



Rwanda regrets DR Congo apparent abandonment of Nairobi and Luanda Peace Processes

Kigali, 19 January 2023

The Government of Rwanda notes with regret the 18 January 2023 statement of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is a selective reading of the Luanda Communiqué of 23 November 2022. The DRC statement avoids key decisions of the November summit, and concludes with what can only be seen as a threat of imminent attacks on Rwanda.

The staged demonstrations against the EAC Regional Force, in Goma and other parts of the DRC, constitute part of a plan by the DRC military and government to exit the Nairobi/Luanda peace processes. The goal of the demonstrations appears to be to cause the departure of the force, whereas the Luanda Communiqué calls for “Continued full deployment of the EAC Regional Force”.

The Luanda Communiqué comprises important decisions beyond the withdrawal of one Congolese armed group. This includes the “creation of conditions for the occupation of M23 currently controlled zones by the EAC Force, with the support of MONUSCO and the Ad-Hoc Verification Mechanism.”

The Luanda Communiqué also calls for the cessation of all political and military support to the genocidal militia FDLR and other illegal armed groups. The DRC is violating this decision by continuing to provide weapons and fighting alongside several illegal armed groups in Eastern DRC. This also constitutes a clear violation of the Nairobi Process, which is aimed at disarmament and demobilization of these armed groups, and a threat to Rwanda’s security.

In addition, the recruitment of foreign mercenaries by the DRC is a clear indication that the DRC is preparing for war, and not peace.

Of particular concern to Rwanda is the complete disregard of the Luanda decision to “consider and resolve the issue of the return of refugees to their countries of origin”. Rwanda continues to bear the burden of hosting over 75,000 Congolese refugees, with more arriving daily due to continued insecurity and persecution in eastern DRC. The DRC government has not acknowledged the situation of these refugees and made no effort to facilitate their safe return to their homes in the DRC.

The Government of DRC signed on to the ongoing Luanda and Nairobi processes as an implementing partner and should focus on full implementation. Attempts by the DRC to sabotage or abandon these regional agreements can only be seen as a choice to perpetuate conflict and insecurity. The Great Lakes Region cannot afford yet more failed peace initiatives – our citizens deserve better.

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