

 **STATEMENT BY**

 **HIS EXCELLENCY**

**AMBASSADOR FRANCISCO JOSÉ DA CRUZ**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING**

**THE** **SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING**

**ON THE SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**January 28, 2025**

*Please check against delivery*

**STATEMENT FOR THE SECURITY COUNCIL EMERGENCY MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN THE DRC**

**VENUE: SECURITY COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**DATE: Tuesday, January 28, 2025**

**TIME: 3:00 AM**

**Mr. President,**

His Excellency Ambassador **Amar Bendjama**, President of the United Nations Security Council for the month of January,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

We welcome the presence of Her Excellency **Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner**, State Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and **Ambassador Ernest Raymucyo**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations.

We thank Ms. **Vivian van de Perre**, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Protection and Operation, for her briefing on latest development on the ground and for; we her bravery in keeping high the UN flag under these difficult circumstances.

**Mr. President,**

We are at a very critical juncture in the pursuit for lasting peace in the DRC and the normalization of diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda.

The M-23 has made a significant military advance in North Kivu province, worsening the already fragile security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC. It resulted in the capture of the provincial capital Goma, despite calls by the United Nations Security Council, the AU, and other actors in the international community to halt its military advances.

This is a make-or-break moment that requires wisdom and pragmatism from the concerning parties and relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and sub-regional organizations.

Although H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation and Facilitator of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda is making every effort to advance the Luanda Process, the security and humanitarian situation in the Eastern DRC has suffered a substantial deterioration in the last few weeks

On 24 January 2025, the Angolan Head of State expressed deep concern over the serious deterioration of the peace and security situation in the Eastern DRC. He condemned and denounced the actions of the M-23 and its supporters, which undermine the progress made in the Luanda Process. He reaffirmed that there is no military solution to the conflict and urged the parties to return immediately to the negotiating table.

Due to the rapid deterioration of the security situation, members of the Enhanced Ad-hoc Verification Mechanism (EAVM) and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) deployed in the city of Goma under the Luanda Process to support the pacification process in the Eastern DRC on Sunday had to be evacuated to Angola.

**Mr. President**

The UN Security Council is the world’s last resort when it comes to maintaining international peace and security. Its mandate is clear and must be respected and upheld.

Today we have one simple and direct message to the Council:

**THE CONFLICT IN DRC MUST CEASE AND THE WARRING PARTIES MUST RETURN TO NEGOTIATING TABLE**

The ongoing hostilities in the Eastern DRC have already claimed the lives of thousands of civilians and injured many others. Credible reports indicate that Goma has neither running water nor electricity, thus making living conditions of population and of those living in IDP camps almost unbearable. In addition, millions of people have fled their homes and they do not know where to go.

We demand the immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of the M-23 from the occupied areas, as well as the end to the establishment of parallel administrations in the DRC territory.

We call for the full respect of integrity of the DRC, in accordance with UN Charter, the international law, and the principle of sovereign equality of all Member States.

We call on all parties in conflict to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law, the protection of civilians, IDP camps and medical sites, and the protection of peacekeepers, while noting that attacks on civilians and peacekeepers constitute war crimes. Direct attacks on MONUSCO and SAMIDRC personnel are unacceptable and those responsible must be held accountable.

We urge the signatories of the August 2024 ceasefire agreement to urgently resume dialogue without preconditions. In this context, we call on both parties to return to the Luanda Process under the facilitation of H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola.

**Mr. President**

The hardly won gains achieved through the Luanda Process following months of intense negotiations must be preserved. In his capacity as the AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation mandated to facilitate the mediation between Rwanda and the DRC, H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço undertook several initiatives to resolve the differences between the two countries and made substantial progress, including the signing of the Rwanda-DRC Ceasefire Agreement on 30 July 2024, which entered into force on 4 August 2024.

In December 2024, he convened a Summit of the Presidents of the two countries, which was subsequently postponed due to disagreements regarding how to address the M-23 issue.

We reiterate our call for a **speedy** **and unconditional** **de-escalation** of hostilities and **a genuine and renewed** **commitment** to peace by both parties**.**  Immediate return to the negotiating table is the only way out, since the conflict and security challenges in the Eastern DRC have **no military solution**.

The parties must continue exploring ways to settle the M-23 pending issue in a view to create conditions to reschedule the Tripartite Summit.

We encourage the resumption of contacts between His Excellence Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya and the facilitator mandated by East African Community (EAC), with the Armed Groups in the DRC, including the M-23, to address sources of grievances that have led to the current level of insecurity in DRC.

The United Nations, the African Union, sub-regional organization and leaders in the region must work together and in a complementary approach to bring the DRC and Rwanda back to the Luanda Process.

**To** **conclude, Mr. President,**

We continue encouraging all parties to avoid any actions or rhetoric that can further escalate tensions, including provocative language or inflammatory public statements, which is counterproductive to the diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting solution to this conflict that has prevailed for so long.

In his quest to advance the Luanda Process, in the last few days His Excellency **João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço**, President of the Republic of Angola, has been in contact with several African leaders. Today he spoke to His Excellence Mohamed Ould Ghazouan, President of the Republic of Mauritania and current President of the UA and His Excellence Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the current President of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to which the DRC and Rwanda are members.

Angola reiterates the steadfast commitment of His Excellence President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço to continue playing his role as the Facilitator mandated by the AU to assist the normalization of the diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda to achieve peace and security in the Eastern DRC.

Thank you.