



Communiqué of the launch and field visit of the Joint Follow-Up Mechanism on the repatriation of the disarmed FDLR and ex-M23 combatants

15 May 2018

1. On 24 April in Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in line with the decision of the Eighth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework Agreement for the DRC and the region to “Complete the repatriation without preconditions of the FDLR disarmed combatants and their dependents located in transit camps in eastern DRC, and of the ex-M23 combatants that are in Rwanda and Uganda no later than 20 October 2018,” Special Envoy Saïd Djinnit and AU Special Representative Basile Ikouebe, together with representatives of the Governments of the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, as well as other Guarantors of the Framework Agreement, including the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), launched the Joint Follow-Up Mechanism on the repatriation of disarmed FDLR combatants. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), which was initially scheduled to attend the meeting, sent its regrets due to the concurrent holding of its Double Troika Summit. Also in attendance were representatives UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDP) and the ICGLR’s Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM).
2. At the meeting, participants adopted the Terms of Reference for the Follow-up Mechanism, and the Action Plans for the repatriation of FDLR and ex-M23 former combatants. This represents an important signal of the political will of the regional leaders to work together to address the security challenges in the region, including through the repatriation of the disarmed combatants and their dependents.
3. Thereafter, from 25 April to 4 May 2018, the Follow-up Mechanism team visited the three FDLR transit camps in the DRC to convey the decision of the Heads of State to proceed with their repatriation, and Rwanda and Uganda to convey the same message to the ex-M23 combatants.
4. During the field visits, the team assured ex-combatants and their dependents of the commitment of the Joint Follow-up Mechanism to monitor their reintegration process through the existing mechanisms, namely the DRC National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program (PNDDR) and the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC).
5. The Guarantors of the Framework Agreement wish to sincerely thank the country representatives for their high-level commitment and involvement in the Follow-Up Mechanism and call on all stakeholders to maintain the current momentum and expedite the implementation of the Action Plans.