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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Bendjama	(Algeria)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Panama	Mr. Moscoso
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Somalia	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Ms. Shea

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item of the agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix (*spoke in French*): I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief it on the prevailing situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I will make a short introductory statement before the briefings by my colleagues, Ms. Bintou Keita and Ms. Joyce Msuya. As was discussed with the Security Council presidency, due to a previous commitment as part of an official visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, I will probably not be able to participate in the entire meeting. Through you, Mr. President, I ask the members of the Council and other participants to forgive me for that.

Today's meeting is taking place against the backdrop of a significant deterioration in the situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since the beginning of the year, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) has launched large-scale offensive operations in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the support of the Rwandan armed forces. Those actions have enabled it to significantly extend its territorial gains in the space of a few weeks, while opening up a new front in South Kivu, from which the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) withdrew on 30 June 2024.

The United Nations is deeply concerned by the resumption of hostilities, which has led to the capture of Sake, a strategic locality a few kilometres from Goma, directly threatening millions of innocent civilians and the peacekeepers deployed with the mandate to ensure their physical protection. In that regard, I refer to the statement of the Secretary-General on that matter, which has just been issued. I would like to call on Council members and other participants to look at it.

On 23 and 24 January, the M23 fired on positions of MONUSCO and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the past 48 hours, two MONUSCO peacekeepers belonging to the South African contingent and one Uruguayan peacekeeper were killed while carrying out the mandate entrusted to them by this Council. I recall that that mandate relates in particular to the protection of civilians and support for the fight against armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Eleven other peacekeepers were

injured and are receiving treatment at the United Nations hospital in Goma. Soldiers of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC), supported by MONUSCO under a mandate from this Council, were also killed or injured. There are also a very large number of civilian victims and significant additional population displacements in an already extremely difficult humanitarian situation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Secretary-General, our most sincere condolences to the families of the deceased peacekeepers, as well as to their Governments and to the people of South Africa and Uruguay, and I wish a speedy recovery to the injured. I also extend my condolences to the Governments of the troop-contributing countries of SAMIDRC and to the families of the victims.

I pay tribute to the courage of all MONUSCO peacekeepers in carrying out their mandate to protect civilians and counter the threat posed by armed groups. I take this opportunity to recall that attacks against United Nations peacekeepers and civilian personnel may constitute war crimes.

(spoke in English)

With the fate of Goma and its millions of inhabitants hanging in the balance, MONUSCO has shown admirable resolve in delivering on its protection of civilians mandate, often at great cost, while doing its utmost to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel. To that end, MONUSCO has reinforced its blocking positions, in coordination with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and SAMIDRC, to prevent the M23's further advance towards Goma. Steps have also been taken to ensure the swift resupply of United Nations contingents based in M23-controlled areas, notably Kiwanja, Kanyabayonga and Kitchanga. The Mission has activated contingency measures to facilitate casualty and medical evacuation procedures, as required. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita will provide further details on the steps being taken by the Mission to deliver on its mandated responsibilities, while doing its utmost to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel and installations.

At this critical juncture, with the lives of countless vulnerable civilians, peacekeepers and respect for this Council's mandate at stake, MONUSCO remains committed to the robust defence of its mandate under very challenging conditions. The Council must honour the sacrifice made by the peacekeepers who laid down their lives in pursuit of that noble goal by sending a clear and unequivocal message to the M23 and its backers that actions endangering the lives of civilians and United Nations peacekeepers will not be tolerated. All parties to the conflict must abide by international humanitarian law.

(spoke in French)

It is imperative that the M23 cease hostilities immediately and withdraw from occupied territories. The violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo represents a breach of the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations will continue to work with the main stakeholders to encourage the parties to resume negotiations as part of the Luanda process, which the United Nations fully supports. In that context, I would like to recall the significant progress made in recent months under that process. It is crucial that those gains not be lost. Rwandan forces must be withdrawn from the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the plan to neutralize the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda must be implemented; and the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism must become fully operational.

The populations threatened by the M23 offensive and the contributing countries that have made their soldiers and police officers available to the United Nations to ensure their protection expect a resolute response from this Council to re-establish an environment conducive to continuing political efforts to find a lasting solution to the current crisis. It is still possible to prevent the worst provided that the Council acts without delay.

The President: I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's urgent meeting to discuss the alarming developments in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 23 January, the military Governor of North Kivu, General Peter Cirimwami, was wounded on the battlefield and subsequently passed away. So far, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has lost three peacekeepers trying to protect Sake and Goma from the advance of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). I would like to express my condolences to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Governments of the troop-contributing countries, for those who were killed while implementing the Mission's mandate. I also wish a swift recovery to those injured, including our 11 MONUSCO peacekeepers.

Today, despite ongoing MONUSCO support to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), the M23 and Rwandan forces penetrated the Munigi quarter on the outskirts of Goma city, causing mass panic and flight among the population. Roads are blocked, and the airport can no longer be used for evacuation or humanitarian efforts. The M23 has declared the airspace over Goma closed. In other words, we are cut off. I call on this Council to act now to secure the civilian population, humanitarian aid workers and all United Nations personnel.

When I presented the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/863) on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, on 9 December (see S/PV.9804), the Mouvement du 23 mars, with the active support of the Rwandan armed forces, had consolidated its occupation in North Kivu province, doubling its controlled territory as compared to 2012. Today the M23 has expanded its control in North Kivu and extended its advance into South Kivu province, from which MONUSCO withdrew in June 2024. It has received reinforcements and supplies to strengthen its positions along several axes, both south and north of Goma. It notably deployed a heavy presence near Sake, 25 kilometres west of Goma, and is advancing in Munigi, 9 kilometres north of Goma.

In line with its protection of civilians mandate, MONUSCO has enhanced its support for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) by sharing information, participating in joint tactical planning and actively participating in combat, along with the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC). MONUSCO has notably activated Operation Springbok III and deployed one quick reaction force, one rapid deployment battalion, a reserve battalion, a platoon size of special forces and an artillery battery to reinforce its positions in order to counter the M23's advance. In a context of permanent movement of populations, fleeing for their lives or used as human shields, the military response, especially the use of MONUSCO artillery, is being carefully calibrated to avoid harming civilians and our forces on the ground or damaging civilian facilities.

The United Nations also temporarily relocated non-essential personnel from Goma. Those efforts are still under way. Such a measure aims to guarantee the safety of personnel, while maintaining essential United Nations operations in the province.

That relocation in no way affects the unwavering commitment of the United Nations to providing humanitarian aid and protecting civilians in North Kivu.

Global Positioning System jamming and spoofing incidents have resumed more intensely than ever before. Such attacks hamper the protection of civilians and the safety and security of United Nations personnel. The Mission stands ready to provide documentation in support of the Democratic Republic of Congo's complaint to the International Civil Aviation Organization and encourages Member States to do the same.

While MONUSCO's robust posture in support of the FARDC and SAMIDRC has helped to counter mis- and disinformation, the Congolese authorities and MONUSCO continue to coordinate joint communication and ensure clear, unified messaging. Nevertheless, I must draw the Council's attention to a troubling rise in targeted hate speech, led by M23-affiliated online campaigners. Their hateful rhetoric targets not only me as Special Representative of the Secretary-General but also the Mission's spokesperson, who has received threats of sexual violence. I call on the Congolese authorities to clearly condemn hate speech that targets especially human rights defenders and civil society actors. So far, at least 32 human rights defenders have approached MONUSCO for protection measures. In response, the Mission implements individual protection mechanisms with human rights networks.

(spoke in French)

Now more than ever, we need to find a political solution. A displaced person from North Kivu recently emphasized that even the Second World War ended thanks to dialogue. I therefore call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to continue political negotiations as part of the Luanda process. In that regard, hostile rhetoric and mutual accusations must stop to make way for constructive exchanges and actions. I welcome the efforts of the international community to preserve that process, particularly after the aborted summit of 15 December 2024.

Specifically, I also call on Rwanda to withdraw its forces from Congolese territory, to end its support for the M23 and to deploy its delegates as soon as possible to the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism so as to supplement the personnel from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, I call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make significant efforts to neutralize the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. I reaffirm MONUSCO's commitment to supporting those efforts in line with its mandate.

In parallel, I encourage close synergy between the Luanda process and the Nairobi process, which is being revitalized. In order to make substantial progress, concessions will have to be made. In particular, the M23 should immediately withdraw towards the pre-4 August positions. I call on all parties to respect their obligations to protect civilians in full compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Civilian infrastructure providing essential services to civilians must also never be targeted.

As Angola prepares to chair the African Union in February, I support a second quadripartite summit of the Southern African Development Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Economic Community of Central African States and the East African Community to strengthen peace efforts. It will also be vital to urgently convene a new tripartite summit between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. It will also be critical to hold the twelfth summit of the Regional Follow-up Mechanism of the African Union's Peace and Security Council in order to relaunch the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

I encourage Angola's presidency of the African Union to promote the inclusion of women in peace initiatives. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that could be achieved through the implementation of the national strategy for positive masculinity and the establishment of the interministerial committee and the national council for gender and parity, provided for in the 2015 law on parity.

MONUSCO supports efforts to hold all those responsible for human rights violations accountable. It is therefore important to identify the victims in order to provide them with justice, while reducing the risk of a recurrence of violence, including gender-based violence. In addition, international warrants must be issued against those who fuel insecurity and commit violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Together with the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Huang Xia, and all my other colleagues, I call on the Council to take decisive action, including targeted sanctions, against the perpetrators of violations. No exceptions must be made.

