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# JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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## **Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework urge stakeholders in the region to resume effective action against armed groups in Eastern DRC and speed up the repatriation of ex-combatants**

**Kinshasa, 29 April 2016** - During a five-day visit in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC) from 25 to 29 April, senior representatives of the United Nations Organization (UN), the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) representing the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region urged Government officials from the three countries to intensify their efforts to neutralize armed groups in eastern DRC and expedite the repatriation of the remaining ex-M23 combatants from Rwanda and Uganda. According to the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa and leader of the delegation, Said Djinnit, "the region will not be at peace with itself and focus on socio-economic progress as long as the scourge of negative forces and other root causes of conflicts in the region remain unaddressed".

During their tour of the three countries, the high level delegation met with senior Government officials, representatives of the signatory countries of the PSC Framework and international partners. In Uganda and Rwanda the delegation urged the leaders of the ex-M23 movement to comply with their commitments under the Nairobi Declarations and accept to voluntarily repatriate to the DRC. The delegation also encouraged the ex-M23 designated coordinator and representatives to participate in the coordination meetings under the aegis of the National Oversight Mechanism (NOM) in Kinshasa to discuss the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations.

The Guarantors took note of the concerns expressed by the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda on the need to fast-track the neutralization of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). To this end, the delegation assured Rwanda and Uganda of MONUSCO's resolve to make full use of its

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Intervention Brigade in support of military operations by the DRC Armed Forces. The ICGLR also expressed its total commitment to support ongoing efforts towards stability in the region, notably through its regional security mechanism known as the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM). The delegation further took note of the Congolese Government demand for the imposition of sanctions against the ex-M23 leadership for blocking the repatriation process of ex-M23 elements in accordance with the recommendation of the outcome of the sixth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) held in New York on 29 September 2015 and for the countries of the region to concretely demonstrate their commitment to the implementation of their obligations under the PSC Framework. The delegation welcomed the readiness expressed by the Congolese Government to consider the reconvening of NOM-led coordination meetings on the Nairobi Declarations, which is expected to be attended by the designated representative of the ex-M23.

It will be recalled that at their meeting held in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PSC Framework signatory countries requested the Guarantors to hold consultations with relevant stakeholders in the region to find ways to overcome obstacles in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations signed on 12 December 2013 by the DRC Government and the ex-M23 rebel movement. The visit comprised the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Said Djinnit; the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, Prof. Ntumba Luaba; the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), David Gressly; the Director of SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, Jorge Cardoso; the Deputy Director for Regional and Continental Integration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, Alfredo Nuvunga, representing the SADC Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation; and Altiné Traoré representing Prof. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for the Great Lakes region and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Burundi.

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