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EurAc asks the European Union to insist that Rwanda immediately end its involvement in the conflict in the east of the DRC.

The European network for Central Africa (EurAc) and its member NGOs have many times denounced involvement by Rwanda which feeds and prolongs the insecurity in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by supporting armed groups. This condemnation has just been corroborated by the annual report of the UN Sanctions Committee for the DRC. The group of UN experts states that the Rwanda government provides « direct assistance in the creation of M23 through the transport of weapons and soldiers throughout Rwandan territory» supports and protects General Bosco Ntaganda who is currently wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes.

Not only does Rwanda recruit demobilised personnel of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) who have been repatriated to Rwanda, but its support for M23 gives more time for these rebels to reorganise themselves, whereas they were being weakened by the operations of the regular army (FARDC) and of the UN force (MONUSCO). These actions by Rwanda are contrary to international law and are the source of a number of war crimes and crimes against humanity on Congolese territory which contribute to the destabilisation of the Great Lakes region.

Up to now the international community in general and the European Union in particular have always based their strategies for stabilisation in the east of the DRC on the assumption that both the DRC and Rwanda want peace and, in consequence, should work together to that end. The problem is not a lack of dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda but rather the absence of political will. The UN group of experts reveals the existence of a hidden agenda in Kigali which every time leads to a resumption of war after the signing of agreements. Such behaviour on Rwanda's part calls into question the credibility of its relationship with the EU, whose reaction to the report of the group of experts has so far been very feeble.

EurAc considers that no dialogue or new joint military action would be productive as long as there is no real political will in Rwanda and this can only be created as the result of a strong stand by the international community and by the EU in particular.

For these reasons, EurAc asks the European Union and its member states to :

1. Take a strong stand denouncing Rwanda's support for the M23 rebels and its protection of Bosco Ntaganda ;
2. Insist that the Rwanda government immediately puts a stop to this support of M23 and of other armed groups in the east of the DRC;
3. Review its security strategy for the east of the DRC, as Rwanda can no longer be considered a peaceful actor wanting peace in eastern DRC, so as to employ pressure and sanctions to impose respect for international law;
4. Invoke sanctions against Rwandan officials cited in the UN report including : the Minister of Defence, General James Kabarebe; the Chief of the General staff, General Charles Kayonga; and generals Jack Nziza, Emmanuel Ruvusha and Alexis Kagame ;
5. Establish mechanisms to ensure that budgetary and military aid granted to the Rwanda government is not used in support of rebel groups or for the destabilisation of the Great Lakes region;
6. Effectively support the DRC to restore government authority across all its territory and in particular the east of the country in the framework of the reform of the security sector (army, police, judiciary);
7. Oppose Rwanda's candidature for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council, seat that would risk increasing its influence that has, so far, not been very positive, in the pacification efforts of the East of DRC.

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