The President: I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is at a dangerous point. The situation is deteriorating rapidly, and, if hostilities spill into Goma, a densely populated urban centre, the impact on civilians could be devastating. More than 21 million people already need aid across the country — one of the highest numbers worldwide. Approximately 1 million people have already sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The escalation in the east threatens to make a critical humanitarian situation even worse.

In North and South Kivu, hundreds of civilians have been killed or injured in the past few weeks. Hundreds of thousands have fled their homes or shelters, often multiple times, to escape gunfire and shelling, especially around Sake and Minova. Humanitarian access remains constrained due to insecurity.

Hospitals, including Ndosho and Kyeshero in Goma, are overwhelmed. Medical facilities in Minova are also struggling to tend to the hundreds of people in need of treatment for gunshot and shrapnel wounds. Bombings in overcrowded displacement sites in and around Sake and Minova have resulted in casualties, including among children, and destroyed shelters, causing panic and further displacement.

I am particularly concerned about the impact on women and girls. We already know that gender-based violence increased by 300 per cent in recent years, and that two thirds of all cases occurred in the three eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri.

The Secretary-General has emphasized the importance of upholding international humanitarian law and international human rights law and ensuring immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need. I reiterate that call.

We urge all parties to protect civilians and the critical infrastructure on which they rely, respect the civilian nature of displacement sites and avoid using wide-area explosives and heavy weapons in populated areas. That will be particularly important should the hostilities spread into Goma given the risks of conflict in urban areas. All parties must take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout military operations.

In those challenging circumstances, our humanitarian partners have bravely and tirelessly continued their efforts to enable life-saving operations by negotiating access, including by providing critical care through our partners, particularly

non-governmental organizations that deliver medical and food assistance. To address the escalating humanitarian crisis before the situation further worsens, I have three asks to the Council.

First, I urge this Council and all Member States to leverage their influence to ensure that international humanitarian law is respected by all parties. Civilians must be protected. Internally displaced persons sites and medical facilities must be protected. Rapid, unimpeded and safe humanitarian access to those in need must be facilitated.

Secondly, since we are at the start of the year and many funding sources remain unavailable or delayed for various reasons, adequate funding is essential to enable and sustain urgent humanitarian action. In the light of the scale and severity of the current situation, we are allocating \$17 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for immediate life-saving interventions. However, let us be clear: additional resources are urgently needed.

Thirdly, I urge the Council and all Member States to use their influence to end the hostilities.

The scale of suffering in the Democratic Republic of the Congo demands urgent attention. The plight of the country's women, men and children cannot continue to go unnoticed.

The President: I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. I welcome the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Security Council is meeting today because of the rapid deterioration of the situation in North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the capture of Sake and the encirclement of Goma by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), made possible by the active support of the Rwandan Defence Forces. The situation is serious, and the Council must take stock of it.

France reaffirms its solidarity with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its unwavering commitment to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. It expresses its deep concern about the dangerous escalation of the conflict in North Kivu around Goma. It strongly condemns the ongoing offensive by the M23, actively supported by Rwanda. The presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a foreign military force against the will of the Congolese State is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. That offensive, as with the support to armed groups by all parties, poses a major risk to the security of the civilian population and is currently leading to the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. The M23 must immediately cease its offensive and withdraw from the territories it has taken control of.

France urges a return to the ceasefire and a resumption of dialogue. There is no military solution to the conflict. The President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, recalled that yesterday to Presidents Kagame and Tshisekedi Tshilombo, with whom he held meetings.

The dialogue initiated under the Luanda and Nairobi processes, with France's full support, must resume without delay. A political process must be resumed. France is ready to support it. Force is not an option. In that context, France calls for the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of

the Congo and the implementation of the plan to dismantle the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, in accordance with the commitments made under the Luanda process.

Finally, France expresses its full support for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which is playing an essential role in protecting civilians and whose mandate was unanimously renewed on 20 December 2024 (see S/PV.9824). We strongly condemn the attacks carried out by the M23 against MONUSCO, which have already led to the deaths of several peacekeepers in recent days. We recall that attacks against peacekeepers may constitute war crimes.

We pay tribute to the courage of the troops deployed as part of MONUSCO and express our condolences to the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as to South Africa, Uruguay and Malawi. France also condemns all measures that are hampering MONUSCO's ability to carry out its mandate, in particular the deployment of surface-to-air missiles and GPS jamming systems in areas controlled by the M23, with the direct support of the Rwandan Defence Forces.

The international community's reactions must be commensurate with the humanitarian and political consequences of the current M23 offensive supported by the Rwandan Defence Forces. France calls on the entire Security Council to mobilize and to condemn with one voice that serious threat to regional and international peace and security, as the Secretary-General did again this morning in very clear terms.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Somalia and my own country, Sierra Leone, as well as Guyana (A3+).

We are deeply grateful to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their thorough and detailed account of the alarming situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also warmly welcome the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the representatives of Rwanda, Angola, Uruguay, South Africa and Burundi at this important emergency meeting.

At the outset, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the family of Major General Peter Cirimwami, Governor of North Kivu. Our thoughts are also with the families of the fallen United Nations peacekeepers and the contingent of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC). We wish a speedy and full recovery to all those injured. We express our unwavering solidarity with the United Nations and humanitarian actors on the ground who continue their essential work under incredibly difficult and dangerous conditions.

In recent days, the A3+ has been actively engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to assess how the Security Council can best assist the Congolese people in bringing an end to the violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, following the breach of the ceasefire by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23)/Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC). Our consultations with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, alongside discussions with the Secretariat, have reinforced a singular undeniable conclusion: the resolution of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo must be political, not military. In that context, we affirm that the Luanda and Nairobi processes remain viable paths to peace.

Let us be clear — while we advocate a political solution, the sovereignty and territory integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected by all State and non-State actors alike.

In the light of the recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the A3+ would like to underscore the following key points.

First, we unequivocally condemn the killing of peacekeepers of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and of SAMIDRC military personnel during the current offensive by the M23/AFC rebel group. We commend MONUSCO for maintaining its defensive posture in protecting civilians and fulfilling its mandate. We call for continued coordination among MONUSCO, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and SAMIDRC in line with their mandates and relevant Security Council resolutions. We also strongly condemn the spoofing and jamming of GPS signals used by MONUSCO and demand that the M23/AFC cease such disruptive activities. While the international community rightfully focuses on evacuating its citizens, diplomats and staff, we must not forget the safety and security of the Congolese people who have nowhere to seek refuge. The protection of millions of Congolese civilians remains a top priority for the A3+. And we urge MONUSCO to continue its vital role in safeguarding both the population and critical infrastructure in Goma.

Secondly, we call on the M23/AFC rebels to immediately cease hostilities, halt their offensive and return to their designated pre-cantonment areas. The M23/AFC must engage through the Nairobi process and silence their guns. As we have stated, the ultimate resolution to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo lies in political dialogue. In the light of recent developments, the A3+ calls on all parties to engage meaningfully and in good faith in order to create the conditions for peace. In that context, we call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage in good faith with all relevant stakeholders and commit to the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), as outlined in the harmonized plan within the framework of the Luanda process. We call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Rwanda to return without preconditions to the diplomatic talks under the Luanda process to achieve a lasting and peaceful resolution of the conflict in the region, including by addressing respective issues pertaining to the neutralization of the FDLR and the disengagement of the forces outside the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, we strongly urge those who continue to support the M23's advancement to immediately cease such assistance, as it undermines the long-term peace and stability of both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader region. We are deeply concerned about the 25 January communiqué of the M23/AFC, which can only exacerbate tensions and undermine prospects for peace. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must receive our collective support, as a Council, in its effort to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to ensure the protection of its people. Furthermore, we urge the Security Council to work strenuously to promote meaningful engagement to de-escalate tensions and to avoid attributing blame to the parties to the conflict. We further call for proactive support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes. That includes ensuring that no external actors intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including through the provision of weaponry and other resources.

Fourthly, we emphasize the urgent need to resume the Nairobi process. We call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be fully committed to the process, and we encourage continued African leadership for engaging all

relevant stakeholders and revitalizing the process with the full backing of the international community.

As we call for an end to the M23/AFC offensive, the international community must take immediate action to support MONUSCO in alleviating the severe humanitarian crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are currently 6.5 million displaced persons in the country, with more than 34,000 newly displaced individuals seeking refuge around Goma. Emergency hospitals in Goma are overwhelmed with more than 290 individuals wounded, including 90 civilians, many of whom have life threatening injuries. We must rally behind MONUSCO and other United Nations agencies to provide vital medical assistance. We are deeply concerned that 80 per cent of Goma's electricity and water supply has been damaged owing to the M23/AFC offensive. Furthermore, 400,000 children are currently out of school as a result of the closure of educational institutions in the region.

In conclusion, we wish to express our gratitude to His Excellency President João Lourenço of Angola and former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya for their unwavering commitment to peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and their important contributions under the Luanda and Nairobi processes, respectively. We also echo the call of His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, urging all parties to engage in the ongoing peace efforts under the auspices of the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I thank today's briefers and, in particular, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her steadfast leadership of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) amid a clear and deliberate escalation of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya, and I welcome the participation in this meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We condemn in the strongest terms the hostilities against Goma and attacks on Sake by Rwanda and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). We urgently call for a ceasefire and an end to the fighting, which has endangered civilians and further displaced tens of thousands more, as hundreds of thousands flee the fighting.

The United States commends the MONUSCO leadership for taking such robust steps to defend Sake and Goma from Rwanda's and the M23's advances. We express our deepest condolences to the families of all of the peacekeepers lost during the attacks, and we commend all MONUSCO personnel for their bravery in protecting civilians during the ongoing assault.

