

Special Envoy Djinnit's address to the Security Council

26 March 2019

Mr. President,

Distinguished members of the Council,

1. J'ai l'honneur de présenter le rapport du Secrétaire général sur la mise en oeuvre de l'Accord-cadre pour la paix, la sécurité et la coopération pour la République démocratique du Congo et la région, communément appelé « l'Accord-cadre ».

2. Je tiens tout d'abord à saluer l'évolution positive que la région a connue dernièrement, en particulier la tenue d'élections pacifiques en République démocratique du Congo ; la signature de l'Accord revitalisé sur le règlement du conflit en République du Soudan du Sud ; et l'accord de paix entre le Gouvernement de la République centrafricaine et 14 groupes armés facilité par l'Initiative africaine, ainsi que les efforts actuellement déployés pour consolider ces acquis.

3. Par ailleurs, je voudrais faire le point sur certaines initiatives importantes que mon Bureau a menées avec détermination au cours de la période considérée, en collaboration avec les autres Garants de l'Accord-cadre.

4. **Firstly**, as a follow up to the decision of the 8th Summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) held in October 2017 in Brazzaville, the protracted presence of disarmed FDLR combatants located in transit camps in the DRC was decisively addressed and resolved. As a result of efforts of the Follow-Up Mechanism facilitated by my Office, 98 former FDLR combatants and their dependents were voluntarily repatriated from the DRC to Rwanda, as well as 80 ex-M23 elements and dependents from the camp in Uganda and one ex-M23 from Rwanda to the DRC. Moreover, building on the momentum created by the Follow-up Mechanism, in November 2108, all FDLR camps in eastern DRC were closed by the Congolese authorities and 1,634 disarmed FDLR and dependents were successfully repatriated to Rwanda through bilateral arrangements.

5. This shows that progress can be made even on the most protracted issue when political will is displayed by the leaders of the region. I seize this opportunity to commend the three countries concerned, the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda, for their commitment and cooperation. I encourage them to sustain this positive momentum to conclude the repatriation of the remaining ex-M23 members in camps in Rwanda and Uganda. It will also be important to monitor and support the effective reintegration of the former combatants into civilian life.

6. **Secondly**, during the 9th ROM Summit, leaders of the region stressed the need to strengthen existing security and confidence building mechanisms and to explore avenues to further strengthen the bounds of friendship and cooperation between the core countries of the region. Accordingly, we have been working assiduously with ICGLR towards supporting the operationalisation of these mechanisms, notably the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM), as important platforms to exchange information and enhance

regional cooperation on the neutralization of negative forces. I have also been encouraging leaders, including during my most recent meetings with President Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, President Museveni of Uganda, President Lourenco of Angola and AU Commission Chairperson Faki, to assist in defusing current tensions between some core countries of the region. In this regard, I welcome the recent initiatives taken by some leaders.

7. **Thirdly**, in extended consultations with all stakeholders, we have been highlighting the urgency of addressing the protracted refugee crisis in the region and promoting a common regional approach on this important issue. These efforts culminated in the holding on 7 March of a Ministerial meeting on the refugee situation in the Great Lakes region which I co-chaired together with the Prime Minister of Uganda and the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR. The Ministers stressed the importance of addressing the drivers and root causes of forced displacement, noting that over 4 million out of the 6.3 million refugees on the African continent originate from

countries in the Great Lakes region. They reviewed options for durable solutions, including local integration of refugees in host communities. ICGLR was further requested to develop a Regional Strategy and action plan for durable solutions for the region.

Mr. President,

8. Since this will be my last briefing as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, allow me to use this opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges encountered during my tenure.

9. Indeed, since the 1990s and early 2000s, the region has made important steps towards durable peace and stability. Despite persisting insecurity in eastern DRC, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the region today is largely peaceful. Where cross-border clashes frequently occurred, differences between member states are now mostly addressed through dialogue, albeit not always conclusively. Serious efforts have been initiated to promote regional cooperation and socio-

economic integration which need to be vigorously sustained and supported by international partners.

10. This progress notwithstanding, the continued presence of negative forces in eastern DRC perpetuates insecurity and mistrust between some countries. Allegations of support by governments of the region or their proxies to such groups, and of cross-border interferences continue to threaten cordial relations and stability. They are compounded by the continuing illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources. The re-emergence of tensions between some countries of the region have further hampered efforts to yield the full potential of cooperation.

11. These issues require our sustained attention. Greater regional cooperation will be necessary to effectively neutralize the negative forces operating in eastern DRC and transform natural resources into vehicles of shared prosperity. In addition to strengthening existing confidence building mechanisms, there is a continued need to create opportunities for dialogue between the concerned countries to address differences where

they exist and strengthen the trust and cooperation between them.

12. Politically, significant opportunities for consolidating regional peace and stability have emerged, including with the recent developments in the DRC, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. In this regard, I welcome the recent visits by President Tshisekedi to the countries of the region in efforts to strengthen ties with his country.

13. This progress, however, remains fragile. We need to capitalize on the opportunities and not waver in our support to the respective parties to live up to their responsibilities.

14. In the DRC, sustained efforts are required to ensure differences across political parties are addressed and consensus is promoted on ways to achieve peace and development throughout the country.

