



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 March 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-second session

27 February–31 March 2023

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Political Tensions Between The Government Of The Democratic Republic Of The Congo and The Government Of Rwanda

On 24th January 2023, a missile was fired on a Congolese fighter jet by the military of the Government of Rwanda. The incident appears to be the tip of the iceberg in the rather long political tensions which have built up between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Rwanda. Whereas Rwanda argued that the jet entered its airspace without permission, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo seems to view it as an act of aggression. Despite the fact that a proxy war on the grounds in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo carried out by different armed groups already appears to be in place, civilians in Goma are allegedly fearing an inter-state war. However, analysts think of the latter to happen as rather unlikely.

In any case, the Society for Threatened Peoples is deeply concerned about the situation of civilians on both sides of the border and especially the position of minorities within the broader conflict(s). Whereas both the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as an expert panel of the United Nations has accused the Government of Rwanda of backing the armed group M23 and the Government of Rwanda denying this, informants of the Society for Threatened Peoples even impeach the Government of Rwanda of supporting other active armed groups operating in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well, for example Red-Tabara, whose origin lies in Burundi. Moreover, especially Kinyarwanda-speaking civilians living inside the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo appear to face a specific threat. Whereas the Government of Rwanda argues the aforementioned group of persons to be discriminated against within the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it also seems to frame an alleged security-threat against whoever they perceive as “Tutsi” which could alongside the ostensible fighting of the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), the latter consisting inter alia of “génocidaires”, potentially be used as a pre-text for the Government of Rwanda’s deployment of troops within the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Considering that other states which are part of the East-African Community (EAC) have deployed troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with an authorization of the Government thereof through the East-African Community (EAC), the Society for Threatened Peoples would like to point out that it is not aware of such an authorization having been put in place regarding the troops deployed in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the Government of Rwanda.

Taking into account the political tensions between the two neighbouring nation states, Kinyarwanda-speaking minorities living within the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo appear to be put in a difficult position. Whereas they might have to face potential hatred from their fellow-citizens, possibly inter alia deriving from the language used against not only the Government of Rwanda but also Kinyarwanda-speaking people as a whole by the general public (which is considered as hate-speech by some analysts) and their alleged association with the Government of Rwanda, the latter might also pose a potential threat to them in case they should decide not to cooperate with the ideas of the argumentation of the Government of Rwanda who might try to use them as well as their threat by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a pre-text for invading into the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thus, whichever side it is that Kinyarwanda-speaking minorities might decide to take up with, they appear to be facing a rather serious threat, not to mention the danger caused by the local militias, some of whom are very likely to be supported by either one of the two nation states as well.

Therefore, the Society for Threatened Peoples calls upon the UN Human Rights Council to:

- call upon the Government of Rwanda to stop supporting the M23 as well as any other non-state armed actors operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in any way, shape, or form,
- call upon the UN Security Council to call upon the International Criminal Court in the Hague, pursuant to a resolution adopted under chapter VII of the United Nations Charta, to issue an arrest warrant against the “génocidaires” who are part of the FDLR

(Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) and subsequently ensure the adequate legal prosecution of the “génocidaires” under international law,

- call upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to start bringing the M23 as well as other armed groups operating in the Eastern part of the country to the negotiating table,
- call upon the Government of Kenya to foster a negotiating process between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the active armed groups in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the M23,
- call upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to hold any security forces as well as members of armed groups who have abused, killed or tortured civilians accountable for their actions and persecute them under national Congolese law,
- call upon the East African Community (EAC) to foster negotiations between the armed groups operating in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Rwanda,
- call upon the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council to request an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice on the legal question of whether the Government of Rwanda is authorized to deploy troops within the countries’ borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- call upon the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, to foster national reconciliation processes focusing on the Eastern part of the country,
- call upon the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, as well as the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, to take active measures to de-escalate the conflict,
- call upon the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, to desist from using any kind of language which could be considered as insensitive or might even amount to a light form of hate speech against Kinyarwanda-speaking civilians on either side of the border,
- call upon the Government of Rwanda to withdraw any Rwandan soldiers from Congolese soil, especially the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- call upon the President of Angola, João Lourenço, to keep accelerating the process of talks between representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Rwanda which happened in Luanda in November in 2022 and the implementation thereof,
- strongly condemn the absence of the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, at the talks in Luanda in November 2022 and call upon him to attend similar appointments next time,
- call upon the former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, to not lose focus on the implementation of the so-called “Nairobi process” alongside the talks in Luanda mentioned above and include more of the other non-state armed groups which are active in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
- call upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to improve the general living conditions of all the civilians living within its borders, as that will probably contribute to impede the recruiting process for the armed groups.