Rwanda's use of advanced weaponry and systems, including GPS jamming and spoofing, have interfered with the humanitarian response, endangered MONUSCO and continue to endanger those fleeing from the violence. Those actions must stop immediately. The indiscriminate use of artillery has endangered civilians, with bombs falling on and near internally displaced persons (IDP) sites. Congolese and Rwandan leadership, as well as leaders of the M23 and other armed groups, must issue clear orders not to target civilians and to respect the civilian character of IDP sites.

There is no military solution to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To achieve a durable peace, all parties must honour their commitments to the Luanda process and the terms laid out by Angolan President Lorenzo and return to the negotiating table. We call for the swift operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism. We also support the efforts of former President Kenyatta to mediate with the M23. All sides of the conflict must respect the ceasefire in place since August and act swiftly to end the fighting. We call on all partners in

the Great Lakes region to use the diplomatic tools at their disposal to reinforce that message. All actors must also respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and put an end to all forms of support to armed groups, whether Congolese or foreign. All parties must uphold human rights and international humanitarian law and ensure immediate and unfettered access to populations in need of humanitarian assistance.

The United States remains alarmed by the findings of the recent report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo detailing the consolidation of a parallel administration, forced recruitment and the illicit exploitation of mining areas in M23-controlled territories (see S/2024/969). And we reiterate in unequivocal terms our condemnation of hate speech and xenophobia, as well as ethnic-based politics. The United States will consider all the tools at its disposal in order to hold accountable those responsible for sustaining armed conflict, instability and insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for briefing us at this urgent meeting today. I would also like to welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in our meeting.

Greece commends Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) for their continued efforts in the extremely difficult circumstances amid the escalating crisis in the region. We are following developments closely, also through our Embassy in Kinshasa, since there are Greek citizens residing in Goma.

I would like to emphasize four key points.

First, we strongly condemn the recent flagrant violation of the ceasefire and the subsequent further advance of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in North Kivu. The M23 must immediately reverse its territorial expansion and halt the encirclement of the town of Goma. The threats by the M23 of seizing Goma are completely unacceptable. Moreover, as the Secretary-General also assessed in his statement today, the presence of Rwandan troops on Congolese soil and their support to the M23 are very concerning. We call on Rwanda to cease its support for the M23 and to withdraw its forces now, and we reiterate that the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be fully respected.

Secondly, in the next stage, peace cannot be attained without the withdrawal of Rwandan forces and the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is more imperative than ever that both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in particular, Rwanda commit to the ceasefire, re-engage sincerely in political dialogue and implement all decisions and commitments agreed under the Luanda process. We commend Angola's President Lorenzo for his continued efforts for peace, and we believe that he deserves the Council's support. As a point of principle, my country, Greece, believes that African-led solutions are needed to address African issues and supports that.

Thirdly, the Council ought to focus on the humanitarian conditions, especially in North Kivu, which remain very dire. All parties must respect international humanitarian law and ensure unrestricted humanitarian access.

Fourthly, we express our deepest condolences to the families of the peacekeepers killed and to the troop-contributing countries — South Africa, Malawi and Uruguay. We wish the injured peacekeepers a speedy recovery. We emphasize that attacks

against peacekeepers may constitute potential war crimes and that attacks against MONUSCO peacekeepers also form a basis for sanctions designations.

Finally, MONUSCO must be granted full access and freedom of movement to effectively fulfil its mandate and address urgent needs. The protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel must remain an absolute priority.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their updates on the alarming situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

No words can truly capture the death and gravity of the situation we are witnessing in North Kivu as we speak. We must not and we cannot remain indifferent or silent to what is happening.

Slovenia is deeply alarmed by the recent rapid escalation of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The seizure of vast territories, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians and the blatant violation of international law are a direct assault on regional peace and stability. They undermine the Luanda and Nairobi processes and constitute a breach of the ceasefire agreements.

The capture of Minova and Sake, alongside the looming threat of the capture of Goma, is deeply alarming and involves catastrophic security and humanitarian consequences. We categorically condemn the actions of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and demand the immediate cessation of all hostilities. We call on its members to immediately stop attacks on Goma and halt any plans to seize any part of the entire city.

We call for the full and unconditional withdrawal of the forces from the territories that they have seized. We reiterate our strong call on Rwanda to immediately cease its support to the M23 and fully withdraw its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory. Any unauthorized military presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the same time, we urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cease all cooperation with the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and other armed groups, honouring their commitments under international law and regional arrangements. We urge Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take decisive actions to de-escalate tensions in their relations, re-engage in dialogue and place the highest priority on peace, stability and the well-being of the region.

The consequences of the displacement are severe. Concerns about the heightened vulnerability of women and children facing the abhorrent risk of sexual and gender-based violence are serious. We strongly warn against deepening ethnic divisions, including hate speech. We remind all parties of their obligations and call on them to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law, ensuring the protection of civilians and refraining from any actions, including the use of heavy firepower, which has devastating effects on densely populated areas, including displacement camps.

We unequivocally condemn the attacks and threats against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its personnel, as well as against the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the strongest possible terms. We mourn the tragic loss of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and extend our condolences to their families. We stand in solidarity with the wounded, wishing them a swift recovery. Those acts are not just an affront to those who serve in MONUSCO, and may amount to war crimes, but they are also

an assault on the very values of the international community and an attack on peace itself. They call for justice and accountability.

We extend our gratitude to all troop- and police-contributing countries for their sacrifice and contribution to the United Nations efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We stand with them in these difficult times.

A little over a month ago, all 15 members of the Security Council raised their hands in unison to renew MONUSCO's mandate (see S/PV.9824). That vote was not only symbolic; it was a commitment to the women and men peacekeepers in uniform and beyond whose foremost duty is the protection of civilians and supporting peace efforts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They have put their own lives at risk on a daily basis. Today those very women and men, alongside millions of innocent civilians, face mortal threats. We mourn the tragic loss of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and we stand with others in solidarity.

The international community and the Security Council cannot afford to remain passive in the face of the crisis. We have clearly heard calls from the field for the Council to send a clear message. It is our responsibility to provide our unequivocal support.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking all the briefers today and, in particular, to extend my thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her steadfast leadership. I welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner, as well as the representatives of Rwanda, Angola, Uruguay and South Africa.

The peacekeepers and personnel of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) work bravely to deliver the Security Council's mandate in the most difficult of circumstances. The United Kingdom reiterates clearly today that attacks on United Nations peacekeepers are absolutely unacceptable and may constitute war crimes. We also recall that planning, directing, sponsoring or conducting attacks against MONUSCO peacekeepers may constitute a basis for United Nations sanctions designations.

The United Kingdom extends its sympathies to the families of the Blue Helmets from South Africa and Uruguay who have lost their lives serving in MONUSCO. And we extend our best wishes for a full recovery to those peacekeepers who have been injured. The United Kingdom also extends its condolences to the families of all troops from the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) who have lost their lives in support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's stability and security. As we do so, we fully acknowledge that the numbers of those lost and injured is changing by the hour. It is a critical moment for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the region.

I would now like to make three points.

First, the United Kingdom once again condemns the violent actions of all armed groups, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). We are deeply concerned about the scale and pace of recent M23 and Rwandan Defence Forces advances in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In December, the Security Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate (see S/PV.9824). And in the four weeks since, the M23's unacceptable offensive and that of the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF), through North and South Kivu, has resulted in the capture of several towns and villages. As we have heard, hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced and violence has intensified as a result.

We are also deeply alarmed by the M23's declaration that it intends to take Goma, a city where the humanitarian situation is already catastrophic. The rising

number of displaced people resulting from the M23's territorial expansion has placed further pressure on crowded internally displaced persons camps and exacerbates the challenges faced by humanitarian actors.

This morning, the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary spoke with President Kagame and called for urgent de-escalation, outlining the need for Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to urgently return to the negotiating table.

Now, more than ever, it is critical that MONUSCO be able to deliver its mandate. M23 attacks on peacekeepers, with support from the RDF, must stop immediately. Those attacks prevent the force from being able to discharge its Security Council-mandated mission to protect civilians. Rwandan spoofing and jamming of GPS signals, which obstruct United Nations and humanitarian operations, must also stop. We urge all parties to remember their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Finally, the United Kingdom once again extends its thanks to Angola for its leadership on mediation efforts. We encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to return to the negotiating table and to focus on making tangible progress on delivering on their commitments under the concept of operations. There can be no military solution. The fighting must stop. Civilians must be protected. And the parties should engage in good faith in the political process.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her briefing today. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is facing immense pressure. Denmark greatly appreciates her continued leadership and engagement. Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya and, through her, the entire humanitarian community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and the Department of Peace Operations for their tireless work in support of our peacekeepers. I welcome the presence of His Excellency Foreign Minister Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner in today's meeting.

Let me first express Denmark's deepest condolences to the families, friends and comrades of the brave peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace.

As we speak, the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23), with the support of the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF), are advancing towards Goma. Denmark condemns, in the strongest terms, the M23's offensive in Goma and its recent capture of Minova and Sake. The human suffering that that has caused, and will cause, is unconscionable.

Let there be no doubt — that offensive, as well as Rwanda's military presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — are clear violations of the terms agreed in the ceasefire, clear violations of the Charter of the United Nations and clear violations of the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call on the M23 and the RDF to cease their operations and withdraw from all occupied areas immediately.

MONUSCO is operating under extremely difficult circumstances. It faces a hostile opposition that uses GPS interference and increasingly complex weaponry. That not only severely restricts the Mission's operations but also delays humanitarian aid delivery and complicates access to the most vulnerable civilian populations. Let me be very clear: Denmark deplores, in the strongest terms, any attack against Blue Helmets or United Nations staff and their humanitarian partners. Such attacks are unacceptable and a violation of international law and may constitute war crimes.

