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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P10\_TA(2025)0020**

#### **Escalation of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2025 on the escalation of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (2025/2553(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),
- having regard to the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU of 25 January 2025 on the latest escalation in eastern DRC,
- having regard to the statement by G7 foreign ministers of 2 February 2025 on the escalation of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- having regard to the press statement of the UN Security Council of 26 January 2025 on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- having regard to the special session of the UN Human Rights Council of 7 February 2025 on the human rights situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- having regard to the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 28 January 2025 on the recent developments in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement of 15 November 2023 between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of the other part<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 136(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L, 2023/2862, 28.12.2023, ELI:  
[http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree\\_internation/2023/2862/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2023/2862/oj).

- A. whereas in January 2025, the armed rebel group M23, backed by Rwandan forces, further advanced in the eastern DRC and seized the regional capital city of Goma; whereas violence between rebel groups and the Congolese army increased sharply, causing a high number of civilian casualties; whereas an estimated 3 000 deaths occurred during the offensive on Goma; whereas approximately 800 000 internally displaced people were sheltering at that time in densely populated displacement sites around the city;
- B. whereas M23 announced a unilateral ceasefire to begin on 4 February 2025; whereas fighting has nonetheless continued, Goma airport remains closed, air traffic management equipment is damaged and humanitarian access is still limited; whereas there are reports that the mining town of Nyabibwe in South Kivu has been captured by M23; whereas M23 leaders have declared their intention to continue advancing in the DRC; whereas the latest advances of M23 mark an alarming escalation of the devastating conflict in the eastern DRC, a violation of territorial integrity and an escalation in violence, leading to a dire humanitarian crisis, human rights violations and the further destabilisation of the country;
- C. whereas the region has been plagued by decades of cyclical violence, causing a security and humanitarian crisis; whereas after a ceasefire that lasted several years, the M23 fighters took up arms again at the end of 2021; whereas martial law has been in force since 2021 in the eastern DRC and the civilian government has been replaced by the military; whereas the M23 forces have been expanding their presence in the eastern DRC, setting up new governance administrations and taxation systems, establishing military training camps and exporting minerals directly to Rwanda; whereas the long-term consequences of the terrible 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi are still fuelling violence, hatred and forced displacements today;
- D. whereas on 23 and 24 January 2025, M23 fired on positions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), which resulted in the deaths of 13 peacekeepers deployed with MONUSCO and the peacekeeping mission led by the Southern African Development Community (SADC);
- E. whereas the UN Group of Experts concluded in its June 2024 report that the deployment of the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) ‘violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’ and that the RDF’s ‘de facto control and direction over M23 operations also renders Rwanda liable for the actions of M23’;
- F. whereas the seizing of Goma has led to significant displacement of civilians; whereas over 500 000 people are estimated to have been displaced since early January 2025; whereas thousands of Congolese people had previously fled to the city to escape violence and have been further driven from camps for internally displaced people into makeshift tents or forced to sleep out in the open; whereas the safety of internally displaced people is now seriously threatened, with women and girls suffering disproportionately;
- G. whereas the deputy head of the UN peacekeeping force based in Goma has reported on the mass rape and killing of women inmates inside Goma’s Munzenze prison, and it is estimated that hundreds of women were raped and many burned alive in the prison;

