



# 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 [2808 \(2025\)](#), 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> The report provides an overview of peace and security developments since the previous report ([S/2025/615](#)) and covers the period from 16 September 2025 to 15 March 2026.

#### II. Major developments

##### A. Political developments

###### *Efforts to achieve peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*

2. Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo intensified in late 2025, resulting in several agreements, notably in the context of the Washington-led peace process between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and the Doha-facilitated negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Alliance Fleuve Congo/Mouvement du 23 mars (AFC/M23). Despite these efforts, AFC/M23 temporarily seized control of Uvira, South Kivu Province, in December, contributing to a worsening security situation (see section II.B below). In response, regional actors stepped up their engagement through a series of high-level meetings under the auspices of the African

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, the region refers to the 13 signatory States of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the 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.



Union, Angola, Togo and Uganda, aimed at facilitating de-escalation, fostering dialogue and enhancing coordination.

3. The United States of America hosted four meetings of the Joint Oversight Committee and four meetings of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism. These meetings resulted in the finalization of an operational order for the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the disengagement of forces and lifting of defensive measures by Rwanda, and the agreement of a regional economic integration framework.

4. The process culminated in the signing, on 4 December in Washington, D.C., of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity, comprising the Declaration of Principles of 25 April, the Washington Peace Agreement of 27 June and the regional economic integration framework of 7 November. The Accords were signed by the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in the presence of the President of the United States. Several leaders from the region and beyond attended the ceremony, including the Presidents of Angola, Burundi and Kenya; the Vice-President of Uganda; the African Union mediator and President of the Council of Ministers of Togo; members of the African Union Panel of Facilitators; the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and the ministers for foreign affairs of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda signed bilateral agreements with the United States.

5. On 2 and 6 March, the Government of the United States announced two sets of sanctions targeting the Rwanda Defence Force and several Rwandan officials for actions viewed as undermining ongoing peace efforts and the commitments made under the Washington Accords. Measures include sanctions involving the blocking of assets under United States jurisdiction and prohibitions on transactions involving United States persons, and a visa restriction policy.

6. Qatar continued to facilitate negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23. Following the signing of a prisoner exchange mechanism on 14 September, the parties agreed on 14 October to establish the Ceasefire Oversight and Verification Mechanism. The Mechanism comprises an equal number of representatives of both parties, with the African Union, Qatar and the United States acting as observers. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) were also included in the Mechanism.

7. On 15 November, in Doha, the parties signed the Doha Framework for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which comprises eight protocols. While two protocols, related to the prisoner exchange mechanism and to the Ceasefire Oversight and Verification Mechanism, have been finalized, six others remain to be agreed upon, namely those pertaining to humanitarian access; internally displaced persons and refugees; the return of State authority; the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of combatants; economic recovery; and transitional justice.

8. At the regional level, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, in his capacity as Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, hosted a regional ad hoc summit on 21 December in Entebbe, Uganda, with the support of ICGLR and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Discussions focused on options to address the deteriorating security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including through stronger regional involvement and alignment with the Washington and Doha peace processes.

9. During a ministerial meeting on the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo held on 29 December, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union demanded the “immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of all uninvited foreign forces, armed groups and terrorist groups” from the Congolese territory and called for “renewed commitment [by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda] to implement the recently signed agreements in good faith”. The Peace and Security Council further “urge[d]” the President of Uganda to continue his good offices efforts towards a durable solution to the conflict.

10. On 2 February, at the seventh meeting of the Ceasefire Oversight and Verification Mechanism, held in Doha, the parties, as well as the African Union Commission, ICGLR and MONUSCO, signed the terms of reference for the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism Plus. MONUSCO and ICGLR subsequently carried out a joint assessment mission to Uvira from 23 to 27 February.

11. Meanwhile, Angola renewed its engagement in support of the ongoing peace efforts, including the Washington and Doha processes. The President of Angola, João Lourenço, received, on 9 February in Luanda, the African Union mediator and President of the Council of Ministers of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé; a member of the African Union Panel of Facilitators, Olusegun Obasanjo; and the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi. The four jointly mandated Angola to initiate consultations with “all interested Congolese parties” for a national dialogue to be organized in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by relevant national institutions and in accordance with the Constitution. The call of the President of Angola on 12 February for a ceasefire between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23, to take effect on 18 February, was accepted by the former but not the latter. AFC/M23 instead reiterated their commitment to the ceasefire mechanism agreed under the Doha process.