The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has long contended with a multitude of crises. The humanitarian situation is catastrophic. With the M23's advance from its surrounding areas, civilians sought protection in overburdened and overcrowded camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Goma. Widespread

sexual and gender-based violence, child recruitment, hate speech and xenophobia, summary killings and other persistent violations of international humanitarian law, as well as violations and abuses of human rights, have been reported and extensively documented. We express our deep concern for the protection of civilians. We call on all parties to immediately comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. All parties responsible must be held to account, and the protection of civilians, including human rights defenders, journalists and civil society, must be ensured. There is an urgent need to guarantee the security of all medical workers and humanitarian personnel, including in IDP camps. Humanitarian access and corridors must be ensured. That goes both for those fleeing and for those staying.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has faced instability and conflict for more than three decades. We are now at the brink of a more widespread conflict, with unspeakable devastation not just for the Congolese people but for the whole region. We urge all parties to act and engage in good faith and to immediately recommit to the existing, robust processes in place to resolve the conflict. We echo the statements made by the Secretary-General and urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to remain fully engaged in the Luanda process.

Momentum must be maintained on the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the withdrawal of Rwandan forces, as well as the swift application of the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism. We urge Rwanda to send its representatives to the mechanism immediately. Denmark expresses its full support both to the Luanda process and the Nairobi process.

We strongly urge Rwanda to immediately cease its support for the M23 and to withdraw its forces, and for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to immediately cease its support for the FDLR, both of which has been consistently documented by the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The illegal exploitation of natural resources in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is a key driver of instability in the Great Lakes region. That must end. We encourage Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to investigate and prosecute all actors and networks involved.

In conclusion, as we speak, the Congolese people are suffering. That suffering long predates this meeting and this current offensive and has deep historical ties. They are looking to the Council to act.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Bintou Keita, Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their briefings.

In recent days, tensions have escalated dramatically in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) launching offensives in North Kivu, capturing key towns such as Masisi, Minova and Sake, resulting in heavy civilian casualties and displacement. It is shocking that the M23 fired at positions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), resulting in the deaths of three United Nations peacekeepers and injuring many others. There were also serious casualties among troops of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. China condemns the M23 attacks against local civilians and peacekeepers. We express our condolences to the peacekeepers who lost their lives and our sympathy to the injured. Considering the current situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, China strongly urges the M23 to cease its attacks immediately. At present, the M23 continues to launch attacks and openly claims that it wants to take Goma, which is a matter of grave concern for China. The possibility of further escalation

of the fighting is deeply disconcerting. The relevant actions of the M23 constitute a serious violation of the ceasefire agreement and jeopardize regional peace and stability. China calls on the M23 to abide by the ceasefire agreement, stop resorting to force, withdraw from the territories it has taken and return to the track of political settlement. All external forces should refrain from providing military support to the M23 and other armed groups to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

Secondly, the protection of civilians should be the top priority. International humanitarian law is the bottom line that must be respected. No matter what the demands and objectives of the M23 armed attacks are, they should not come at the cost of civilian lives, and the M23 should not attack civilians and civilian facilities. At present, a large number of civilians have fled their homes, seeking refuge, and there is a severe shortage of humanitarian supplies. The international community should provide timely humanitarian assistance. The M23 should ensure that the channels for humanitarian assistance are open and unimpeded.

Thirdly, MONUSCO should be supported in performing its duties in accordance with its mandate. MONUSCO is at the forefront of the conflict and is carrying out its peacekeeping mandate in line with Council resolutions. The M23 should not threaten the safety and security of peacekeepers. Attacks on peacekeepers may constitute war crimes. China supports MONUSCO in strengthening its defensive measures in Sake and Goma and opposes acts such as jamming GPS signals that impede MONUSCO's mandate delivery. We also call on all parties to refrain from spreading misinformation and disinformation against MONUSCO and peacekeepers.

Fourthly, we must firmly support regional mediation efforts. Under the current circumstances, it is even more urgent to scale up mediation efforts. Although the tripartite summit has been postponed, the Luanda process remains an effective platform for resolving the issues of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. China expects the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to stay committed to the track of political dialogue, strengthen communication and find a lasting peace programme. China supports Angola and other parties concerned in continuing to intensify their diplomatic efforts to ease the situation. It is our hope that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Bintou Keita, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Xia Huang, will strengthen coordination and provide greater support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

China reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its support for the efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government in safeguarding national security. We hope that the Council will speak in one voice as soon as possible and create enabling conditions to promote the de-escalation of the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and maintain regional stability.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings, which described the very disturbing situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this meeting, as well as the representatives of Rwanda, Angola and other countries.

I would like to make the following points.

First, Pakistan supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We deplore any foreign intervention in its internal affairs. We call for the

withdrawal of Rwandan forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Secondly, we strongly condemn the attacks in North and now South Kivu by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). The M23 has captured Sake and encircled Goma, causing sizeable civilian casualties, and attacked United Nations and African peacekeepers, several of whom have been killed or injured. Those attacks on civilians and United Nations peacekeepers, deployed under the mandate of the Security Council, constitute war crimes, and those responsible for perpetrating, supporting or sponsoring those attacks must be held accountable. We demand that the M23 halt its attacks immediately, withdraw from the areas it has occupied and observe the ceasefire agreement of 31 July 2024, as well as end its GPS jamming and spoofing. We express our condolences to South Africa and Uruguay and to the families of the peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the noble cause of preserving peace and security.

Thirdly, we call for an adequate and urgent response to the humanitarian crisis that is being faced in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Assistance must reach all those affected by the M23 offensive and access must be ensured by all parties, including the M23, to the civilians and others in need of such assistance.

Fourthly, we admire the bravery of our peacekeepers. At the same time, we urge the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations to take immediate measures to ensure the safety and security of not only civilians, but also the United Nations and other peacekeeping units that are in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are particularly concerned about the Pakistani artillery battery located in Sake and adjacent areas. It is highly exposed and without supporting forces to defend itself against the M23 forces. That unit should be quickly redeployed for the safety of its personnel and its heavy and expensive equipment, which must not fall into the hands of the rebel force. Redeployment will also enable the unit to provide support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo forces more effectively. Such redeployment needs to be done immediately and while it is still possible.

Fifthly, the United Nations, MONUSCO and the Democratic Republic of the Congo forces must develop an effective military strategy to counter the M23 forces, which outnumber the forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the peacekeepers and has more advanced capabilities. We must ensure respect for MONUSCO and its forces, not only in the region but also within the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself. Pakistan feels that the withdrawal from South Kivu, from which Pakistani Blue Helmets withdrew, was hasty and influenced by political considerations. I must recall that our troops had succeeded in maintaining peace and order in South Kivu. We need to strengthen MONUSCO and equip it with the capabilities to respond to the challenges it is facing in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Without adequate reinforcements, equipment and political support, especially from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and other peacekeepers cannot be expected to implement their challenging mandate assigned to them by the Council.

Sixthly, we call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to resume the dialogue under the Luanda process, ably led by His Excellency President Lourenço of Angola. That process has made encouraging progress. We regret that the 15 December summit did not take place. It should be urgently reconvened. The understandings reached under the Luanda process — the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the withdrawal of Rwandan forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo — should be maintained and implemented even as the challenge posed by the M23 is confronted and ended. We also hope that reconciliation within the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be achieved

through the Nairobi process, under the able leadership of former President Kenyatta of Kenya. We extend our full support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa in promoting dialogue to resolve the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, we urge the Security Council to address the root cause of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, that is, the illegal exploitation of its natural resources. That requires greater oversight and traceability mechanisms, working in coordination with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional and international partners and encouraged and supported by the Security Council.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Bintou Keita and Joyce Msuya for their briefings. We welcome the participation in the meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, and the representatives of Rwanda, Angola, South Africa, Uruguay and Burundi.

We are extremely dismayed by the current escalation by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), and we condemn it. It is the civilian population who is suffering first and foremost as a result of its actions. We express our condolences to the families of all the citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have died. We are now forced to witness another wave of displaced persons. According to the latest United Nations figures, the number of displaced persons has exceeded 400,000 people. Many of those people were already internally displaced and were living in refugee camps in dire conditions.

We are particularly alarmed by the use in the area of hostilities of advanced weapons systems and the use of heavy artillery close to civilian infrastructure. We are also concerned about the continued use of electronic warfare means, which poses a threat, inter alia, to civilian aviation.

Unfortunately, there have also been casualties within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We express our condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers from South Africa and Uruguay and to the Governments of those countries. We wish a speedy recovery to the wounded from other contingents. Russia unconditionally condemns the attacks on Blue Helmets. One such attack, in March 2022, killed our compatriot Alexei Mizyura, a senior member of the Russian military observer team. We express our support and gratitude to MONUSCO, its leadership and its peacekeepers.

We also express our deepest condolences to the families of the fallen fighters of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from South Africa and Malawi. Russia stands in solidarity with the Governments of those countries and the SADC contingent, and we wish a speedy recovery to the wounded.

The current escalation following the breakdown of the Luanda summit in late 2024 clearly indicates the price to be paid for the failure of political instruments. We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urge Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to return to the negotiating table, under Angolan mediation, and to reaffirm their commitment to mutual obligations under the Luanda process.