- H. whereas women and girls in the DRC face increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence, resulting in there being one victim of rape every four minutes; whereas the staff of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, which receives many survivors of sexual violence, is alarmed about the deteriorating security situation in the area and about the security of the staff and patients in Panzi Hospital itself;
- I. whereas the seizure of Goma triggered violent protests in Kinshasa, with dozens of protesters attacking embassies and calling on the international community to halt the advance of M23;
- J. whereas the conflict in the DRC is at risk of regional spillover; whereas a peacekeeping deployment from the East African Community Regional Forces withdrew in 2023; whereas the SADC deployed a peacekeeping mission to the DRC in December 2023 with troops from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi; whereas at least 20 peacekeepers were killed during the M23 advance on Goma; whereas on 6 February 2025, Malawi announced the withdrawal of its troops from this mission;
- K. whereas it is widely acknowledged that Rwanda is active in the conflict in the eastern DRC, including through its de facto control of M23, to which it supplies weapons, logistical support and troops; whereas UN experts estimate that there are between 3 000 and 4 000 Rwandan troops operating with M23;
- L. whereas North Kivu is a resource-rich region, with vast supplies of critical raw materials including cobalt, gold and tin, which are necessary for the global digital and energy transition; whereas Goma is a major transport and trading hub for the export of minerals; whereas the UN estimates that around 120 tonnes of coltan are being moved by M23 to Rwanda each month; whereas UN experts further estimate that M23 is financed by around EUR 288 000 per month generated through its control of the mineral trade in the DRC; whereas the rebel groups often recruit child soldiers in a blatant violation of international law and humanity;
- M. whereas the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigations in the DRC have focused on alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed mainly in the eastern DRC, in the Ituri region and the North and South Kivu Provinces, since 1 July 2002; whereas the DRC made a second referral to the ICC in May 2023 concerning alleged crimes committed in North Kivu since 1 January 2022;
- N. whereas on 8 February 2025 at a joint summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the regional blocs of southern Africa, the SADC, and eastern Africa, the East African Community (EAC), called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, demanded the withdrawal of uninvited foreign armed forces from the DRC territory, urged all warring parties to hold peace talks within five days, and demanded the reopening of Goma airport and other key routes to facilitate humanitarian aid; whereas the African Union is set to address the matter at a meeting in Addis Ababa on 14 February 2025; whereas other mediation efforts are ongoing, notably by France, which aims to bring all actors to the negotiation table;
- O. whereas the Foreign Affairs Council of the Council of the EU is expected to exchange views on the situation in the DRC on 24 February 2025;

- P. whereas between 2021 and 2024, the EU provided EUR 260 million in funding to Rwanda, with an additional EUR 900 million pledged under the Global Gateway strategy; whereas following the latest developments in the eastern DRC, the EU declared that it stood ready to boost emergency assistance, particularly for the newly displaced populations in and around Goma, and on 28 January 2025, the Commission announced new humanitarian support for the DRC with an initial amount of EUR 60 million for 2025; whereas the EU is trying to intensify its presence in the region, including through its recent support for the ‘Green Corridor Kivu-Kinshasa’ programme via a Global Gateway initiative, which aims to help establish a sustainable 2 600 km corridor connecting the eastern DRC to Kinshasa and the Atlantic Coast, covering 540 000 km<sup>2</sup>;
- Q. whereas the EU has formed raw materials partnerships with several countries, including the DRC, Rwanda and other countries in the region; whereas these partnerships are focused on, among other things, advancing due diligence and traceability, cooperation in fighting against the illegal trafficking of raw materials, and alignment with international environmental, social and governance standards; whereas Parliament, unlike the Council, was not given the opportunity by the Commission to share its political assessment of the decision to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rwanda or to provide technical feedback on the draft MoU;
- R. whereas the DRC Foreign Affairs Minister Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner and Nobel Prize laureate Denis Mukwege briefed Parliament on 5 February 2025, at an extraordinary meeting of the Delegation to the Africa-EU Parliamentary Assembly (DAFR) and the Committee on Development, on the occupation of the eastern DRC and the dire humanitarian impact on the local population and internally displaced people;
- S. whereas the Council appointed Johan Borgstam as the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region on 1 September 2024; whereas on 30 January 2025, DAFR organised an extraordinary hearing with the EU Special Representative and Bintou Keita, Head of MONUSCO;
- T. whereas prior to recent developments, the DRC faced one of the largest displacement crises in Africa, with 6,7 million internally displaced persons, including 4,6 million in South and North Kivu; whereas the DRC also hosts over 520 000 refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries, while 1,1 million refugees from the DRC are being hosted in neighbouring countries in the region, more than half of them in Uganda; whereas the recent surge in violence has internally displaced over half a million people since the beginning of the year; whereas given the severe overcrowding in the displacement sites where people remain and the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, the risk of a cholera outbreak is extremely high, along with that of a rapid spread of the Mpox epidemic;
1. Strongly condemns the occupation of Goma and other territories in the eastern DRC by M23 and the RDF as an unacceptable breach of the DRC’s sovereignty and territorial integrity; urges the Rwandan Government to withdraw its troops from DRC territory, as they are in clear violation of international law and the UN Charter, and to cease cooperation with the M23 rebels; demands that Rwanda and all other potential state actors in the region cease their support for M23;