12. To support the implementation of the ceasefire, the defence ministers of the States members of ICGLR, at an extraordinary meeting held on 10 January in Livingstone, Zambia, agreed on a draft memorandum of understanding, to be signed by ICGLR, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23, and endorsed the appointments of the new Commander and Deputy Commander of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism. They also tasked the ICGLR secretariat with coordinating the development of an operationalization plan for the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism Plus, which was subsequently adopted at a meeting of the ICGLR Committee of Defence Experts, held on 4 and 5 March in Lusaka.

13. The African Union mediator focused on strengthening coherence and coordination among the various peace efforts, notably the African-led peace efforts. A high-level meeting, held on 17 January in Lomé, resulted in, inter alia, an agreement on the centrality of the Togo-led mediation within African peace efforts and the adoption of workplans for the African Union Panel of Facilitators.

14. From 29 January to 3 February, the African Union Panel of Facilitators travelled to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, for discussions with the respective Heads of State on the way forward. Having visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 22 December and having received the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Lomé on 12 January, the African Union mediator joined the Panel for the visits to Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. The Panel also held consultations with the African Union Commission and a delegation from the United States on the margins of the thirty-ninth African Union summit. Between 27 February and 5 March, one of the co-facilitators, Mokgweetsi Masisi, accompanied by a delegation from Togo, visited Burundi and Ethiopia for discussions on African solutions and options to address the urgent humanitarian dimensions of the crisis.

*Bilateral relations*

15. Despite the peace agreements and public commitments to peace, tensions and mistrust persisted between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as illustrated by continued mutual accusations. On 9 October, at the second Global Gateway Forum in Brussels, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo made a public overture to the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, who was also in attendance, stating that he would like to “offer peace” if Rwanda ordered AFC/M23 to stop the escalation. While the President of Rwanda did not respond, his Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Olivier Nduhungirehe, in a statement issued on social media, called on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cease support to FDLR and to disarm Wazalendo.

16. On 27 November, during a press conference, the President of Rwanda accused the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of not assuming its responsibilities to end the conflict, in particular by refusing direct negotiations with AFC/M23. On 28 November, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo renewed his accusations regarding the destabilizing role of Rwanda and ruled out integrating armed groups into national security forces. Following the seizure of Uvira on 10 December by AFC/M23, six days after the signing of the Washington Accords, both sides accused each other of jeopardizing the peace agreements signed in Washington, D.C., and Doha.

17. Following televised remarks made on 27 December by the then spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo formally disavowed the comments and suspended the spokesperson. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda subsequently said that the remarks risked inflaming ethnic divisions.

18. On 22 January, in a statement for the record addressed to the Chair of the Africa Subcommittee of the United States House of Representatives, the Ambassador of Rwanda to the United States, Mathilde Mukantabana, acknowledged that Rwanda was “engag[ed] in security coordination with AFC/M23”, given their “common interest” in protecting people from armed groups, such as FDLR.

19. Relations between Burundi and Rwanda worsened following the seizure of Uvira. On 10 December, in an interview, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Development Cooperation of Burundi, Edouard Bizimana, attributed AFC/M23 capabilities to Rwandan financial and military support, and said that all options were on the table to protect Burundi and its population. On the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda condemned the role of the Burundi National Defence Force in South Kivu, accusing it of laying “siege to Banyamulenge villages in Minembwe in a deliberate attempt to starve the residents”. In his address to the nation on 26 December, the President of Burundi, Evariste Ndayishimiye, said that his country had no plans to attack anyone but that its “northern neighbour harboured offensive intentions”. He later confirmed during a meeting with a member of the African Union Panel of Facilitators, Mokgweetsi Masisi, on 2 March, his commitment, on behalf of the African Union and Burundi, to contribute to a peaceful solution to the conflict.

20. Relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya were strained by the launch of the “Sauvons la RDC” movement in Nairobi on 14 and 15 October. Convened by the former President, Joseph Kabila, the movement called for a united front to “end dictatorship, restore democracy and reconcile the nation”. In response, on 15 October, the spokesperson of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Patrick Muyaya, accused Nairobi of becoming a “capital of conspiracy” against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while dismissing the

meeting in Nairobi as a “non-event”. On 16 October, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Jacquemain Shabani, denounced the alleged role of Kenya in the event.