At the same time, we would like to emphasize that real progress on the diplomatic track will be feasible only after the State ends its relations with illegal armed groups. That applies primarily to the M23 and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. It is for Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to decide whether the parameters of this process are to be defined in the framework of the relaunched Nairobi process or of other initiatives. In any case, it is clear that this issue requires a

comprehensive approach and certain flexibility by both sides. Without tackling this issue, it will not be possible to find a sustainable and viable formula for a political settlement of the conflict. And that should be done immediately if we are to avoid the worst-case scenario.

We must also not forget that the central element of the crisis is the illegal exploitation of Congolese natural resources. It is no secret what is now happening in the coltan-rich region of Rubaya, which is under the control of the M23. It is also well known that there are other groups and external players involved in this criminal business. We all know very well who they are, and we know that they are lining their pockets by smuggling bloody natural resources from the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are convinced that the struggle to gain access to strategically important Congolese minerals is one of the reasons for the continuation of the crisis we are witnessing now.

We once again call on countries with political and economic influence in the region to leverage their influence and to work with the main protagonists. That could contribute to a swift end to the escalation, as demonstrated in the situation we witnessed in 2012 and 2013.

At the same time, we will continue to work alongside other members of the Security Council to coordinate an appropriate response to the events taking place in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that we will be able to find the right language that will help to end the suffering of the civilian population and bring the parties back to negotiations.

In conclusion, I underscore that we must not forget that instability in the Great Lakes region is largely a legacy of the colonial period. It was precisely then that the colonial powers of that time laid the ticking time bombs that the region continues to suffer from.

We see how tired the Congolese are of violence and how much they want simply to live and work on their own land. Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, will do everything in its power to bring this longed-for moment closer.

Mr. Moscoso (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation appreciates the efforts of the President of the Council for convening this emergency meeting to address the alarming situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the light of the current situation. We recognize and appreciate the briefing of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Bintou Keita, whose leadership is crucial at this critical time. We also express our solidarity in the face of the threats she has shared with us today, which the Republic of Panama finds unacceptable. We also extend our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their valuable contributions in this complex scenario that has directly affected hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

Panama express its deep concern about the escalating conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, marked by recent advances by the rebel group Movement du 23 mars (M23) in North Kivu, which has further aggravated the already fragile security and humanitarian situation. The recent 23 January offensive has intensified the massive displacement of civilians into Goma and caused irreparable losses, including the tragic death of the Military Governor of North Kivu, Major General Peter Cirimwami. The advances of the M23, as well as the consolidation of de facto local administrations, not only pose a serious threat to the stability of the

region, but also directly challenge international mediation and peace efforts, such as those under the Luanda process and the Nairobi process.

We strongly condemn the actions of the M23 and of all those who directly or indirectly fuel this crisis. It is urgent that all stakeholders act responsibly and immediately cease any form of support to armed groups. Otherwise, the suffering of the Congolese people will be further intensified.

These developments also jeopardize the lives of United Nations staff and restrict their ability to carry out their mandate effectively. Against that backdrop, it is critical that the Council strengthen its support for MONUSCO with a unified voice, ensuring the necessary resources and support to respond to the current challenges and protect the most vulnerable populations. We strongly reject and condemn the attacks perpetrated against United Nations Mission personnel. We also deeply regret the tragic loss of life of the Blue Helmets in recent clashes during operations in North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We express our deepest solidarity and sympathy to the Governments and peoples of South Africa, Malawi and Uruguay for these irreparable human losses. We also stand with the bereaved families in this difficult time.

We honour the bravery and sacrifice of those who, with exemplary commitment, dedicated their efforts to the noble mission of preserving international peace and security. We acknowledge and thank the countries that have contributed troops to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, contributing to the mandate of protecting civilians and promoting stability in the country.

We urgently call on all parties to fully respect the ceasefire, immediately cease hostilities and honour their commitments under the Nairobi and Luanda processes. We also reiterate the pressing need to resume negotiations under the Nairobi process, in recognition that inclusive dialogue among all relevant actors is critical if we are to reach a lasting political solution.

In conclusion, Panama reaffirms its resolute and unwavering commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We believe that a comprehensive and coordinated approach, combining the leadership of regional mechanisms with the decisive support of the Council, is essential to put an end to the violence and alleviate the suffering of the Congolese people.

Time is running out. We cannot allow promises of peace to fizzle out through inaction. Today more than ever, it is imperative that the international community intensify its efforts to bolster the operational capacity of MONUSCO. History will not judge our intentions, but our actions. Only through firm commitment and concrete actions can we prepare the path to peace.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting. I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their timely briefings. I also welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner, as well as the representatives of Rwanda, Angola, Uruguay, South Africa and Burundi, to this meeting.

At the outset, the Republic of Korea expresses its deepest condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families and nations of all peacekeepers who have sacrificed their lives in fulfilling their mandate. We also wish a speedy and full recovery to all those injured.

I would like to underscore four points today, considering the devastating events on the ground.

First, we condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the ongoing offensive by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in North Kivu and demand that the M23 immediately cease its unjustifiable attacks. The M23's attempts to capture Goma, a city of approximately 2 million people, through advances along three different axes, have intensified civilian suffering. In the past week alone, as the group has expanded its territory by 11 per cent, the number of internally displaced persons has doubled to 400,000. Those actions clearly violate the ceasefire established under the Luanda process, inevitably provoking retaliatory measures by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo. The M23's establishment of a parallel administration on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo also constitutes an egregious violation of the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Those actions must cease immediately.

Secondly, Rwanda must stop all forms of support to the M23, and unauthorized foreign military forces must withdraw from the Democratic Republic of the Congo without delay. Otherwise, consequences will only lead to further violence and instability, not only in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in the larger Great Lakes region. Furthermore, the involvement of Burundian and other forces, coupled with the opening of new battlefronts in South Kivu, from which the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has already withdrawn, significantly heightens the risk of that rapidly expanding crisis escalating into a full-scale regional conflict.

Thirdly, the safety and security of peacekeepers must be upheld as a requisite priority in carrying out their mandates. In that light, we strongly condemn the attacks against the positions and bases of MONUSCO and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have already resulted in numerous casualties. The use of GPS jamming and spoofing, along with the deployment of surface-to-air missiles, is particularly alarming. Credible reports implicating Rwanda in those hostile acts are profoundly troubling. Those actions gravely undermine the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and significantly hinder MONUSCO's ability to fulfil its key mandate of protecting civilians. We take this opportunity to reiterate that attacks against peacekeepers may constitute war crimes, and involvement in such acts warrant sanctions designations in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Fourthly, we call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to return to dialogue and fully implement their commitments under the Luanda process. The postponement of the tripartite summit planned for December was disappointing, but it must not undermine the progress achieved thus far. We recognize the differing interests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, but further escalation of tensions is simply unacceptable. Many lives are at stake.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for President Lourenço of Angola and his important mediation efforts. All commitments under the Luanda process must be upheld, including the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the disengagement of forces. The operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism is essential to ensure strict compliance with the ceasefire.

In conclusion, as we stand on the precipice of even greater violence and instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, my delegation reiterates its urgent appeal for de-escalation and for all parties to step back from the brink.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would like, on behalf of the people and the Government of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, to express our gratitude for convening this meeting at such short notice. We recognize the commitment of the Algerian presidency of the Security Council and acknowledge the contribution of the United States during the previous presidency. We also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and acknowledge the essential contributions of Ms. Bintou Keita, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Ms. Joyce Msuya in efforts to support peace and security in our country.

Before continuing, I would like to observe a moment of silence to pay tribute to the ultimate sacrifice made over the past 72 hours by the peacekeepers of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also honour the courage of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the memory of the Congolese civilian population martyred by Rwanda.

History has brought us today to this Chamber where the destiny of nations is sealed. History tolerates neither indifference nor hesitation. What the Democratic Republic of the Congo is going through is not just another conflict, but a deliberate and methodical aggression against a sovereign State, a flagrant violation of the founding principles of this Organization and an intolerable attack on international peace and security. The Democratic Republic of the Congo legitimately expects the Security Council to act firmly and diligently to protect international peace and security and to uphold international law, a power conferred exclusively on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

At this very moment, as I stand before the Security Council, an attack of unprecedented gravity is unfolding before the eyes of the world. New Rwandan troops have crossed the twelfth and thirteenth border posts between Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Gisenyi, in Rwanda, entering our territory in broad daylight, in an open and deliberate violation of our national sovereignty. That is a direct attack, a declaration of war that is no longer hiding behind diplomatic manoeuvres.

In Goma, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, supported by the troops of the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community, are defending the city and its people on several fronts, with the bravery and determination that only the just and noble cause of defending one's legitimate right to exist can inspire. But that struggle is not limited to the battlefield: more than 3 million civilians and humanitarian workers are being held hostage by the aggressors, used as shields in a cynical strategy of terror and chaos.

The signs are clear: Rwanda is preparing to orchestrate open-air carnage with a brutality reminiscent of the darkest hours of our history.

It is imperative that the fighting stops immediately. Every hour that passes brings our region closer to a tragedy of intolerable proportions. We refuse to see a repeat of the nightmare of 1996, that dark chapter in African history that we thought was closed.

Today the victims are not only Congolese. The attack is directed against Africa as a whole, and I would even say against humankind as a whole. Rwandan bullets are indiscriminately hitting South Africans, Tanzanians, Malawians, Burundians and Uruguayans — those brothers and sisters who have come for peace.

And what about the members of the Security Council? The aggression is not aimed solely at the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is directed against them, against their Mission and against their peacekeepers, whom they have mandated to protect and not to be targeted.

Let me be clear: every minute that passes without decisive action by the Security Council is a victory for the aggressor. Every hesitation weakens the credibility of the United Nations and condemns innocent people to the unspeakable. The world is watching; it is time to act.