2. Strongly condemns the indiscriminate attacks with explosive weapons in populated areas of North Kivu by all parties, including on displacement camps and other densely populated areas near Goma, as well as the unlawful killings, rapes and other apparent war crimes, forced labour, forced recruitment and other abusive practices committed by M23 with the support of the RDF and by the armed forces of the DRC, the FARDC;
3. Is appalled by the shocking use of sexual violence against women and girls as a tool of repression and weapon of war in the eastern DRC as well as the unacceptable recruitment of child soldiers by the various rebel groups; demands that these matters be addressed by the international community without delay; strongly reiterates that any attack against UN-mandated forces is inexcusable and might be considered a war crime;
4. Calls for an immediate end to the violence, particularly the mass killings and the use of rape as a strategic weapon of war; calls on the DRC and Rwanda to investigate and appropriately prosecute those responsible for war crimes, including sexual violence, under the principle of command responsibility;
5. Is extremely concerned by the critical humanitarian situation in the country; calls for the immediate reopening of Goma airport to re-establish humanitarian operations and bring in supplies via the airport and the land border; calls for the creation and immediate opening of humanitarian corridors and for all parties, including armed groups operating in the eastern DRC, to allow and facilitate full humanitarian access based on needs and humanitarian principles, including ensuring that civilians and displaced people are not denied access to items essential for their survival;
6. Emphasises that humanitarian workers must be able to operate safely to deliver life-saving assistance to Congolese civilians, and that the safety of medical facilities must be preserved; stresses that this is a central obligation under international humanitarian law, and that perpetrators violating these obligations should be held to account; underlines that Rwanda and the neighbouring countries have a special responsibility to facilitate humanitarian access to the region;
7. Strongly condemns the attack on diplomatic institutions of the EU, its Member States and civil society organisations, such as political foundations in Kinshasa; underlines that the protection of civilians and diplomatic staff must be guaranteed;
8. Expresses concern over the lack of coherence in the EU response to the Great Lakes region's crises and calls on the Council to reassess the implementation of its renewed EU Great Lakes strategy; recalls that the EU and its special representative for the region are ready to assist all mediation efforts;
9. Welcomes the increased humanitarian support pledged by the EU, notes that this still falls far short of meeting the basic needs for food, water, medical assistance and shelter in the eastern DRC, especially in the light of the recent termination of support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); calls on the Commission and the international community to significantly step up financial support for urgent and life-saving assistance;
10. Regrets that the EU has not taken appropriate measures to sufficiently address the crisis and effectively press Rwanda to end its support for M23, and that it has instead taken steps – including the signing in February 2024 of an MoU on sustainable raw materials

value chains without sufficiently discussing the conflict, and the decision to top up support for Rwanda's deployment in Mozambique under the European Peace Facility (EPF) – that have failed to demonstrate sufficient safeguards and that have contributed to sending an inconsistent message to the Rwandan authorities;

11. Urges the Commission and the Council to immediately suspend the EU-Rwanda MoU on sustainable raw materials value chains until Rwanda proves that it is ceasing its interference and its exportation of minerals mined from M23-controlled areas; calls on all actors to increase transparency and to effectively ban the entry of all blood minerals into the EU;
12. Calls on the Commission to render the future re-activation of cooperation on critical raw materials conditional upon Rwanda joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which the DRC is already part of;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the current Conflict Minerals Regulation<sup>1</sup> is strongly enforced and on the Commission to propose a revision of the EU rules, with the aim of ensuring the highest standards of traceability and transparency;
14. Notes that parliamentary oversight and civil society involvement in the preparation, signing and implementation of raw material MoUs and roadmaps are essential for an inclusive process with adequate scrutiny, and must become part of the MoU;
15. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the international financial institutions to freeze direct budget support to Rwanda subject to it meeting conditions on, among other things, humanitarian access and the breaking of all links with M23; urges the Commission and the Member States to freeze their military and security assistance to the Rwandan armed forces to ensure that they do not contribute directly or indirectly to abusive military operations in the eastern DRC; calls strongly, in particular, for a review of the EU's renewed support under the EPF to ensure that troops deployed in northern Mozambique and benefiting from EPF support, as well as their commanders, have been properly vetted and have not been involved in the eastern DRC or in other human rights violations, with a view to suspending the support if it is found to contribute directly or indirectly to abusive military operations in the eastern DRC;
16. Urges the Commission and all Member States to ban the transfer of weapons to the Rwandan forces and M23 and to ensure greater transparency of trade in EU weapons;
17. Urges the Council to expand sanctions against senior M23 commanders, leaders of other armed groups and senior officials from the DRC and Rwanda – including Major-General Eugene Nkubito, the commander of the RDF's 3rd Division, and Major-General Ruki Karusisi, RDF Special Force Commander, identified in the June 2024 report of the UN Group of Experts, and Major-General Emmy K. Ruvusha, Commander of the Rwanda Security Forces, identified in the June 2023 report of the UN Group of Experts – and from other countries across the region, as being responsible for or