### *Elections*

21. Four signatory States of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework held general elections during the reporting period. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the elections of 29 October saw the incumbent President, Samia Suluhu Hassan, declared the winner. The African Union election observation mission noted, however, that the elections “did not comply with African Union principles”, citing a restricted political environment and pointing to the need for urgent reforms. In the Central African Republic, the combined presidential, legislative, regional and municipal elections of 28 December resulted in the re-election of the incumbent President, Faustin Archange Touadéra, for a third term. While the vote was conducted in a calm and orderly manner, the opposition platform Bloc républicain pour la défense de la Constitution du 30 mars 2016 maintained its decision to boycott the polls, citing legal shortcomings and the absence of dialogue with the political opposition. In Uganda, Yoweri Museveni was re-elected as President on 15 January for a seventh consecutive term. A joint election observation mission comprising the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development reported restrictions on civil society and cases of intimidation and arrests of opposition candidates and supporters. Internet access was temporarily suspended during the elections in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. In the Congo, the presidential election took place on 15 March. The incumbent, Denis Sassou Nguesso, of the Congolese Labour Party, was re-elected President for a fifth term.

## **B. Security situation**

22. Despite the peace efforts mentioned above, the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo deteriorated further during the reporting period, with significant regional implications.

23. In late 2025, AFC/M23, supported by the Rwanda Defence Force, advanced further in parts of North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces and continued to consolidate control over previously seized areas, including through the gradual expansion of the parallel administration. In addition to territorial gains in Rutshuru territory and along the Masisi-Walikale axis in North Kivu, AFC/M23 entered Uvira, in immediate proximity to the Burundian border, on 9 December, prompting the authorities of Burundi to close several border posts with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

24. Following deep concern expressed by the mediators, notably the United States, AFC/M23 withdrew from Uvira between 17 and 18 January. Wazalendo militants allegedly entered the town thereafter and engaged in widespread looting and attacks targeting Banyamulenge residents. In a communiqué issued on 19 January, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced that they had taken control of Uvira on 18 January, while accusing AFC/M23 and its allies of systematic looting prior to their withdrawal. The Kavimvira/Gatumba border post was reopened on 23 February.

25. Between December 2025 and March 2026, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo intensified air operations, and clashes between AFC/M23 and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Wazalendo and other armed groups increased in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, particularly in Masisi and Fizi territories, respectively. Heavy artillery and a growing number of

armed drone strikes resulted in civilian deaths and infrastructure damage. An alleged air strike on Masisi-Centre on 2 January killed at least 6 civilians and injured 42 others. On 3 February, AFC/M23 claimed to have destroyed a military drone command centre at Kisangani airport, in Tshopo Province. On 24 February, a drone attack near Rubaya, North Kivu, killed the M23 spokesperson, Willy Ngoma. On 11 March, a drone strike in Goma, North Kivu, killed a staff member of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and two other people. M23 intensified the jamming and spoofing of communications in areas under its control.

26. FDLR and associated Nyatura groups remained active in North Kivu Province. Clashes between FDLR and AFC/M23 in Masisi and Rutshuru territories resulted in at least 108 civilian fatalities. In South Kivu, clashes persisted between the Burundi National Defence Force and Burundian armed groups, notably the Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi (RED Tabara). In December, RED Tabara elements reportedly met AFC/M23 representatives in South Kivu, potentially reinforcing their alliance.

27. In North Kivu and Ituri Provinces, attacks on civilians by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) intensified, despite continued pressure from Operation Shujaa, conducted by the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and notwithstanding the efforts of MONUSCO. During the reporting period, ADF killed at least 431 civilians, including 72 women and 3 children, highlighting the persistent threat posed by the armed group.

28. There was also a notable increase in activity in Ituri Province by the Convention pour la révolution populaire (CRP), led by Thomas Lubanga, who was previously convicted by the International Criminal Court and remains under United Nations sanctions. Clashes were reported between CRP and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably near Bunia and Lake Albert along the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

#### *Cross-border security incidents*

29. On 8 December, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in an address to parliament, accused the Rwandan army of having fired heavy weapons into Congolese territory from the Rwandan town of Bugarama, causing human and material damage. On 10 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda responded by claiming that the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Burundi National Defence Force and allied forces had "systematically" bombed villages close to the Rwandan border. These accusations could not be independently verified.

