

Statement by the President of the Security Council

The Security Council recalls its mission to Kinshasa and to Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), from 9 to 12 March 2023.

The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of the DRC, emphasises the need to fully respect the principles of non-interference, good-neighborliness and regional cooperation and encourages the Government of the DRC to continue the efforts undertaken to ensure its primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and for the safety and security of United Nations personnel and assets. The Security Council commends the stabilising actions of MONUSCO, reiterates its call on all parties to continue their efforts to ensure full cooperation with MONUSCO, and requests the Secretary-General to provide MONUSCO with all necessary capacities to fulfil its mandate.

The Security Council strongly condemns the increase in attacks by the 23 March Movement, also known as M23, in North Kivu during recent months and the advances of M23 which are worsening security and stability in the region and further exacerbating an extreme humanitarian situation. The Security Council takes note of indications of initial steps towards disengagement. The Security Council demands the immediate and full implementation of commitments on the cessation of hostilities, the end of any further advances by the M23 and its withdrawal from all occupied areas as agreed through the African Union-endorsed Luanda Process. The Security Council further demands that all external parties immediately cease their support to Security Council-sanctioned M23 and withdraw from the DRC.

The Security Council expresses concern over the tensions between the DRC and Rwanda and, in this regard, calls for calm and increased dialogue between the two countries in furtherance of durable peace in the region. The Security Council encourages the DRC and Rwanda to prioritise peaceful means of addressing the challenges between them and reaffirms the importance of building confidence and trust in the region, in line with the objectives and commitments of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region. The Security Council calls on stakeholders to ensure an atmosphere conducive to constructive debate and dialogue.

The Security Council strongly condemns the increased attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Cooperative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) against civilians in Ituri and North Kivu and the activities of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). The Security Council demands that all members of armed groups immediately and permanently disband, lay down their arms, reject violence, end and prevent violations perpetrated against women and children, and release children from their ranks. The Security Council stresses that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable.

The Security Council reiterates its support to regional efforts through the East African Community (EAC)-led Nairobi Process and the Luanda Process to rebuild trust, resolve differences through dialogue and to continue to make use of existing subregional organisations and mechanisms. The Security Council urges the expeditious implementation of the outcomes of the Luanda and Nairobi processes, as well as the Communiqué of the

Mini-Summit of Luanda of 23 November 2022. The Security Council takes note of Angola's intention to deploy Angolan Armed Forces to eastern DRC, after consultations with the Government of DRC.

The Security Council welcomes efforts to advance the two-track approach of the EAC-led Nairobi process. The Security Council acknowledges the deployment of the EAC Regional Force to the eastern DRC and recognises the efforts of the Troop Contributing Countries to the EAC Regional Force. The Security Council encourages support to the EAC Regional Force, as appropriate, to promote regional peace and security. The Security Council calls for complementary efforts to ensure that these initiatives are mutually reinforcing, including with support from the Secretary-General, MONUSCO and the office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region.

The Security Council underlines the importance of a political resolution of the current crisis. In that regard, the Security Council urges all Congolese armed groups to participate unconditionally in the EAC-led Nairobi Process to seek political conditions in preparation for the disarmament, demobilisation, community recovery and stabilisation programme, in view of a return to civilian life, and for foreign armed groups to return to their countries of origin.

The Security Council underlines its readiness to designate individuals and entities engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the DRC, including by providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to, a designated individual or entity.

The Security Council expresses grave concern about the humanitarian crisis and calls on Member States and international and regional organisations to respond swiftly to the humanitarian needs identified in the Humanitarian Response Plan through increased contributions and to ensure that all pledges are honoured in full and in a timely manner.

The Security Council strongly condemns the continuing violence and abuses of human rights by all armed groups, including summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence and large-scale recruitment and use of children, and remains deeply concerned by the intensification of misinformation and disinformation. The Security Council further calls upon all actors to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, and to ensure accountability for violations, including sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Security Council welcomes further steps taken by the Government of the DRC towards the establishment of a national transitional justice process.

The Security Council encourages the DRC authorities to continue to work, with the support of MONUSCO, toward peaceful, transparent, inclusive and credible processes for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled in 2023, in accordance with the Constitution and the Electoral law, throughout the DRC, to facilitate free and fair elections, to ensure the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women at all stages, as both candidates and voters, and reaffirms the important role of youth in electoral processes.