



Rwanda Hails Outcomes of AU Meetings, Reinforces Border Security

Kigali, 27 February 2023

Rwanda hails the outcomes of the recent meetings held during the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, on the situation in Eastern DRC. As implementation of the decisions of the Nairobi and Luanda processes commences, Rwanda has confidence in the role of East Africa Community Regional Force in supervising ongoing actions, including the withdrawal of M23.

The international community's support for the regional processes is welcome and useful, including statements from the United Nations Secretary General, the European Union, and the United States. It is positive that the U.S. statement on 22 February 2023 echoes the regional decisions related to hate speech and ethnic violence, the return of refugees, and the disarming and repatriation of the FDLR. However, the United States appears consistently out of step with the decisions of the regional processes, and risks undermining them, by continuing to endorse the DRC Government's false narrative blaming Rwanda for the crisis.

The repeated failure by the international community to condemn the DRC Government for the preservation of the FDLR encourages DRC to continue arming and fighting alongside this genocidal militia, which has conducted cross-border attacks in Rwanda while embedded with the Congolese army (FARDC).

This constitutes a direct and serious threat to Rwanda's security. The FDLR is not a benign or inconsequential force, and the ultimate goal of its partnership with FARDC is to attack Rwanda. Similarly, the purpose of unchecked hate speech and public incitement against Tutsi is to mobilize the population for future atrocities and ethnic cleansing, in the dangerous context of electoral competition.

At the same time, DRC has opted for continued military escalation in recent months, in defiance of regional decisions. In the context of increasingly bellicose statements by DRC civilian and military leaders, the DRC is deploying new hardware capabilities and foreign mercenaries in the common border area.

Given Rwanda's legitimate security concerns, defensive and preventive mechanisms have accordingly been reinforced to guard against violations of our airspace and borders. These contingencies are ready to act to prevent any cross-border threat, proportionately to its magnitude, origin, and nature. We will not allow any spill-over into Rwanda from any armed group, and total security for our territory and our people will be ensured.

We commend regional leaders for their commitment to a sustainable solution to insecurity in our region, including the decision by the African Union Peace and Security Council to use the African Union Peace Fund to support the East African Community Regional Force.

Rwanda has always worked within regional frameworks to contribute to stability in our region. But we cannot accept for Rwanda's security concerns to be trivialized and ignored.

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