30. On 3 January, at a press conference, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented several alleged foreign military personnel captured in Congolese territory, including purported members of the Rwanda Defence Force. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda refuted the claims.

## **C. Humanitarian situation**

### *Impact of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*

31. The deteriorating security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation. Displacement remained extremely high, with 6.47 million internally displaced persons as of February 2026, including 1.8 million in North Kivu, 1.5 million in South Kivu and 920,000 in Ituri. Escalating violence severely restricted humanitarian access, while the sharp decline

in humanitarian funding in 2025 significantly impacted response capacities. In 2025, more than 1,000 nutrition centres closed, leaving over 390,000 severely malnourished children without access to essential treatment. Approximately 1.5 million people also lost access to primary healthcare, with facility closures, shortages of vital medicines and reduced epidemic response capacity. According to the 2026 humanitarian response plan, an estimated 14.9 million people require humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian community requested \$1.4 billion to assist 7.3 million people with the highest needs. As at 25 March 2026, only \$361 million (25.7 per cent) has been mobilized.

32. In addition, over 214,000 people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo sought protection in neighbouring countries in 2025, including more than 120,700 in Burundi and over 78,300 in Uganda. In Burundi, reception facilities have faced acute shortages of shelter, food, water and health services, following the arrival of at least 90,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo since early December.

#### *Other developments in the region*

33. The conflict in the Sudan continued to cause significant humanitarian and security challenges. Large-scale displacement into South Sudan and Uganda further strained fragile humanitarian systems and host communities already affected by chronic poverty, limited basic services and underfunded aid responses.

34. Food insecurity remained a major challenge across the region, with projections of 1.14 million food-insecure people in Burundi and 26.6 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the period from January to June 2026. Moreover, as of February 2026, there are an estimated 241,600 food-insecure people in the United Republic of Tanzania and 2.1 million in Uganda.

35. Recurring outbreaks of communicable diseases, including cholera and mpox, as well as climate-related natural disasters, further worsened the humanitarian situation.

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

### *Impact of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*

36. The human rights situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained deeply concerning. Between 16 September and 14 March, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo documented 2,913 human rights violations and abuses, representing a 9 per cent decrease compared with the previous reporting period. While the number of victims declined by 34 per cent, the scale, intensity and brutality of violence against civilians remained acute.

37. After weeks of intense clashes, M23 took control of Uvira on 10 December 2025 and occupied the city for five weeks. Following the withdrawal of M23 on 18 January 2026, cases of looting and destruction of property by civilians and Wazalendo combatants were documented. Members of the Banyamulenge community were disproportionately affected. They were also allegedly subjected to harassment, violence, arbitrary detention, forced displacement and hate speech, including by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Burundi National Defence Force and Wazalendo militants.

38. Armed groups were responsible for 73 per cent of the documented human rights violations, with 1,124 individuals reportedly killed during the reporting period. M23 remained the main perpetrator, with 444 alleged victims. Other perpetrators included Wazalendo groups, ADF, the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo and Mai-

Mai factions. State actors, including the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congolese National Police, were allegedly responsible for 631 human rights violations.

39. Conflict-related sexual violence increased further, with 324 documented cases attributable to parties to the conflict, affecting 516 victims (375 women, 137 girls and 4 men).

40. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 30 September, the High Military Court in Kinshasa sentenced the former President, Joseph Kabila, in absentia, to death for “treason, war crimes, crimes against humanity, collaboration with AFC/M23, participation in an insurrectional movement, and armed conspiracy against the State”. The Front commun pour le Congo and several opposition actors, civil society representatives and human rights organizations denounced the trial as politically motivated.

#### *Other developments in the region*

41. Restrictions on civic and political space persisted or worsened in several countries, reflected in arbitrary arrests and detention of opposition members, bans on political activities and limitations on freedom of expression and assembly, including in the context of recently concluded electoral cycles. These patterns raised growing concerns about adherence to constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations, as well as shrinking space for dissent during sensitive political periods.

