



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

*3199th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 19 November 2012*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The EU strongly condemns the resumption of hostilities by M23. It demands an immediate end to the military offensive in North Kivu. The EU expresses its grave concern about the urgent security and humanitarian crisis in the eastern DRC and the vast challenge it poses for the security and stability of the Great Lakes Region.
2. The EU reiterates its condemnation of the M23 rebel group and other armed groups in the area and demands the immediate cessation of violence, including sexual violence, human rights abuses and the recruitment of child soldiers. The EU strongly condemns the steps taken by the M23 to establish a parallel administration in the zones it controls.
3. Efforts to undermine the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC cannot be tolerated. The EU takes note of the report of the UN Group of Experts to the Sanctions Committee 1533 and is deeply concerned at reports of continued external support to rebel groups in the eastern DRC. It calls on those concerned to cease all such support immediately and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. In coordination with other members of the International Community, the EU will consider appropriate follow-up steps to deliberations in the UN Security Council, as well as measures to encourage a constructive attitude of the regional actors.
4. It is also essential that the Government of the DRC promotes effective efforts to establish security, the rule of law and effective administration throughout the eastern DRC and takes measures to ensure the full protection of civilians. In that context, the EU calls upon the Government to speed up the vital process of comprehensive reform of the security sector which the EU supports through its two CSDP missions EUSEC and EUPOL.

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5. The EU remains gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC where well over 650,000 people have been displaced since April 2012. The recent military offensive will increase the risks of an uncontrolled humanitarian crisis. The EU calls on all parties, including neighbouring countries, to fulfil their obligations in relation to access for humanitarian agencies responding to the needs of the affected civilian population.
 6. All those responsible for violence against civilians, in particular women and children, including acts of sexual violence must be held accountable. The EU also encourages MONUSCO to play an active role in the crisis as per its mandate. Its role, in support of the Government of the DRC, is determinant as regards the protection of civilians and any effort to undermine MONUSCO's ability to implement its mandate is unacceptable.
 7. The EU stresses that a military solution to the ongoing conflict is not sustainable. It welcomes efforts by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the African Union and the UN to find a lasting political solution to the current crisis in the eastern DRC. It calls on all stakeholders, including neighbouring countries, to exert all possible influence and take necessary steps to avoid further deterioration of the situation and to prevent the conflict extending to other factions and areas.
 8. The EU supports the appointment of an AU special envoy and invites the UN Secretary-General to examine the possibility of appointing a special representative to facilitate regional dialogue to address both the immediate crisis and to find a sustainable political solution with the region addressing the root causes of the conflict. The EU will continue to support the ICGLR Extended Joint Verification Mechanism and encourages intensified cooperation on operational issues with MONUSCO.
 9. With a view to promoting and supporting coordinated national, regional and international efforts, the Council invites the High Representative and Commission to bring forward proposals for a strategic EU approach to the multi-faceted security and development challenges facing the eastern DRC."
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