

The President of the Security Council presents her compliments to the members of the Council and has the honour to transmit herewith, for their information, a copy of a **note verbale dated 13 February 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations** addressed to the President of the Security Council, and its enclosure.

13 February 2024

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS
NEW YORK

NV/2020/13.02/D/2024

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Security Council and has the honor to transmit a letter from Honorable Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the Republic of Rwanda, addressed to H.E Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, in her capacity as President of the United Nations Security Council.

The Permanent Mission of Rwanda further has the honor to request that the letter be circulated to all Members of the United Nations Security Council.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Security Council the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 13 February 2024



Her Excellency Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett
President of the United Nations Security Council
New York

Copy:

- United Nations Secretary-General



Kigali, 12th February 2024
N° 057/09.01/CAB.MIN/24

Her Excellency Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett
President of the United Nations Security Council
NEW YORK CITY

Your Excellency,

The Government of Rwanda has learned with great concern, through the declaration of the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre LACROIX, that the United Nations (UN) is considering providing logistical and operational support to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC).

During his meeting with the SAMIDRC Force Commander, General DYAKOPU MONWABISI, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations stressed the importance of joint coordination to support the Congolese national army (FARDC) in their fight against “armed groups” in eastern DRC. According to a MONUSCO Press Release related to the press conference of Mr. LACROIX in Kinshasa on 7 February 2024, he explained that: *"In Resolution 2717 (2023), the Security Council mandated MONUSCO to examine ways in which it could provide limited logistical and operational support to the SADC force (SAMIDRC). The Mission is currently exploring options for providing this support. Proposals will be made to the Security Council, which will decide on the nature of this support and its modalities"*.

The Government of Rwanda notes that according to Paragraph 20 of Resolution 2717 (2023), the UN Security Council: ***“Encourages support to Regional Forces, as appropriate, expresses its intention to consider, upon clear and detailed request from the host country and the organisation concerned, the conditions under which limited logistical and operational support may be provided by MONUSCO to an AU mandated regional force deployed within the area of MONUSCO’s deployment, in furtherance of MONUSCO’s mandate, and within existing resources, further recalls that any such support should be in strict***

*compliance with the United Nations HRDDP, and **further stresses** the importance of the protection of civilians, of close coordination and information sharing between deployed regional forces, the FARDC, Burundi National Defence Forces, Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces and MONUSCO, including to deconflict operations and to ensure MONUSCO mandate implementation, and of the need to carry out all operations, joint or unilateral, in strict compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable."*

The Government of Rwanda further notes that according to Paragraph 48 of the same Resolution, the UN Security Council: "**Requests** the Secretary-General, in consultation with stakeholders, including the AU and regional organizations, to report to the Security Council by 30 June 2024 on possible logistical and operational support the United Nations can provide to regional forces present in DRC at the request of the host country and the organization concerned, in line with the Secretary-General's 2 August 2023 report, including recommendations to ensure, in such case, coherence, coordination, complementarity and efficient articulation of efforts between MONUSCO and these forces."

While the Government of Rwanda would naturally have no issue with the UN providing support to regional Forces, if they were genuinely intended to bring peace in eastern DRC, it wishes to draw the attention of the UNSC that SAMIDRC is not a neutral force in the current crisis. Its mission is to support the Government of DRC's belligerent posture, which bears the potential for further escalation of the conflict and increased tensions in the region.

While there are more than 260 armed groups in the eastern DRC, SADC Forces, like in 2013, are selectively supporting the DRC Armed Forces (FARDC) in the fight against M23 rebels, along with Burundian Forces (FDNB), European mercenaries, Rwandan genocidal forces (FDLR and its splinter groups) and a host of ideologically and ethnically-charged local armed groups known as Wazalendo. These Wazalendo groups include the notorious Congolese Hutu militia Coalition of Movements for Change (CMC-Nyatura) whose creation was inspired and facilitated by FDLR. They have vowed to cleanse the eastern DRC of Congolese Tutsi, whom they consider as Rwandans, and they are involved in horrible scenes of ethnic killings reminiscent of events that preceded the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. SAMIDRC has been conducting joint operations with these negative groups against M23, in support of the Government of DRC's resolve to pursue a military solution, in violation of the recommendations of both EAC-led Nairobi Process and Angola-led Luanda initiative.

Rwanda hosts around 100,000 of these refugees, some of whom have lived in Rwanda for almost thirty years now, including more than 13,000 who fled ethnic cleansing in eastern DRC during the last four months.

The intended UN logistical and operational support to the FARDC allied forces emboldens the Government of DRC in pursuing a military solution in place of a negotiated and peaceful solution of the crisis. The Government of Rwanda wishes to draw the attention of the UNSC members on the dangers of such move, including erosion of any peaceful settlement of the decades-long crisis in the eastern DRC, resurgence of ethnic confrontation and risk of a regional conflict given the determination of the presidents of DRC and Burundi to cause a regime change in Rwanda.

The Government of Rwanda would like to request the UNSC to avert the escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC, by not reconsidering the request to provide logistical and operational support to the FARDC-led coalition, which could only feed into more escalation. The UN Security Council should instead encourage the Government of DRC to pursue a peaceful solution within the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

The Government of Rwanda is willing and ready to play its role in supporting a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the eastern DRC. In the meantime, the Government of Rwanda will continue to undertake preventive and defensive measures against the declared intention of the presidents of DRC and Burundi to remove the Government of Rwanda and the threat posed by the Rwandan genocidal forces operating in the eastern DRC.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Vincent BIRUTA

Minister

CC:

The United Nations Secretary General
New York City

In her statements dated 30 November 2022 and 24 January 2023 respectively, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice WAIRIMU NDERITU, indicated to have received “*alarming reports on multiple attacks against civilians along ethnic lines in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, in eastern DRC*”. She warned that “*the conditions necessary for the commission of atrocity crimes continue to be present in a region where a genocide happened in 1994*”. In her statement of 24 January 2023, the Special Adviser recalled her visit to the DRC in 2022 as well as the technical-level mission by her Office in the same year which established that “*indicators and triggers contained in the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes are present in DRC including; dissemination of hate speech and absence of independent mechanisms to address it; politicization of identity; proliferation of local militias and other armed groups across the country; widespread and systematic attacks, including sexual violence*”. The Government of Rwanda wishes to put to the attention of the UNSC that this violence is particularly directed against Congolese Tutsi, including the Banyamulenge in South Kivu and Hema in Ituri, as reported by the UN Group of Experts on DRC and the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the basis of their ethnicity and perceived allegiance with neighboring countries and intergroup tensions.

The escalation of the conflict in the eastern DRC comes in the context of public declarations by the presidents of DRC and Burundi to support a regime change in Rwanda and heightened ethnic tensions in the region. The hyper-militarization of the eastern DRC with presence of ethnically motivated forces, both state and non-state is a serious concern to Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda is concerned that instead of condemning the ethnic killings in eastern DRC and belligerent declarations of the presidents of DRC and Burundi, the UN intends to support the coalition that is behind this escalation.

By associating itself with and supporting a coalition including SAMIDRC, FDNB and FDLR, the UN is acting on wrong premises and risks lending a hand to a coalition of forces whose sole objective is to uproot Congolese Tutsi in eastern DRC and which has declared its intention to destabilize Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda wishes to note that the conflict has persisted because the international community has deliberately ignored the root causes of the conflict, which include among others support to and preservation of Rwandan genocidal forces in eastern DRC, refusal of the Government of DRC to address genuine grievances of Congolese Rwandophones, especially Tutsi, and refusal to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Congolese refugees living in the region.