42. Cross-border incidents linked to political activism affected bilateral relations. In October, two Kenyan activists disappeared in Uganda after expressing solidarity with the leader of the National Unity Platform, Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine; they were later repatriated following an intervention by the Government of Kenya. In the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenyan and Ugandan activists were reportedly arrested for sharing politically sensitive content during the country’s electoral period, while Kenyan influencers reported threats of prosecution for participating in cross-border digital campaigns.

43. In Kenya, reports of excessive force, custodial deaths and harassment of activists intensified during the by-elections of 27 November. In Uganda, over 300 opposition supporters were reportedly arrested between September and December. Opposition rallies were repeatedly dispersed through excessive force by State actors, and opposition party members and supporters were abducted ahead of and after the January elections. Following the polls, Mr. Kyagulanyi went into hiding, citing death threats, while his wife, Barbara Itungo Kyagulanyi, was reportedly assaulted on 23 January by armed intruders seeking information on her husband’s whereabouts. Mr. Kyagulanyi left the country in mid-March and is currently in the United States. At least 670 individuals, including opposition party supporters, were reportedly arbitrarily arrested and detained, and extrajudicial killings were reported. In the United Republic of Tanzania, post-election protests were allegedly met with excessive force, resulting in numerous fatalities, injuries and detentions.

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

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

44. On 17 October, the National Security Council of the Democratic Republic of the Congo concluded the technical validation of the country’s first national security policy, marking an important step towards national security sector reform.

45. On 31 January, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirmed his commitment to an inclusive national dialogue, to be held on Congolese soil. Following the meeting convened by the President of Angola on 9 February in Luanda, the Office of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo subsequently clarified on social media on 10 February that the national dialogue would be organized by Congolese institutions and in accordance with the Constitution.

## **B. Commitments at the regional level**

### *Regional cooperation*

46. The African Union and regional organizations and mechanisms, including ICGLR, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the East African Community (EAC), continued to engage on the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, emphasizing the need to ensure adherence to existing peace agreements. Their condemnation of the escalating violence reflected broad regional concern over the destabilizing impact of the hostilities.

47. On 11 December, in response to the seizure of Uvira by AFC/M23, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, “urged restraint”, while expressing opposition to any attempt to install a parallel administration in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

48. At the opening of the thirty-ninth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on 15 February, the outgoing Chairperson of the African Union, the President of Angola, noted that, despite the peace efforts, the security and humanitarian situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to deteriorate. He emphasized the need to advance dialogue towards national reconciliation and commended the efforts of the African Union mediator. The incoming Chairperson, the President of Burundi, highlighted the wider continental impact of the crisis and called for support for African Union conflict-prevention mechanisms.

49. At the ninth ICGLR summit, held on 15 November in Kinshasa, participants urged ICGLR member States to demand the immediate withdrawal of “troops of the aggressor country” from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called for dialogue. At the summit, Mubita Luwabelwa of Zambia was appointed ICGLR Executive Secretary, the ICGLR strategic plan for 2026–2030 was adopted, and participants called for an expedited review of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the evaluation of the six tools of the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources.

50. On 17 November, Rwanda, which did not participate in the ICGLR summit, rejected the summit’s resolutions on eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the Foreign Minister describing them as “null and void” and emphasizing that the Washington and Doha peace processes remained the only valid frameworks.

51. At a meeting of the ICGLR Regional Committee against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, held on 4 and 5 December in Entebbe, participants underlined the importance of the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in disrupting financing channels linked to armed groups. Participants finalized the report on the independent evaluation of the six tools of the Regional Initiative, stressing the need for sustainable financing, stronger national ownership and enhanced digitalization.

52. With regard to SADC, South Africa assumed the interim chairpersonship of SADC during a virtual extraordinary summit held on 7 November, following the decision of Madagascar to relinquish the Chair owing to political developments in the country.

53. On 1 December, ECCAS decided to establish a mediation committee to facilitate discussions on the potential return of Rwanda to the organization.

54. On 7 March, the twenty-fifth ordinary summit of EAC Heads of States was held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. Participants reviewed ongoing efforts to restore peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other topics, and urged the African Union to provide the necessary financial and logistical support to the African Union-led mediation process. In addition, participants elected Uganda as the new Chair of EAC, designated Rwanda as Rapporteur, and appointed Stephen Patrick Mbundi of the United Republic of Tanzania as Secretary-General for a term expected to run until 2031.

