



PRESS RELEASE

28th January 2025, Bujumbura: The Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Ambassador João Samuel Caholo, today participated in the 1257th Emergency Ministerial Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on the situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which was chaired by H.E. Kacou Houadja Leon Adom of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. The meeting expressed deepest concern about the deteriorating security conditions and humanitarian situation in Eastern DRC. It also underscored the blatant disregard of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, in particular, non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another, peaceful co-existence of Member States and their right to live in peace and security.

The meeting was informed that the tensions escalated significantly since 15th December 2024, following the postponement of the Luanda Tripartite Summit. In recent weeks, intense military confrontations have occurred between the FARDC and M23 forces, with the fighting reaching critical areas near Goma. It also expressed concern about the advance of the M23 toward Goma town on 26th January 2025, despite international appeals for cessation of advances and hostilities. The meeting paid tribute to the innocent civilian lives lost, as well as the significant military casualties suffered from both sides, including the deaths of international soldiers from SAMIDRC forces and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).

The ICGLR is exceptionally concerned about the situation in the eastern DRC. It is seized through its specialised bodies, the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) and the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre (JIFC), which continue to monitor the situation. We call for unwavering commitment to the August 2024 Ceasefire Agreement and an urgent resumption of dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda. Further, the ICGLR reaffirmed the organisation's support for the Luanda Process, facilitated by ICGLR Chairperson H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation. Furthermore, the ICGLR calls for an immediate follow-up

Quadripartite Summit on the crisis, which will include the EAC, ECCAS, ICGLR, and SADC, as well as the DRC and Rwanda, under the leadership of the AU. We also call for the Security Council, based on the UN Charter, to immediately take enforcement measures to maintain or restore peace and security in the DRC.

The ICGLR reiterates its dedication to working with all stakeholders to achieve sustainable security and stability in Eastern DRC. It emphasises the critical need for international solidarity support and immediate de-escalation of conflict to prevent an unprecedented regional security instability and humanitarian crisis.