15. On Burundi, we need to provide continued support to the East African Community to promote effective decisions on next steps in the facilitation process to ensure a peaceful and

inclusive political process towards elections in 2020, in full respect of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

16. Recognizing these continuing challenges, and in line with the Roadmap which I developed after assuming function as Special Envoy and which you endorsed, I have focused my engagement on key priority areas to support the signatory countries in the implementation of the PSC Framework in the following ways.

First: Strengthening regional ownership of the implementation process.

17. Upon assuming my function, I realised that the Summit meetings of the Regional Oversight Mechanism held regularly on the margins of the AU Summit and the UN General Assembly were facing diminishing interest and participation by leaders of the signatory countries. In efforts to reinvigorate this mechanism as a forum for regular exchange between the leaders and as the main vehicle to govern the implementation of the PSC Framework, I recommended that the Summit be

held in the region, convened and chaired by one of the signatory countries on rotational basis.

18. Since the endorsement of this reform initiative by the Heads of State in 2016, the chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism has been held by the Heads of State of Angola, the Republic of Congo, and Uganda successively. The next Summit of the Mechanism is scheduled to be hosted in the DRC in October 2019, followed by Zambia in 2020. The reform was successful in promoting renewed interest and ownership of the signatory countries in the PSC Framework implementation process. The annually rotating responsibility affords the respective chair an opportunity to provide leadership in addressing key outstanding issues related to the regional commitments under the PSC Framework.

Second: Maintaining regional and international focus on the need to strengthen cooperation against the negative forces and build confidence between countries.

19. On all occasions, I have encouraged opportunities for dialogue between the concerned leaders to address differences where they exist and promote cooperation, most notably on the neutralization of negative forces. This is particularly important in light of persisting mistrust and tensions between some countries of the region. As a result of these engagements, the 9th ROM Summit in October 2018 in Kampala reviewed in a closed-door session the issues that contributed to mistrust between some of the leaders and reflected on ways to resolve them. The Summit asked President Sassou Nguesso and President Museveni to take initiatives in this regard. I am encouraged by ongoing efforts by leaders of the region to help address causes of tensions and promote dialogue in the region. International partners should stand ready to support these engagements in a concerted manner.

Third: Promoting regional cohesion and international attention on the situations in the DRC and Burundi.

20. Recognizing the importance of political stability at the national level for regional stability, and in line with my

mandate, support to peaceful, credible and inclusive political and dialogue processes has been one of my key priorities and a major area of political engagement.

21. I had been given the opportunity from April to June 2015, to promote a promising dialogue process between the parties in Burundi which had it been effectively supported by all, could have provided the Burundian stakeholders a better forum to address their differences. In the DRC, I was initially requested to explore avenues for the UN to facilitate dialogue.

22. In addition to frequent visits to the DRC and Burundi to encourage commitment to dialogue and compromise, I promoted a concerted regional and international approach to the situations in these countries. I also facilitated joint action of the Guarantor institutions, which resulted in the holding of six ministerial level meetings as well as a joint visit to Kinshasa in May 2017 to engage national stakeholders on the need for inclusive dialogue.

23. The role of the Special Envoy, working in collaboration with the SRSG and Head of MONUSCO and the Special Envoy for Burundi, will continue to be critical in highlighting the importance of peaceful and inclusive political processes in the region and promoting sustained concerted support to countries concerned.

Fourth: Situating women’s participation in peace and political processes at the centre of advocacy efforts.

24. I am pleased with the momentum we have achieved in promoting women’s participation in political and peace processes in the region through strengthened advocacy with the support of the Advisory Board of the Women’s Platform for the PSC Framework. Effective follow-up to the joint UN-AU-ICGLR solidarity missions to Burundi, the Central African Republic, the DRC, and South Sudan, and implementation of the decisions of the Gender Ministers meeting held in Uganda in November 2018 is now required. I call on the Council to support the region in efforts to achieve a minimum quota of 30 per cent women’s representation in political and peace

processes by 2020 in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000).

Fifth: Encouraging a political conversation on ways to transform natural resources into vehicles of shared prosperity.

25. In view of the lack of tangible progress in curbing the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources and addressing their role in fuelling insecurity and building on the efforts by ICGLR, signatory countries agreed to our proposal to initiate a political dialogue on ways to transform the exploitation of natural resources into a driver of peace and shared prosperity. Consultations to this effect have been initiated with the concerned countries.

Sixth: Promoting rule of law and respect for human rights.

26. Recognizing the centrality of respect for human rights, I am pleased with the operationalization of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network which supports collaboration between prosecutors and judicial authorities in the region on cross-border crimes and serious human rights violations. In

efforts to further foster political commitment to advance the fight against impunity, I am pleased to announce that my office is co-organising together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and ICGLR a high-level conference on justice and good governance in May in Nairobi. The support of the Council to this initiative would be much appreciated.

Monsieur le Président,

27. Permettez-moi de conclure en remerciant le Conseil de l'appui qu'il m'a apporté au cours de mon mandat. J'espère sincèrement que les partenaires régionaux et internationaux continueront de collaborer étroitement en faveur de l'instauration d'une paix durable et de la prospérité partagée dans la région des Grands Lacs.

28. Je vous remercie de votre attention.