#### *Bilateral cooperation*

55. Efforts to strengthen bilateral security and economic cooperation continued, including between Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo; the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa; Kenya and Uganda; Rwanda and Uganda; and the Sudan and South Sudan.

56. On 4 December, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia signed a bilateral agreement to boost trade, develop one-stop border posts and advance regional economic integration.

57. On 21 March, the President of Kenya, William Ruto, and the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, officially launched the construction of the 269 km Naivasha–Kisumu–Malaba standard gauge railway. The extension will connect the Naivasha inland container depot to Kisumu port on Lake Victoria and the Malaba border post with Uganda to boost regional trade.

### **C. International commitments**

58. Beyond the United States and Qatar, international partners including France, the European Union and the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region remained actively engaged in support of peace and de-escalation efforts.

59. On 31 October, France hosted an international conference on peace and prosperity in the Great Lakes region, in coordination with Togo. The conference mobilized over €129 million for the humanitarian emergency in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was also intended to galvanize international support for ongoing mediation initiatives and regional economic integration efforts led by the African Union, Qatar and the United States.

60. At the bilateral level, the European Union and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed, on 9 October, a strategic partnership on infrastructure, peace and sustainable development. The European Union further adopted, on 24 November, a €10 million aid package under the European Peace Facility in support of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, focused on security sector reform and civilian protection. On 29 November, the European Union and South Africa concluded agreements on clean trade and investment and sustainable mineral value chains.

61. On 8 December, the European Council renewed for one year its restrictive measures related to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, targeting 31 individuals and two entities implicated in human rights violations, electoral obstruction and conflict-related activities.

62. Senior European Union officials, including the Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Johan Borgstam, and the Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, Hadja Lahbib, undertook repeated missions to the region, including to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, to help address the humanitarian situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Kinshasa, the Commissioner announced €81.2 million in European Union humanitarian assistance for 2026 for populations affected by the conflict and reportedly also outlined plans for a humanitarian air bridge. In Goma, during a press conference after a meeting with the Commissioner, the Coordinator of AFC/M23, Corneille Nangaa, said that he had accepted, in principle, to engage in discussions on the reopening of the airport.

63. The International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region held several meetings to assess the evolving security dynamics and progress in the peace processes, including a meeting in Berlin on 20 October and a virtual meeting on 22 January, following the assumption of the chairpersonship of the Group by Sweden on 1 January. In joint statements on 9 December and 5 March, members of the Group urged all parties to cease hostilities, return to the negotiation table, and fully implement their obligations under the Washington and Doha processes and relevant Security Council resolutions.

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

64. Efforts to revitalize the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework continued. At the thirty-ninth meeting of the Technical Support Committee, held on 2 and 3 December in Nairobi, participants reviewed progress in implementing decisions from the twelfth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism held on 28 May, including follow-up to the action plan for the Framework's revitalization.

#### **E. Good offices and political engagements of the Special Envoy**

65. The Special Envoy pursued his good offices aimed at preserving dialogue channels, reducing the risk of further escalation and regional spillover of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and fostering greater alignment of regional, continental and international peace efforts.

66. In his engagements with senior government officials from Angola, Burundi, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, the Special Envoy encouraged enhanced coherence, complementarity and coordination among peace initiatives, while reiterating the readiness of the United Nations to provide political and technical support. He also underscored the need to address the underlying root causes of the protracted instability. In this regard, he advocated for full commitment to the ongoing revitalization of the Peace and Security Framework.

67. On 16 December, the Special Envoy visited Kampala to encourage the engagement of Uganda, the current Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, and to discuss ways to narrow the gap between the parties' commitments and the reality in the conflict area.

68. The Special Envoy also intensified his outreach to facilitation and mediation actors. On 5 October, in Doha, the Special Envoy met the Minister of State at the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi, to take stock of progress under the Doha peace process and to explore avenues for United Nations support.

69. In October and January, the Special Envoy travelled to Lomé to attend the second Lomé Peace and Security Forum and a high-level meeting on coherence and consolidation of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively. On both occasions, he was received by the President of the Council of Ministers of Togo. Their discussions focused on additional measures required to advance African-led peace efforts in light of the deteriorating situation on the ground, as well as opportunities for further coordination of African-led and international peace efforts.

70. The Special Envoy also engaged with representatives of the African Union Commission and members of the African Union Panel of Facilitators to discuss next steps in the African-led peace efforts and options for United Nations support.

