

MEETING OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SADC MEMBER STATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS WITH MR. JEAN-PIERRE LACROIX, UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR PEACE OPERATIONS

Permanent Mission of Angola to the United Nations

13 March 2024

Participants from UN

- General Birame Diop, Military Adviser, DPO
- Ms. Martha Pobee, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, DPPA-DPO
- Mr. Michael Kingsley-Nyinah, Director, Central and Southern Africa Division, DPPA-DPO
- Mr. Ugo Solinas, Deputy Director, Central and Southern Africa Division, DPPA-DPO
- Ms. Florence Poli, Political Affairs Officer, Central and Southern Africa Division, DPPA-DPO – notetaker
- Mr. Gueladio Ba, Political Affairs Officer, OUSG DPO

Objective of the Meeting

Discussion on ongoing deployment of the SAMIDRC to DRC and the eventual MONUSCO support to the regional force.

Background Information

The Extraordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Windhoek, Republic of Namibia, on 08 May 2023 approved the deployment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC) as a regional response to address the unstable and deteriorating security situation prevailing in the Eastern DRC.

The SAMIDRC was deployed on 15 December 2023 to support the Government of the DRC to restore peace and security in the Eastern part of the country. The SAMIDRC is comprised of contingents from Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania which are actively engaged in providing support to the *“Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo”* (FARDC) in the ongoing fight against M23.

The deployment of the SAMIDRC is in accordance with the principle of collective self-defence and collective action outlined in the SADC Mutual Defence Pact (2003) that emphasises that; *“Any armed attack perpetrated against one of the States Parties shall be considered a threat to regional peace and security and shall be met with immediate collective action”*.

The presence of the SAMIDRC demonstrates the commitment of SADC Member States to supporting the DRC in its efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability and, ultimately, create an enabling environment for sustainable development and prosperity.

On 22 November 2023, SADC formally requested UN assistance for SAMIDRC, including the provision of facilities, equipment, air asset services, medical support, and information and intelligence sharing, among other forms of support.

In resolution 2717 of 19 December 2023, which most recently renewed the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the Security Council expressed its intention to evaluate the conditions under which *“limited logistical and operational support may be provided to an AU-mandated regional force deployed within the area of MONUSCO’s deployment, in furtherance of MONUSCO’s mandate, and within existing resources”*. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report in June, which will include his recommendations on this matter.

Opening Remarks by the Chair

Since October 2023, the security situation in Eastern DRC has significantly worsened due to the Movement du 23 Mars (M23) military activities.

H.E. João Manuel Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa and Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), has been actively engaged in diplomatic initiatives aiming at achieving peace and stability in DRC through the Luanda and Nairobi processes. Mandated by the African Union, the Angolan leader has been mediating the ongoing political crisis between DRC and Rwanda.

On the margins of the AU Summit, H.E. President João Lourenço, convened a mini-summit on 16 February which saw the participation of regional leaders and AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat. The mini-summit discussed ways of restoring a cessation of hostilities and facilitating direct talks between the DRC and Rwanda to avoid the further expansion of the conflict into a regional crisis.

H.E. President João Lourenço held bilateral meetings with his counterparts of the DRC and Rwanda on 17 February. He continued his diplomatic engagement in Luanda meeting with H.E. President Felix Tshisekedi on 27 February and H.E. Paul Kagame on Monday, 11 March, as part of the Angolan leader renewed diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the perennial insecurity in the Eastern DRC and the Region. The Presidents of DRC and Rwanda has expressed the willingness to meet in the near future.