

Draft Report of the 23rd Session of the Technical Support Committee

Nairobi, 24-25 January 2019

The Technical Support Committee (TSC) of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region held its 23rd meeting on 24-25 January in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the decisions of the 9th Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) held on 8 October 2018 in Uganda. The meeting was co-chaired by Said Djinnit, United Nations (UN) Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and Basile Ikouebe, African Union (AU) Special Representative for the Great Lakes region. It brought together representatives from the signatory countries of the PSC Framework, as well as senior officials from the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and MONUSCO. The Southern African Development Community could not attend.

The TSC meeting was preceded by the 4th meeting of the Follow-up Mechanism to review the status of repatriation of FDLR and ex-M23 combatants. After taking note of recent political developments in the region, including the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the launch of the Central African Republic (CAR) dialogue under the African Initiative in Khartoum, the TSC discussed and agreed on the following:

Addressing the threat of illegal armed groups: a regional approach

1. Expressed concern over the continued activities of the armed groups in the region, in particular the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).
2. Noted the efforts of the ICGLR and the contributing countries towards the full operationalization of the Joint Follow-up Mechanism (JFM) on the ADF and appealed to the respective contributing countries to appoint their personnel and effect the transfer of their contributions to the JFM.
3. As requested by the 9th ROM meeting, agreed on additional steps to support the strengthening of the existing ICGLR mechanisms, notably the JFM. These will include a joint assessment to be undertaken by ICGLR, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General (O/SESG-GL) and the contributing countries of the JFM, on 11—12 February 2019.
4. Welcomed plans by ICGLR and O/SESG-GL to convene as soon as possible a capacity building workshop for the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM).
5. Welcomed bilateral cooperation efforts between the DRC and Rwanda as well as the DRC and Uganda to address and resolve amicably cross-border security issues. The TSC encouraged similar bilateral engagements between Rwanda and Burundi.
6. Welcomed consultations by O/SESG-GL and ICGLR on confidence building initiatives, including the convening of a meeting among the security services of the core countries to review the security situation in the region and strengthen the sharing of information on the negative forces, no later than March 2019.

7. Noted with regret the untimely death of the Rwandan expert to the EJVM, Lt. Col. Pascal Hakizimana, on 20 January and extended its condolences to the Rwandan Government and the ICGLR.

Repatriation of former combatants and dependents

8. Welcomed the implementation by the DRC of the decision to close the FDLR transit camps in eastern DRC and the subsequent repatriation of 1634 disarmed FDLR and their dependents in November 2018 through bilateral arrangements between the DRC and Rwanda. Recalled progress in the repatriation of disarmed combatants in the framework of the Follow-up Mechanism (FM) for the repatriation of disarmed combatants, which included 40 disarmed FDLR members and their dependents as well as 14 ex-M23 combatants. Commended the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and the FM for their cooperative efforts in pursuit of the 8th ROM decision.

9. Took note of the conclusions of the 4th meeting of the FM, including the following timetable: 14—16 February screening and repatriation mission in Uganda; 18—20 February screening and repatriation mission in Rwanda; and 20—21 February monitoring mission of repatriated FDLR in Rwanda.

10. Took note of the report provided by the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) on the reinsertion and reintegration process of ex-FDLR members since November 2018. Noting the importance of ensuring the effective reintegration of the former FDLR combatants, recommended that the visit to Rwanda be used to consult with the Government of Rwanda on possible support to further facilitate the reintegration.

11. Encouraged continuing cooperation between the Governments of the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda to complete the repatriation of ex-M23 members in Uganda and Rwanda. Agreed that the FM should continue its work, including by monitoring the reintegration process.

12. The FM will submit a report on above activities for consideration at the next TSC meeting.

Electoral and dialogue processes

13. Regarding the DRC, congratulated the Congolese people on the conduct of peaceful elections. Congratulated H.E. Felix Tshisekedi on taking office as President of the Republic. Noting the importance of stability in the DRC as key for regional stability, encouraged political actors to continue to work towards consensus and national unity so as to ensure peace and development throughout the country.

14. In discussing developments in Burundi, stressed the importance of taking all necessary measures to ensure a peaceful and inclusive political process towards the 2020 elections, in full respect of the letter and spirit of the 2000 Arusha Agreement. Further encouraged efforts towards good neighbourly relations to advance regional cooperation and integration that are critical to improve the current socio-economic situation in the country.

15. On developments in the CAR, welcomed the resumption of talks between the Government and armed groups on 24 January in Khartoum. Noted with concern the prevailing precarious humanitarian situation and encouraged greater financial support to humanitarian efforts.

16. On South Sudan, welcomed progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), under the auspices of IGAD. Stressed the

importance of all parties to fully honor their commitments under the Agreement, and urged all those who have not yet signed the Agreement to do so with continued support from the partners.

Advancing economic integration and shared prosperity

17. Noted the importance of a more political and strategic approach to regional economic integration which should, as a priority, promote natural resources as drivers of shared prosperity.

18. Noted ongoing efforts by ICGLR and O/SESG-GL with the Government of Rwanda in preparation for the 2nd Private Sector Investment Conference (PSIC II). Encouraged the convening of a Planning Board meeting by the end of March and the ICGLR Private Sector Forum General Assembly by the end of April 2019 to further advance preparations and draw up a fund mobilization strategy. As part of preparations for the PSIC II, agreed on the need to establish a task force to identify and fast track priority cross-border infrastructure projects.

19. Requested ICGLR and O/SESG-GL to pursue efforts to implement the recommendations of the July 2016 regional stakeholders and experts consultations, including to engage key transit and destination countries of gold from the DRC to enhance compliance with international standards.

20. Noted the request made by Uganda to support ongoing initiatives for border demarcation and called on the AU, the UN and partners to contribute in mobilizing resources.

Second progress report of the PSC Framework

21. Noted that the second progress report to be submitted to the 10th ROM meeting should provide an assessment of achievements and challenges, as well as lessons learned in efforts to promote the implementation of the PSC Framework and provide recommendations on ways to ensure concrete and timely results on the key commitments of the PSC Framework.

22. Requested the joint Secretariat to prepare a draft of the progress report, preferably with the support of an external consultant. The first draft is to be submitted for consideration of the 24th meeting of the TSC.

Children and armed conflict

23. Welcomed the briefing by Ms. Virginia Gamba, UN Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on the situation of children in armed conflict in the region.

24. Reaffirmed its commitment to revive the 2013 ICGLR initiative “Zero Child Soldiers in the Great Lakes region” and encouraged ICGLR to develop a regional strategy in this regard. Committed to remain engaged with the Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, including as regards regional prevention strategies mandated in SC resolution 2427 (2018).

Next meeting of the TSC

25. The TSC agreed to hold its 24th and 25th sessions in May and September in Uganda and DRC, respectively.