



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **International Envoys for the Great Lakes Region call for decisive actions against the FDLR**

**Nairobi, 02 January 2015** – Today, 2 January 2015, marks the expiration of the six month grace period granted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the full and unconditional surrender and demobilization of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

The Team of International Envoys, comprised of UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Said Djinnit, UN Special Representative and Head of MONUSCO Martin Kobler, AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Boubacar Diarra, EU Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes Koen Vervaeke, US Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the DRC Russell D. Feingold and Belgium Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Frank de Coninck, note with concern that the FDLR has not met this deadline. Instead, the FDLR has used this six-month grace period to continue to commit human rights abuses against innocent people in Eastern DRC, recruit combatants, and champion its illegitimate political agenda. Ending the threat of the FDLR is not just a DRC responsibility; it is a regional and international responsibility. We all have a deep commitment to ensuring accountability for those responsible for war crimes, crimes

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against humanity, and genocide. By failing to fully comply with the decisions of the ICGLR, SADC, and the United Nations Security Council, the FDLR has left the region and the international community with no other option than to pursue the military option against those within the armed group that are unwilling to voluntarily disarm. The Envoys recalled the Communique issued by the 1 December meeting of the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) for the DRC and the region in which they "stressed the binding and non-negotiable character of the 2 January 2015 deadline". Indeed, there is no justification for further delaying the neutralization of a group that is responsible for a long history of heinous crimes. The Envoys hereby call upon the DRC Government and MONUSCO, including its Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), to take all necessary measures to disarm the FDLR, in line with Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014). The Envoys commend the troop contributing countries (TCCs) of MONUSCO, particularly those of the FIB, for their commitment to peace and security and for their many sacrifices in their efforts to protect civilians and neutralize other armed groups in eastern DRC. The Envoys note that the international community's expectations for the FIB are enshrined in MONUSCO's mandate. MONUSCO and its FIB must now engage in counter-FDLR operations, as directed by its leadership and in support of the DRC government, in fulfillment of their mandate to neutralize all armed groups. The Envoys emphasize again to FDLR combatants and their dependants that, at any point, they can choose a peaceful path by entering into the existing DDR/RR program, which continues to successfully repatriate former FDLR to Rwanda. Over the years, several thousand ex-FDLR combatants have safely and successfully returned to Rwanda. The Envoys remain fully supportive of the DDR/RR process for FDLR ex-combatants, while encouraging the countries in the region to work together to ensure that those FDLR leaders responsible for serious human rights abuses are held accountable. The Envoys also encourage the signatory countries of the PSCF to fulfill all their commitments, including respecting each other's sovereignty as well as the commitment to "neither harbor nor provide protection of any kind to persons accused

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of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide, or crimes of aggression, or persons falling under the United Nations sanctions regime”. The Envoys further stress the importance for a comprehensive approach in addressing the root causes of conflict and instability, and encourage efforts of the regional leaders aimed at promoting confidence, understanding and cooperation between the countries of the region.

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