting suffering inflicted on civilian populations. The parties must act urgently to uphold and implement their commitments under recent peace initiatives and fully comply with Security Council resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#), in which the Council calls for an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities.

89. I am deeply concerned about the reported violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The conclusions of the fact-finding mission on the situation in North and South Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo give cause for serious concern, particularly as regards the gravity and widespread nature of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict, including acts that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. I am especially disturbed by the unprecedented levels of sexual violence, which must stop.

90. As the region charts a path towards lasting peace, regional and international stakeholders should seek to enhance coherence and coordination and to deliver lasting results for the benefit of the affected populations. I reaffirm the continued support of the United Nations for the peace initiatives under way. National peace and dialogue initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also have an important role to play in promoting peace and strengthening national cohesion.

91. I encourage Burundi and Rwanda to seize this momentum for peace to resolve their differences and normalize their relations.

92. For any peace initiative to have a transformative and lasting impact, it is crucial to address the root causes of the conflict. I commend the leaders of the region for convening the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, which led to the adoption of an action plan to revitalize the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

93. The Framework remains the most comprehensive regional consensus to date. Signatory countries are committed to upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and desisting from tolerating, aiding or supporting illegal armed groups. The Framework provides a foundation for building lasting trust and confidence among all signatories.

94. We must place inclusivity at the very heart of all political processes and ensure that the voices of all stakeholders, in particular those of women and young people, are taken into consideration. The consultations held by members of the Panel of Facilitators constitute an important step in that direction.

95. It is also crucial to curb the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources, both a key driver and a consequence of the conflict. I welcome the continued efforts by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to strengthen its Regional Certification Mechanism, including by drawing on lessons from the Kimberley Process.

96. I call upon the international community to help to mobilize the funds needed at this critical juncture, in particular to address the pressing humanitarian needs and support sustainable development. I further encourage international partners to support the action plan for the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework in order to bolster the vision for long-term stability and prosperity in the region.

97. In line with the decisions taken at the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, I call upon all States concerned to create and maintain the necessary conditions for the timely repatriation and sustainable reintegration into civilian life of members of foreign armed group who have voluntarily disarmed and expressed willingness to return to their countries of origin. Such efforts are essential to advancing regional peace and security and must be supported through sustained political will, adequate collaboration among relevant actors, legal frameworks and sufficient resources.

98. I thank the Special Envoy and his Office for their ongoing efforts to revitalize the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and to enhance complementarity among peace initiatives in the region.
