



Press Release
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PRESS STATEMENT ON DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO BY SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Following is the press statement made today on the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Security Council President Jean-Marc de la Sablière:

The members of the Council called on all Congolese parties to implement without delay the Pretoria agreement of 17 December 2002, in order to establish a transitional government which should lead to elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They stressed the need for early action to resolve the key outstanding issues, especially the question of security for all parties in Kinshasa, and stressed the importance of adopting the Pretoria agreement in the framework of the inter-Congolese dialogue as soon as possible.

The members of the Council expressed their deep concern at the resumption of fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of instability in the north-east of the country. They urged the parties to abide by the terms of the Gbadolite agreement signed on 30 December 2002, and in particular to cease immediately all military activities in the area. They called on the swift implementation of the Luanda agreement and the establishment of the Ituri Pacification Committee without further delay.

The members of the Council condemned in the strongest terms the massacres and systematic violations of human rights perpetrated by the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) and the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD)/national troops in the Ituri area. Jean-Pierre Bemba, as the leader of the MLC, bears the responsibility for the security of civilian populations in the territory under his control. The members of the Council demanded that Mr. Bemba ensure that these massacres and violations of human rights cease immediately and hold the perpetrators accountable. They took note of his commitments to take action and expressed their intention to continue to monitor the situation in this regard, on the basis of continuing investigations by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The members of the Council stressed the particular need for all parties claiming a role in the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demonstrate their respect for human rights, international humanitarian law, and the security and well-being of civilian populations in areas under their control.

The members of the Council stressed the importance of full implementation by the Governments of both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of their commitments under the 30 July Pretoria accord. They encouraged further efforts by

MONUC and the Third Party Verification Mechanism to continue to verify implementation of these commitments, in particular the full withdrawal of Rwandan forces and the absence of all forms of support to the foreign armed groups by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The members of the Council expressed concern at reports of continuing sponsorship of proxy groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They called on both sides to cooperate fully with the verification efforts of MONUC and the Third Party Verification Mechanism.

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