71. In an effort to mobilize continued international support for the region, the Special Envoy also stepped up his outreach to international partners and donors, including International Contact Group members, the European Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Norway and China, advocating for coordinated diplomatic engagement, synchronized technical assistance and alignment of international support behind African-led processes. He also participated in the international conference on peace and prosperity in the Great Lakes region convened by France on 31 October.

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

72. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to support the implementation of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Resolution in the Great Lakes Region, in partnership with the United Nations entities involved.

73. In addition to briefing members of the Technical Support Committee on 3 December on progress made in the Strategy's implementation, the Office convened a meeting of the diplomatic community and United Nations entities on 5 December in Nairobi to discuss regional peace processes and present the 2025–2027 action plan. The Office emphasized the need for sustained resource mobilization, innovative financing and private sector engagement to complement traditional donor support.

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

74. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to support non-military responses to foreign armed elements in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo through the Contact and Coordination Group and its operational cell.

75. From 3 to 7 November, in Entebbe, the Office facilitated the second meeting of the Contact and Coordination Group regional sub-working group on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration. The meeting resulted in the development of a draft standard operating procedure on regional minimum standards for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, to enhance the capacity of national actors to plan and implement safe, voluntary and verifiable repatriation of foreign ex-combatants.

76. In an effort to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region, the Office, in partnership with the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, facilitated a workshop from 10 to 13 February in Kampala, which resulted in the launch of a project on small arms and light weapons, funded by the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund.

77. From 23 to 27 February, the Office of the Special Envoy and the Peacebuilding and Peace Support Office, in collaboration with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, held a retreat in Kampala to advance two priority workstreams of the Contact and Coordination Group operational cell, focused on South Kivu and ADF, respectively.

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

78. As part of its efforts to curb the illicit exploitation of natural resources, the Office of the Special Envoy co-organized with ICGLR and the secretariat of the Kimberley Process a high-level workshop on 7 and 8 October in Gaborone. Workshop participants identified options for improving traceability, enforcing compliance and reinforcing governance among Governments, civil society and the private sector. The recommendations were validated by the ICGLR ministers for mines on 12 November and endorsed at the ICGLR summit held on 15 November.

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

79. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, commemorated by the African Union and the Government of Namibia on 16 and 17 October in Windhoek, the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, together with the African Union and other partners, held an information-sharing session on 18 October with women leaders and government and civil society representatives from the Great Lakes, Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. The session provided a platform for the two women members of the African Union Panel of Facilitators – the former President of the Central African Republic, Catherine Samba-Panza, and the former President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde – to engage with women from the Great Lakes region and present their vision for the peace process. It also facilitated exchanges between Congolese and Rwandan women.

80. On 2 March, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region and the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the African Union, Liberata Mulamula, co-chaired a virtual meeting of the Advisory Board for Women, Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region. Participants underscored the importance of inclusive peace and strengthened support for local women and peace and security initiatives.

81. On youth and peace and security, the Office of the Special Envoy and partners facilitated a virtual meeting of the ICGLR Regional Multifunctional Youth Forum on 22 September, bringing together over 120 youth representatives from 11 countries to share lessons and develop recommendations aligned with Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#).

82. To mark the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), the Office of the Special Envoy held an award ceremony entitled “Youth in Action” on 9 December in Nairobi. Five youth organizations from the region were recognized, with grants totalling \$55,000 to scale up peacebuilding initiatives.

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

83. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to engage with the ICGLR secretariat in follow-up to the eighth meeting of the ICGLR Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network, held in December 2024 in Nairobi.

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

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

84. The Special Envoy and his Office continued to strengthen collaboration with regional organizations and mechanisms, including the African Union, ICGLR and SADC, with a focus on natural resources management, women and peace and security, and security and judicial cooperation.

85. On 9 October, the Special Envoy met the SADC Executive Secretary, Elias Magosi, in Gaborone. They discussed the latest developments in the region and opportunities for closer collaboration in support of the ongoing peace processes.

86. On 20 and 21 October, the Special Envoy took part in the sixteenth high-level retreat on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, convened by the African Union Commission in Aswan, Egypt.

87. The Special Envoy also participated in the ninth ICGLR summit in November and the extraordinary meeting of the ICGLR Committee of Ministers of Defence in January.

