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THE ESCALATING CONFLICT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A DESPERATE CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

Kampala, Nairobi, Accra March 14, 2025 – The African civil society organizations, Justice Access Point (JAP), AMANI Kenya, and Community Focus Ghana (CCF-Ghana), are deeply alarmed by the worsening crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and urgently call on the international community to act now to avert a humanitarian disaster.

The recent capture of Goma and Bukavu by the March 23 Movement (M23) rebels has pushed the DRC to the edge of catastrophe, reviving fears of a broader regional conflict reminiscent of the Congo Wars, which claimed an estimated 5.4 million Congolese lives. This historic tragedy underscores the severe consequences of inaction.

The resurgence of violence, following the Rwanda Defense Force's (RDF) breach of a ceasefire with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (AFDRC) in December 2024, has enabled M23 to seize critical territories. Over 700,000 people have been displaced from Goma alone, with women, children, elderly, and disabled individuals facing dire conditions in overcrowded, unsanitary camps, struggling for basic necessities like food, water, and healthcare.

The conflict has already resulted in the tragic deaths of approximately 900 civilians and 20 peacekeepers, with nearly 2,900 civilians injured. The full scope of casualties remains unclear, complicating relief efforts. Meanwhile, diplomatic tensions between South Africa and Rwanda continue to escalate, with mutual accusations threatening regional stability.

Despite M23's announcement of a ceasefire on February 3, aimed at creating a humanitarian corridor, the situation remains volatile. The East Africa Community (EAC) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) summit on February 8 highlighted the urgent need for direct negotiations with all parties, including M23, within the Luanda/Nairobi process framework.

In response to the crisis, we recommend the following actions:

- The international community, including the United Nations, African Union, and regional organizations, must urgently deliver humanitarian aid to affected communities in the DRC, ensuring access to food, shelter, healthcare, and protection.
- The governments of Rwanda and the DRC should immediately halt all military operations and engage in direct negotiations to seek a peaceful resolution.
- All belligerents must respect international humanitarian law, ensuring the protection of civilians and allowing unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.
- The UN and AU should support the EAC and SADC in facilitating peaceful negotiations through the Luanda/Nairobi process.



- The United Nations Security Council should impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law.
- The African Union and regional organizations should assist the DRC government in strengthening its institutions and enhancing its capacity to ensure security and protect its citizens.
- The international community should provide increased support to refugee hosting countries in the region to bolster their efforts in managing the refugee crisis and ensure the well-being of those displaced.

We implore the international community to act swiftly to address the DRC crisis and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. The lives and well-being of millions are at stake, and immediate action is essential to halt further suffering.

Endorsed by

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