

Brussels, 24 August 2012

**Crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo
The European Union and its member states should withhold their budget support to Rwanda**

Eurac welcomes the decision of several EU member states to temporarily freeze their budget support to Rwanda. This decision comes following the publication by the Security Council of the interim report of the Group of Experts on the DR Congo (S/2012/348) as well as an addendum to the report addressing Rwanda support to armed groups in DR Congo. The freeze of budget support was temporary while awaiting the response of the government of Rwanda to the allegations contained in the Addendum. On July 27th the Government of Rwanda published its response¹.

The evidence provided by the Group of Experts (GoE) is extensive. They state in the Addendum (par. 6) that they interviewed over 80 deserters of FARDC mutinies and Congolese armed groups, including M23 among whom were 31 Rwandan nationals. The group has also consulted dozens of senior Congolese military commanders and intelligence officials as well as political and community leaders with detailed and intimate knowledge of developments between the DRC and Rwanda. The group adds that they communicated regularly with several active participants of the ex-CNDP mutiny, the M23 rebellion and other armed groups. Along side this photos of arms caches, official documents and radio intercepts are presented. Above all, the GoE evidence increased from three credible and independent sources, to five sources when naming specific individuals. The GoE states it has made extensive efforts to engage with the GoR regarding its findings, albeit with limited success.

The GoR reacted by stating that some parts of the report are biased, other parts unfalsifiable, and that the report missed the Rwandan point of view. In its official response the Government provided counterevidence mainly consisting of testimonies of a handful (high level) of officers of the Rwandan Defence Forces and minutes of meetings between the Rwandan and Congolese armed forces.

Eurac has been following these discussions closely and carefully studied the GoE addendum as well as the response of the Government of Rwanda (GoR). Eurac concludes that it is not likely that the content of the addendum of the GoE's report is wrong and/or falsified as Rwanda in its response alleges. It would need false testimonies of a large number of people from entirely different backgrounds, which is highly unlikely. Rwanda claims it has not been heard however, this is not convincing as they had the opportunity to put their views forward in May when the GoE visited Rwanda, but chose not to. Eurac sees on the basis of the information supplied by the GoR no reason to doubt the analysis of the Addendum as it is, and looks forward to the final report due out in October 2012.

¹ response of the Government of Rwanda to the allegations contained in the Addendum to the interim report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2012/348) concerning violations of the arms embargo and sanctions regime by the Government of Rwanda as submitted by H.E. Louise MUSHIKIWABO, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda to the chairperson of the UN Security Council Sanction Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo

Over the last number of years, the active role of Rwanda in DRC armed conflicts has been well documented, notably by UN reports. In the UN Mapping Report of 2010, Rwanda was accused of involvement in violence and atrocities committed in the DRC between March 1993 and June 2003. As in 2008, we are, today, once again confronted with Rwandan support to rebel groups in Eastern Congo. Despite these accusations, a number of countries continued to consider Rwanda a privileged partner. Rwanda on its turn always denied its implication and has been critical of the international community in its media declarations. Eurac estimates that this gives little space for a constructive dialogue, an important pre requisite for budget support.

Budget support contributes to the finances of the government, knows a yearly discussion on general trends and is not tied to specific programs. Eurac welcomes the fact that Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the African Development Bank have taken note of the accusations against the GoR, and have decided to temporarily suspend direct budget support to the country. These temporary measures were made while awaiting the response of the Rwandan Government and monitoring evolutions on the ground.

Recommendations of Eurac :

Eurac calls upon the EU and all EU member states to withhold budget support permanently and limit interventions to project support. However, ongoing support of civil society initiatives that will limit the impact of the sanctions on the Rwandan people is encouraged.

These measures can serve as a first step in a revised relationship with Rwanda. The EU and EU member states should also address the critical situation regarding democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. We refer to our Memorandum to the Presidency of the European Union entitled « Contributing to an increase in democratic space in Rwanda through a collective and coherent approach » of 6 March 2011.

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