### **B. United Nations entities**

88. Coordination with MONUSCO continued in support of regional security and stabilization objectives, including through participation in technical discussions on non-military measures related to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration.

89. The Office also collaborated with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF to advance the woman and peace and security and youth and peace and security agendas and support more inclusive peace processes in coordination with African-led initiatives.

90. The Special Envoy's engagements with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide explored opportunities for closer collaboration.

## **VI. Observations**

91. Recent months offered cautious optimism, marked by collective international and regional diplomatic efforts: the Ceasefire Oversight and Verification Mechanism of 14 October; the Doha Framework for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and AFC/M23 of 15 November; the Washington Accords of 4 December; and the enhanced coordination of African peace efforts under the aegis of the Togo-led African Union mediation agreed upon in mid-January 2026 – commitments that I welcome.

92. In this context, I commend the efforts of the President of Angola, as outgoing Chairperson of the African Union and African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa; the President of the Council of Ministers of Togo, as African Union mediator on eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; the President of Uganda, as Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework; and the consultations led by the African Union Panel of Facilitators. The United Nations reaffirms its unwavering support for these efforts.

93. Despite these diplomatic achievements, the armed conflict continues, heightening the risk of a broader regional escalation. Rising bilateral tensions and growing humanitarian needs threaten to undermine hard-won progress and regional stability.

94. The offensive launched by AFC/M23 in South Kivu in December, only days after the signature of the Washington Accords, underscored the urgent need to bridge the gap between diplomatic efforts and security dynamics on the ground. I am deeply alarmed by the continued violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and condemn the territorial expansion of M23. Intensified military confrontations, including the use of drones and heavy artillery, with disregard for civilian lives and infrastructure, are deeply concerning.

95. In line with Security Council resolutions [2773 \(2025\)](#) and [2808 \(2025\)](#), I urge AFC/M23 to cease hostilities and fully reverse the establishment of illegitimate parallel administrations in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected. I further call upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure urgent implementation of its commitments to neutralize FDLR. I reiterate my call for an immediate cessation of hostilities to protect civilians and enable concrete and sustainable progress in the peace processes. Every effort must be made to prevent the situation from spiralling into a fully fledged regional conflict. Building trust between the parties through sequenced confidence-building measures and ensuring inclusivity by engaging the wider region and local voices remains essential.

96. I call upon the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to recommit in earnest to implement in good faith and without delay their obligations under the Washington Accords, including the timely implementation of the harmonized concept of operations for the neutralization of FDLR and the disengagement of forces and lifting of defensive measures by Rwanda.

97. I urge the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to adhere to the commitments made under the Framework, including by respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring countries, and to neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups. I also call upon all signatory States to continue supporting the revitalization of the Framework.

98. There will be no sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region without addressing the structural causes of instability and violence. In this light, I am concerned by the continued limited mobilization of resources for sustainable development, as well as humanitarian assistance to address both short- and long-term needs. I call upon all partners to take steps to reverse this trend.

99. Transparent resource management remains central to addressing structural drivers of conflict. I was encouraged by the ICGLR high-level workshop held in Gaborone in October, which produced strategic recommendations to strengthen the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism. Building on this momentum, the Office

of the Special Envoy will continue supporting reforms under the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources.

100. The recent escalation also highlighted the impact of conflict on women and young people. Sustained peace requires their meaningful inclusion in political and peace processes. In this regard, I welcome the work done by the Office of the Special Envoy, in the context of the United Nations Strategy for the Great Lakes Region, to strengthen the role of women and young people in peacebuilding initiatives.

101. The recent intensification of the conflict also highlighted the impacts on women and young people. Sustained peace requires their meaningful inclusion in political and peace processes, as well as in the economic domain. In this regard, I welcome the work done by the Office of the Special Envoy, in the context of the United Nations Strategy for the Great Lakes Region, to strengthen the role of women and young people in peacebuilding initiatives.

102. I am deeply concerned by reports of intimidation of opposition actors and civil society representatives, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions during the recent elections in the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Restrictions on access to information and press freedom are also troubling. Upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential to democratic processes and sustainable peace.

103. I commend the Special Envoy and his Office for their tireless efforts in support of the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, as well as their engagement in enhancing coordination and coherence between regional and international peace efforts and mobilizing international support for the region, including through close cooperation with MONUSCO in advancing lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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