Since 6 January, the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) and its Movement du 23 mars (M23) proxies have intensified their attacks, in flagrant violation of 4 August 2024 ceasefire, occupying strategic localities such as and Katale, Lushebere, Masisi Centre, before advancing towards Bweremana, Minova and Kalungu. These attacks are aggravating an already catastrophic humanitarian situation, causing the displacement of millions of Congolese and aiming to drive civilians from their homes in order to establish a parallel administration and change the configuration of the region. In Goma, the RDF deliberately cut electricity and water supply lines, blocked strategic access roads and used Global Positioning System (GPS) jammers, endangering civilian and humanitarian flights.

On 19 January, the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Masisi Centre was hit by a rocket, wounding two aid workers. These acts, like the repeated attacks on internally displaced persons camps, illustrate a clear violation of international humanitarian law and reveal the objective of the RDF and the M23: to spread terror and paralyse humanitarian assistance.

We warn against the trap of the spurious pretext put forward by the Rwandan Government, which brandishes the protection of one of our many minorities as a justification for its interference. The reality is quite different. Today in the camps for displaced Congolese, the victims are of all ethnic groups, including Congolese Tutsis, who are suffering the same tragic fate as their fellow citizens due to the violence of the RDF and the M23. As we face this humanitarian catastrophe, it is clear that this crisis is directly linked to the economic plundering of our country.

The latest report (see S/2024/969) by the Group of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, reveals the scale of the pillage orchestrated by Rwanda. Every month, over 150 tons of coltan are illegally mined and transported to Rwanda, where they are fraudulently labelled for export. This illicit trade compromises the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and directly finances the military activities of the RDF and the M23.

In Rubaya, site of the region's largest coltan mine, the RDF and the M23 have established a parallel administration, exploiting our resources and imposing their control over local populations, with total impunity. These activities must be punished.

This illegal exploitation of natural resources is only one aspect of the aggression waged by Rwanda. Since the start of their campaign of terror in 2022, the RDF and the M23 have systematically targeted peacekeeping forces. On 24 January, Major General Peter Cirimwami Nkuba, Military Governor of North Kivu, was cravenly assassinated by the RDF while he was commanding on the front line.

On 25 January, nine South African soldiers, three Malawian soldiers and one Uruguayan soldier were killed in clashes with Rwanda and the M23. A United Nations tank was set on fire, marking a new threshold in open hostility towards multilateral institutions. Meanwhile, a company of Tanzanian peacekeepers in Kanyobagonga remains surrounded and cut off from all supplies by the RDF and the M23.

The latest report by the Group of Experts also reveals the use by the RDF and their proxies of a sophisticated arsenal: ground-to-air missiles, GPS-guided mortars and anti-tank missiles. These flagrant violations of the arms embargo and international humanitarian law pose a serious threat to the Great Lakes region. The humanitarian,

economic and security dimensions reveal an indisputable reality: systematic and coordinated aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Rwanda.

The Luanda process, designed to provide a framework for peaceful resolution, has been sabotaged by Rwanda's intransigence. Every commitment made in Luanda has been trampled underfoot, starting with the 4 August ceasefire. In addition, since the establishment of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism in Goma on 5 November 2024, Rwanda never sent its three military experts to supervise the implementation of the ceasefire. I note that, at our most recent meeting in the Chamber on this topic, Rwanda's Permanent Representative said the experts were on their way to Goma. Today, 82 days later, they still have not arrived.

On 15 December, Rwanda knowingly sabotaged the summit convened by the facilitator of the Luanda process, His Excellency President João Lourenço, by ignoring his invitation. And on 23 January, the President of Rwanda surprised the whole world by requesting mediation from Türkiye, departing from the principle of "African solutions to African problems".

Despite Rwanda's blatant disregard for the Luanda process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains fully committed and reiterates its confidence in His Excellency President João Lourenço. This process, endorsed by the African Union, remains the only legitimate framework for a political solution to the conflict between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

This exclusively inter-State framework cannot include non-State actors or elevate them to the same rank as sovereign States. The Democratic Republic of the Congo will always reject any attempt to include the M23 in the Luanda process, directing it towards its legitimate framework: the Nairobi process, under the facilitation of His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. The Democratic Republic of the Congo renews its full confidence in him and rejects any attempt to dilute the mediation efforts.

Despite repeated warnings from the Congolese Government over the past three years, the Council has remained passive. The Council cannot content itself with declarations of concern or simply remain seized of the matter. Its mandate and its duty is to defend international peace and security, to protect human life without distinction of origin, race, religion or gender. The Council is the guarantor of hope and faith in better days: days of peace, development and prosperity.

We therefore call on the Council to act decisively and immediately, in line with the overwhelming evidence provided by the latest report by the Group of Experts. Specifically, we demand the following.

The Security Council must immediately order Rwanda to cease fighting and withdraw all Rwandan troops present on Congolese territory. The Council must impose targeted sanctions, including an asset freeze and travel ban against identified members of the RDF chain of command and the political decision-makers responsible for this aggression. The Council must impose a total embargo on exports of all minerals labelled as Rwandan, in particular coltan and gold, in order to put an end to the illegal exploitation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's natural resources. The Council must immediately revoke Rwanda's status as a troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions. It is inconceivable that a country that contributes to United Nations peacekeeping missions is also currently actively and directly participating in attacks on peacekeeping personnel. Finally, the Security Council must establish a systematic notification regime for all arms sales and transfers to Rwanda by Member States or private entities so as to ensure that those weapons are not used to equip embargoed armed groups such as the M23.

The Council is at a major turning point. Indecision and inaction can no longer be tolerated in the face of a crisis that threatens to plunge our country and the region

into absolute chaos. Every day of delay feeds the aggressor and weakens the very principles on which this Organization is founded. We therefore call on the Council to make full use of all the provisions and measures set out in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in order to preserve peace and protect the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Congolese people have a profound aspiration: to live in security, to build a prosperous future and to contribute actively, alongside the nations of the world, to an international order founded on respect for the law and the principles of justice. That aspiration will not be stifled.

We ask the Council to write a new page of courage and commitment: a page where the values of multilateralism and solidarity take precedence over indifference and calculation. History will remember Council members decisions today, just as it will remember our ongoing struggle for peace, dignity and sovereignty.

To those who would dare to justify the unjustifiable, we say this: there is no place in these halls dedicated to world peace for rhetoric that seeks to justify the unforgivable sin of sacrificing innocent lives. The respect due to the hundreds of thousands of lives at stake demands silence in the face of the obvious.

In the face of adversity, the Congolese people have shown a resilience, dignity and determination that command respect. That exemplary courage, driven by the desire to live in security, build a prosperous future and contribute to a just international order, is a testament to the greatness of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That unbreakable spirit will never be broken.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Rwamucyo (Rwanda): I would like to begin by thanking the Algerian presidency for its able leadership at the helm of the Security Council for this month of January. We also thank Algeria for convening this important meeting.

I recognize the presence and the briefings given by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita, Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya. I also recognize the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the participation of the representatives of Angola, Uruguay, South Africa and Burundi.

Rwanda regrets the deteriorating security situation in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current crisis could have been averted had the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government demonstrated a genuine commitment to peace. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has all the necessary tools to achieve a lasting resolution to the ongoing conflict.

The international community placed high expectations on the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes, designed, on one hand, to restore good relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the other, to promote inter-Congolese dialogue by addressing the root causes of the conflict. Those include persistent governance failures in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the presence of more than 250 domestic armed groups, including the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), and 14 foreign armed groups, including the genocidal Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and many others.

The Luanda process, which was revitalized in March 2024, achieved significant milestones. On 31 July 2024, the three Ministers agreed on a ceasefire between warring parties in Luanda, which came into force on 4 August 2024. The ceasefire was more or less holding, despite occasional skirmishes, until the month of October 2024.

Since October 2024, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government and its armed forces, the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo

(FARDC), decided to increase the militarization of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by deploying heavy weaponry, including attack drones, and deployed additional troops along our border, including 10,000 Burundian troops.

As a consequence and in violation of the ceasefire, the FARDC decided to intensify its military operation by attacking the positions of the M23, which retaliated and took more territories. Unfortunately, we regret that the international community chose to condemn the M23 for extending its territories without condemning the FARDC military coalition for violating the ceasefire. The ceasefire was between all the warring parties, so all the warring parties should have observed it.

To make matters worse, the Congolese army is placing heavy weapons and artillery in heavily populated areas, including in close proximity to internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps, against the warnings of international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières. Such actions have led to the unfortunate loss of innocent lives. In turn, that heavy artillery was used to bomb and indiscriminately shell territories under M23 control. Most of the bombings targeted densely populated areas, leading to the loss of lives, livelihoods and homes.

After the postponement of the 15 December 2024 Luanda summit, the situation was aggravated on the ground owing to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's obsession with a military solution to the conflict. By prioritizing the militarization of the conflict instead of embracing the regional mechanisms that have been put in place to foster a sustainable solution born out of dialogue, the conflict has continued to escalate leading to the prevailing situation today.

Under the Luanda process, a ministerial-level agreement was reached on a concept of operations (CONOPS) to neutralize the FDLR — a United Nations and United States-sanctioned genocidal militia — and to lift Rwanda's defensive measures along that common border.

The FDLR, which poses a direct threat to Rwanda's security and territorial integrity, is composed of remnants of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, which claimed more than 1 million lives. For decades, the FDLR has found sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it recruits fighters, influences corrupt local elites and spreads its anti-Tutsi genocide ideology in Congolese communities. That has led to ethnic cleansing and the persecution of those local communities, with the result of hundreds of thousands of them now scattered as refugees in the region and others in IDP camps. Today the FDLR has even moved from being a suppletive force to a strategic ally of the Kinshasa Government.