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas (OJ L 130, 19.5.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/821/oj>).

complicit in recent serious abuses by their forces or those for which they have command responsibility;

18. Urges the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Member States and the Government of the DRC to take immediate action to prevent sexual violence and improve care for survivors, including by adapting the national legal framework to guarantee access to medical abortion care; draws attention to the health needs of pregnant women, notably those who are displaced and out of reach of medical support; calls on the EEAS and the Member States to further prioritise the disbursement of humanitarian support for women and girls in the region;
19. Calls on the Commission to continue supporting anti-corruption efforts and the strengthening of governance in the DRC;
20. Commends the Prosecutor of the ICC's announcement that the ICC will continue to investigate alleged crimes committed by any person, irrespective of affiliation or nationality; reiterates the EU's unwavering support for the ICC and calls on the Council and Commission to fulfil their obligations to ensure the functioning and effectiveness of the ICC;
21. Reiterates its full support for MONUSCO in protecting civilians and stabilising the region; urges the EU to cooperate with all actors on the ground, in particular MONUSCO, to ensure the protection of civilians in the eastern DRC; calls on the UN to work towards a stronger mandate for MONUSCO in order to enable peacemaking; calls on the UN to ensure the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law, particularly given the increased risk of gender-based violence, and to preserve the safety of humanitarian staff, health workers and medical facilities;
22. Calls on the UN to take immediate and specific measures to protect Panzi Hospital and its patients and staff;
23. Welcomes the special session of the UN Human Rights Council of 7 February 2025 on the human rights situation in the east of the DRC; supports the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into serious violations committed since January 2022;
24. Reiterates its condemnation of hate speech and xenophobia, as well as ethnic-based politics; underlines that all those responsible for sustaining armed conflict, instability and insecurity in the DRC must be held accountable;
25. Is concerned about the consequences of Russian interference in the conflict and more widely in the region, and about the increasing presence of disinformation campaigns; condemns, in particular, efforts by Russia to foster anti-Western sentiment through the dissemination of fake news on social media about Western players;
26. Expresses its concern about the increasing presence of Chinese actors in the mining sector of the DRC and the region acting without respect for economic and social responsibilities, and recalls that European industries and companies in the region will only have long-term security of supply if a long-lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict is found;

27. Recalls that only an inclusive and regional approach will be able to address and tackle the multifaceted, long-standing problems in the region; strongly welcomes the joint SADC and EAC peace summit in Dar es Salaam on 8 February 2025; reiterates, in this regard, its full support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes and calls upon all Great Lake countries, in particular the DRC and Rwanda, to urgently pursue negotiations within these frameworks; emphasises that any solution must also address the root causes of the conflict, including, but not limited to, the illicit trafficking of natural resources; calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully support national and regional initiatives, such as the initiative of the Congolese Catholic and Protestant leaders, and the Luanda Process; underlines that regional organisations, such as the African Union, the SADC and the EAC, must play a central role in all of these efforts; underlines also that a lasting solution requires a reform of the DRC security sector, with a better organised DRC army and administration;
28. Calls on the international community and all actors involved to use the Addis Ababa framework agreement and to organise an international conference for peace in the eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region; stresses that this 'Business for Peace' conference will have the unique feature of having the private sector around the peace negotiation table, since the war is about strategic minerals; underlines that business people can have significant leverage to push their countries to act for peace; believes that the business for peace approach can help us move forward in finding a solution;
29. Calls for the cancellation of the 2025 International Cycling Union (UCI) Road World Championships in Kigali if Rwanda does not change course;
30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and Parliament of Rwanda and of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union, the secretariats of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community, and other relevant international bodies.