The draft agreement under the Luanda process that was supposed to be agreed on and signed during the summit of 15 December 2024, had three security concerns that were clearly identified, including by the mediator. The three clearly identified security concerns were the question of the FDLR, Rwanda defensive measures and the question of the M23.

The CONOPS that was agreed on by the three Ministers on 25 November 2024 addressed the first two elements by putting in place a timeline for the neutralization of the FDLR and the lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures. Only the question of the M23 was yet to be resolved.

While the two countries were involved in discussions in Luanda on a plan to neutralize the FDLR, the situation on the ground was different. Since the first ministerial meeting of 21 March 2024, during which the then Democratic Republic of the Congo had agreed to provide a plan to neutralize the FDLR, the collaboration between the FDLR and the Government of Kinshasa had increased. As we speak it has never been more intense at any other time in recent history. As I said before,

the FDLR has become an ally of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo.

Even on 25 November 2024, when the three Ministers were busy in Luanda signing the CONOPS, there were three high-level meetings between FARDC and FDLR commanders that very day in Goma. That reflects the stark contrast between the good faith that the Democratic Republic of the Congo wants to project to the international community and the lack of political will on the ground to end its strategic alliance with the FDLR.

Despite an initial agreement by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enter into dialogue under the Nairobi process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Minister categorically refused for nine hours the inclusion of any commitment to dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M23. Therefore, since it was the only item on the agenda, the only solution was to postpone the summit, as Rwanda was not interested in a photo opportunity. The reason the Heads of States were to travel to Rwanda for the summit was for one agenda item — to sign an agreement. Since there was no agreement to sign, there was no reason for the summit, and only thing to do was to postpone it until the issues were all agreed on.

The recent militarization by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the formation of a broader coalition involving the FARDC, the FDLR, the Wazalendo, 10,000 Burundian forces, 1,600 European mercenaries and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, represents an unprecedented security threat to Rwanda.

For two years, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, has publicly vowed to instigate regime change in Rwanda. That is a very serious matter for us. A Head of State who declares regime change on another country is a matter not to be taken lightly. That rhetoric, coupled with the coalition's significant military presence along Rwanda's border, is destabilizing and unacceptable.

Rwanda also notes with disappointment the international community's failure to condemn the use of foreign mercenaries in this conflict, despite clear violations of the 1977 Organization of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa and the 1989 United Nations Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, especially by State actors. The arrest of Romanian mercenary leader Horatiu Potra, in December 2024, underscores the gravity of this issue, yet no strong action was undertaken and no condemnation was issued by the Council or the European Union.

I would like to highlight Rwanda's concerns on the role that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is currently playing in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. But first, I would like to be clear and to clarify that Rwanda is not hostile to MONUSCO, and no one should harm peacekeepers. However, facts are stubborn, and they speak for themselves.

Rwanda's concerns are threefold.

First, the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which later became MONUSCO was first deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1999. It is now 26 years since it was first deployed. Resolution 1279 (1999), which authorized the deployment of MONUC, and all successive resolutions, including resolution 1925 (2010), which turned it into MONUSCO, all gave it a clear mandate to neutralize the FDLR. Unfortunately, with the presence of MONUSCO in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the security situation has only deteriorated since then.

Secondly, by going beyond its mandate of peacekeeping and protecting civilians, MONUSCO has now joined a broader coalition with a clearly stated goal — to enact regime change in Rwanda, which is another United Nations Member State. That is because the coalition that has been put together by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including all of the forces I have named, have been given a clear mandate, under President Tshisekedi Tshilombo, to act towards regime change, as he is amassing this force for that purpose. We take this matter very seriously

Thirdly, MONUSCO operations are providing support to the FDLR, a United Nations-sanctioned group, and to European mercenaries, in violation of the 1989 United Nations Convention. That is unacceptable, and MONUSCO is at risk of being sucked into a conflict in which it would be a belligerent force. MONUSCO should focus its resources and troops to protect civilians, especially those in internally displaced persons camps, instead of fighting alongside this coalition. That is very important because there is a very clear mandate, which is not to be changed, particularly because of the risk that some of those forces, such as the Wazalendo groups and the FDLR, have committed tremendous atrocities in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore, an international force in which we are all members should not be associated with the activities of such negative armed groups that have been sanctioned.

I reiterate that Rwanda supports MONUSCO and has no problems with it, aside from the three issues I have just outlined.

The situation we are facing today is no surprise to anyone. It mirrors the same situation 12 years ago. It is the result of the complete mismanagement by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a complex problem. The international community also has its fair share of the blame for being completely insensitive to the root causes of the problem and allowing legitimate actors to operate completely beyond their mandates. The situation we are in today prevailed in 2012 and 2013. At that time, no political solution was undertaken in order to resolve the root causes of the issue.

We now stand at a critical juncture. We need to find ways to return to the diplomatic and political processes that focus on practical solutions. Rwanda is of the view that such solutions might involve additional actors, primarily based in Africa, in partnership with the international community. We are committed to the regional process, the Luanda process and to peaceful dialogue in order to resolve this issue, and we are ready to remain engaged in a peaceful process because we strongly believe that there is no military solution to this problem. It must be resolved politically, diplomatically and with the support of all partners acting together.

However, in order for anything to be successful, the Democratic Republic of the Congo must play a helpful role. After all, this is a Congolese problem for which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is looking to outsource its solution. The solution to this problem cannot be outsourced. It requires ownership and political will, looking at the root causes of the conflict comprehensively and addressing them. Partners can support, but they cannot resolve this problem on their own.

Rwanda stands ready to do its part in making sure a practical solution is found that addresses the concerns of all actors involved on an equal footing.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Angola.

Mr. Da Cruz (Angola): Let us begin by congratulating the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on its presidency and able stewardship of the Council, including for convening this important meeting on the prevailing situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We acknowledge the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign

Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and His Excellency Ambassador Ernest Rwamucyo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations. We thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their comprehensive briefings. We would also like to express our appreciation to the members of Security Council and all speakers who are supporting the ongoing mediation efforts of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of Angola, through the Luanda process, to achieve peace and stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We take this opportunity to once again reaffirm Angola's commitment to continue pursuing conflict prevention, management and resolution initiatives in the Great Lakes region.

Today we have the honour to address the Council on three key points.

First, I would like to speak about the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The increase of violence unfolding in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo over the past few weeks is very worrisome. On 25 January, His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of Republic of Angola, who was mandated by the African Union to ensure mediation in the crisis between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, expressed his deep concern about the escalation of the conflict and the serious deterioration of the peace and security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particular in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. The resurgence of actions and attacks perpetrated by the Movement du 23 mars (M23) and its recent illegal occupation of Sake and Minova reflect the dangerous escalation of this conflict, with enormous implications for the fragile humanitarian situation, particularly around the city of Goma, now besieged. Those actions, which we vehemently condemn and repudiate, represent a flagrant unacceptable violation of the ceasefire in force since 4 August 2024 and jeopardize all the efforts and progress made, under the Luanda process, towards a peaceful resolution of this conflict, which can have unforeseen consequences for regional security if not resolved now.

In line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected and upheld. The Republic of Angola calls on the parties to the conflict to respect humanitarian rights and international humanitarian law, protect civilians and safeguard the integrity and security of the personnel of the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism, deployed in Goma, North Kivu, within the framework of the Angolan facilitation efforts.

We reiterate our steadfast support to MONUSCO and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC), and we call on all armed groups to fully respect the United Nations mandate forces. In that context, we take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to the countries, namely, South Africa, Malawi and Uruguay, and the families of the deceased MONUSCO and SAMIDRC soldiers who fell in the line of duty during encounters with the M23. We wish a speedy recovery to the injured. We reiterate that the parties must uphold and fully respect the ceasefire agreed upon by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda on 3 July in Rwanda, which entered into force on 4 August 2024. We strongly urge all the parties and stakeholders concerned to use their good offices to reinforce and maintain the ceasefire.

Secondly, on the Luanda process, we have made remarkable progress in the implementation of the Luanda process. It is important that we preserve the mediation and peace efforts undertaken by His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, which contributed to the declaration of a ceasefire on 4 August 2024, the adoption of the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and its engagement forces, the lifting of defence and security measures by Rwanda, the operationalization of the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanisms on 5 November 2024, the adoption of the concept of operations and the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Angola and MONUSCO on 23 November 2024 towards supporting the ground operation of the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism.

The divergence regarding the resolution of the M23 issue is the only pending matter to finalize and consolidate the draft peace agreement. That caused the postponement of the summit between Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, which was scheduled to take place in Luanda on 15 December, bringing together His Excellency Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Republic of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. In his unwavering commitment to continuing consultation to advance the Luanda process, His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço sent a message to His Excellency President Paul Kagame on 18 December, which was delivered by His Excellency Ambassador Tête António, Minister for External Relations of Angola. We remain hopeful that the parties will be able to overcome any remaining differences and reach an agreement to end the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We need to continue supporting and encouraging them to resolve those last challenges in the long and difficult peace process.

Thirdly, regarding the way forward, His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço has reiterated time and time again that the conflict and security challenges in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have no military solution. He urged the parties to return to the negotiating table immediately. We need the speedy and unconditional de-escalation of the conflict and the genuine and renewed engagement of the parties to explore ways of overcoming the pending issue and reschedule the aforementioned tripartite summit. It means that the party concerned must cooperate, engage, respect and comply with the decision reached within the Luanda process framework. The strict observance of the ceasefire agreed upon between the parties and the immediate cessation of all hostilities are paramount to creating a political environment conducive to a peaceful solution under the Luanda and Nairobi processes. We encourage all parties to avoid any actions or rhetoric that can further escalate tensions, including provocative language or inflammatory public statements, which are counterproductive to the diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting solution to the conflict, which has prevailed for so long.

Let us conclude by reiterating the firm commitment of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, as the facilitator mandated by the African Union to assist in the quest for peace and security in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay thanks Algeria, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for having convened this emergency meeting on the deteriorating security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in the regions of North Kivu and South Kivu and in relation to the advance of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). Our country expresses its deep concern at the escalation of violence that continues to affect that area, with devastating consequences for the civilian population and for the functioning of the

United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

We deeply regret the loss of human lives, including of the Blue Helmets, who are there with the mission to protect the most vulnerable. In that context, Uruguay regrets the death of one of its soldiers and the injuries suffered by four others during an operation in North Kivu. In addition, we express our solidarity over the losses also suffered by the Republic of South Africa and Malawi. We extend our condolences to the families of all the victims and reaffirm our commitment to international peace and security. We are also grateful for the condolences received from other members of this Council.

In MONUSCO, Uruguay has a role focused on the strict fulfilment of the protection of civilians mandate. It should be highlighted that our Uruguayan troops do not participate in offensive operations, limiting themselves exclusively to actions that fall within the Mission's mandate and, as I mentioned, maintaining strict neutrality with regard to internal clashes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We call on the Security Council, in particular members with a direct influence in the region, to redouble their efforts to reach an immediate ceasefire and bring the parties involved back to the negotiating table. We believe that it is essential that the negotiations as part of the Luanda and Nairobi processes be strengthened and translated into concrete progress towards a political and lasting solution to the conflict. We also support the call to all the countries of the region to refrain from any action that could exacerbate the situation and to actively cooperate so as to achieve the aforementioned political solution to the conflict. In that context, Uruguay reiterates its firm commitment to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its full support for MONUSCO at this critical time.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): South Africa wishes to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for convening this meeting to consider, as a matter of urgency, the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their briefings. I also wish to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner in the Chamber.

It is with profound regret that this meeting is taking place at a time when a number of peacekeepers lost their lives, and many others were injured in the line of duty. Nine of those fallen peacekeepers are South Africans who showed immense bravery amid relentless attacks by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). Such attacks by the M23 are in violation of the ceasefire that was brokered through the Luanda process.

We deplore the unwarranted attacks against the uniformed personnel of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who are deployed not only to promote peace, security and stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo but also, by extension, in the African continent in general. Our sincere condolences go out to the families of those peacekeepers who lost their lives, and we wish a speedy recovery to the injured. The cost of being a United Nations peacekeeper should never be that high.

The Security Council has adopted many resolutions that provide clear guidance on such violations carried out against peacekeepers. The Council must take decisive action against callous acts aimed at undermining its role and decisions directed at the maintenance of international peace and security. This Council must send a clear

message that the lives of peacekeepers matter. We must value and safeguard the contribution of those entrusted to carry out the mandates adopted in this Chamber.

It is concerning that the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are being eroded and continue to be violated globally, including in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the evident known and well-reported presence of external forces destabilizing that country. It is crucial for the Rwandan Defence Force to cease support to the M23 and for the M23 to immediately cease all hostile actions and withdraw from occupied territories. We cannot accept a world wherein non-State actors are armed to do the will of other States, while those States refuse to accept responsibility for unnecessary armed violence and potential war crimes.

Peacekeeping as a tool will be rendered ineffective when the peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations face complex political situations, such as that in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, when other States get militarily involved in fuelling the conflict. The international community can no longer afford to simply watch as the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to displace, maim and kill innocent civilians.

The current situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo requires decisive action from the international community, led by this Council. The Security Council must use the tools at its disposal to act against those who perpetuate the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including calling for their withdrawal from that country. There must also be a resumption of both the Luanda and Nairobi processes to find a lasting political solution to the cyclical conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

South Africa commends His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, in his capacity as the African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa, for his tireless work on the Luanda process. We urgently call on the relevant parties to engage in that process with a view to agreeing a negotiated settlement that includes peace and stability in the entire Great Lakes region and in the African continent at large. For its part, South Africa will continue to play a constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire continent, including through peacekeeping efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Sibomana (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to participate in this briefing on the deteriorating security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, convened by the Algerian presidency of the Security Council for this month. We welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are also delighted by the quality of the briefings provided by Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Government of Burundi offers its condolences to the Congolese people and Government following the assassination of the Governor of North Kivu, General Cirimwami, and to the families and countries of the Blue Helmets and the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo who lost their lives.

Burundi wishes to emphasize that the worsening security situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the deterioration of the region continues, not only threatens local peace and stability but also poses a challenge to the maintenance of international security, which is at the heart of this Council's mandate. Burundi strongly supports respect for peaceful coexistence among nations and categorically rejects proxy wars. The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has too often been plagued by conflicts fuelled by foreign interests, exacerbating local tensions and undermining peace efforts. Burundi welcomes the Luanda and Nairobi processes, which are crucial frameworks for a rapid de-escalation of the crisis. Those regional initiatives, supported by the African Union and the international community, set out a clear road map for achieving a lasting ceasefire.

The United Nations, through the invaluable work of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has accurately documented the dynamics of the conflict. Such reports have highlighted the involvement of external actors in supporting local armed groups, flagrant violations of human rights and the systematic plundering of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those facts cannot be ignored. It is crucial that this Council demand concrete measures to put an end to that interference and ensure full respect for the hallowed principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

Burundi notes that the various United Nations reports on the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are published regularly, and that the actors in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are known. The less visible actors are also known and condemned in those various reports. The fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which guide and inspire the action of the United Nations, are known to everyone. Yet the Security Council remains silent — not a single resolution condemning the perpetrators of flagrant violations of the principles of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those principles must be strongly reaffirmed in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The integrity of its territory must not be compromised, and armed incursions and the repeated violations of its borders must cease immediately.

Silence, and no resolution on violations of the basic principles of international humanitarian law. The relevant question, then, is what is the message behind the Security Council's silence? The question remains open and is put to the Security Council.

The fact remains that the city of Goma, the capital of North Kivu, is now on the brink of collapse. A military escalation reaching that city would have catastrophic humanitarian and security consequences, not only for the Democratic Republic of the Congo but for the entire region. This Council should not remain a spectator of a tragedy foretold.

To that end, Burundi urges the Council to, first, call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and ensure that that territory does not become an area of indirect confrontation between regional and international actors; secondly, support the efforts of the Luanda and Nairobi processes by demanding respect for the commitments made by all parties; and, thirdly, support the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in restoring the authority of the State throughout its territory. It also urges the Council, fourthly, to demand the withdrawal of the forces of aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a cessation of hostilities and to support the relaunch of the Luanda and Nairobi processes; and, fifthly, to intensify its support for the civilian and war-displaced populations so as to meet their basic needs, with particular attention to women and children.

Ultimately, the Security Council should be attentive to the legitimate demands of the Congolese people and Government by acting with determination to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo can fully exercise its sovereignty and return to peace. Security and stability in Central Africa and beyond depend on that.

The President: The Minister for Foreign Affairs has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): There will be no rebuttal today. There will be no response today to Rwanda's words and clumsy attempts to ignore the ruthless and inexcusable attacks on the foundations of multilateralism, international law and the value of human life that it is carrying out at this very moment in Goma.

The response to Rwandan aggression and its diversionary manoeuvres must come from this Council, which must finally shoulder its full responsibilities and stop looking the other way. Too much time has been wasted in inaction. Too many lives have been sacrificed, and too many principles have been flouted. Rwanda continues to commit acts of terror and pillage in defiance of the United Nations and the resolutions of this Council. Impunity cannot continue without dealing a fatal blow to the credibility of the United Nations. The time for hesitation is over. The time for action is now.

The President: The representative of Rwanda has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Rwamucyo (Rwanda): I wanted to clearly say that this crisis is a matter of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is why we have the Luanda and the Nairobi processes. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has had endemic security, political and governance challenges for decades. Those matters are not matters of today. It can therefore not pretend that an external party will be responsible for putting its house in order.

On the issue of territorial integrity, we agree that the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo matters. But Rwanda's territorial integrity is also very important. For the past three decades, instability, attacks, infiltration, shelling and loss of life due to the activities of armed groups on Rwandan territory have come singularly from across the border from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Why is the Democratic Republic of the Congo preserving the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), making it a strategic ally? The Democratic Republic of the Congo must disengage, neutralize and completely expel the FDLR from its territory so that we can have peace.

The Minister earlier mentioned the issue of the deployment of the Rwandan liaison officers to the enhanced verification mechanism in Goma. The reason that the three Rwandan liaison officers have not deployed is because the Democratic Republic of the Congo clearly refused to guarantee their safety and security. As soon as the Democratic Republic of the Congo guarantees their security, they will be able to cross to Goma and be part of the enhanced verification mechanism.

The President: The Minister for Foreign Affairs has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I will be brief. I take note, and I think the entire Council takes note, of the fact that Rwanda is questioning the credibility of the Group of Experts, of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and even of you, Mr. President, a member of the Security Council, who have condemned the presence of the Rwandan armed

forces on the sovereign territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It falls to you to decide the consequences of that contempt and lack of respect.

I will reclarify one thing regarding the matter of the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism. The day before the implementation of the mechanism, Rwanda received a note verbale that guaranteed the security of all its representatives who would be deployed, but perhaps they are still looking for the road to Goma 82 days later.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.