



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 19 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 19 December 2024 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda, Olivier Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe, on Rwanda's position regarding the ongoing conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Luanda process (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated to all Security Council members as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Ernest **Rwamucyo**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 19 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

1. The Government of Rwanda would like to bring to the attention of the members of the Security Council the position of Rwanda on the conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Luanda process.
2. This conflict involves the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and over 250 armed groups operating in North and South Kivu. The main root causes of the conflict are bad governance, endemic corruption, lack of basic infrastructure and a dysfunctional public administration, especially in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the marginalization and persecution of minorities, mainly Congolese Tutsis, have been rampant since colonial times.
3. This crisis was aggravated by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, following which the genocidal army (ex-Rwandese Armed Forces, or ex-FAR) and militia (Interahamwe) fled to former Zaire, where they were supported by successive Congolese Governments. The ex-FAR/Interahamwe, which later became the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), exported anti-Tutsi genocide ideology and targeted Congolese Tutsi in the region. During that period, the ex-FAR/Interahamwe carried out multiple attacks and incursions in Rwandan territory, targeting civilians, mainly Tutsis.
4. Given this situation, several armed groups, including the current Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), were created over the past three decades, to defend the Congolese Tutsi community. As Rwanda suffered regular cross-border attacks, within the context of the collusion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the FDLR and the assimilation of the M23 movement to Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda has deployed defensive measures to protect the country and its citizens.
5. As a result of this enduring conflict in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have severely deteriorated, mainly due to the following three security concerns:
  - (a) The presence and activity of FDLR genocidal forces, supported by and embedded in the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC);
  - (b) The deployment of defensive measures in Rwanda in response to the FDLR threat;
  - (c) The M23 question.
6. Despite the fact that M23 is a Congolese armed group, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has continually assimilated the movement and the Congolese Tutsi community to Rwanda. As a consequence, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has mobilized a large coalition of armed groups and forces, including FDLR, Wazalendo and several other local militias, Burundian forces and Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) forces, as well as European mercenaries, whose objective is to attack M23 and, by extension, Rwanda. This coalition is currently fuelled by the genocide ideology of FDLR and the obsession of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, for regime change in Rwanda, as evidenced by multiple statements captured on video.
7. Rwanda recalls that the hiring of mercenaries violates United Nations and Organization of African Unity/African Union conventions and, referring to the recent arrest of Horatiu Potra, the leader of a mercenary group in Romania, who wanted to destabilize ongoing elections, Rwanda denounces the double standard of the

international community. Indeed, Mr. Potra had been creating havoc in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo over the past two years without being held accountable by his country of origin or the international community at large.

8. In this context, the Luanda process was launched in 2022, under the facilitation of the President of Angola, João Lourenço. This trilateral process aims to bring peace to Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and normalize relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From 21 March to 25 November 2024, six ministerial meetings were held under this process to address the aforementioned three security issues.

9. Rwanda recalls that, contrary to the claims by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the M23 question was not brought into the Luanda process by Rwanda, but by the Angolan facilitator. Indeed, the question was included in the initial draft agreement presented by the President of Angola to his Rwandan and Congolese counterparts on 11 and 12 August 2024, respectively. Moreover, from 31 August to 3 September 2024, the facilitator invited a M23 delegation to Luanda, led by its Executive Secretary, Benjamin Mbonimpa, to hear its political grievances. Since then, the M23 question regularly featured in the discussions and outcome documents of subsequent ministerial meetings.

10. The sixth ministerial meeting, on 25 November 2024, was a breakthrough, as both delegations adopted a concept of operations on the harmonized plan for the neutralization of FDLR and the lifting of the defensive measures of Rwanda. This concept of operations settled, at least on paper, two of the three aforementioned security concerns between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Following the adoption of the concept of operations, a virtual meeting was convened on 26 November 2024 to continue the consideration of the draft agreement, focusing on the remaining security challenge, which is the M23 question. During that meeting, the two parties did not agree on the M23 question, and the Angolan facilitator requested Rwanda to submit language that would be included in the draft agreement.

11. As requested by the facilitator, on 27 November 2024, Rwanda sent a note verbale to the Angolan facilitator proposing language calling for a commitment by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to direct talks with M23, tackling the root causes of the crisis, with a view to finding a lasting solution the conflict. Later that day, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, received a call from the Angolan facilitator proposing to hold a trilateral summit in Luanda on 14 December 2024.

12. On 28 November 2024, the Angolan facilitator reiterated in his letter to Rwanda that “the paragraph relating to M23 was the question of substance that remained to be resolved in the draft agreement”. In response to that letter, Rwanda emphasized on 29 November 2024 that “the paragraph relating to M23 in the draft agreement calls for direct dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 within a specified time frame”. In its letter, Rwanda further stated that “without such a paragraph, Rwanda would not be prepared to sign the draft agreement as it stands”.

13. On 30 November 2024, the Angolan facilitator, while accepting the proposal of Rwanda to reschedule the summit from 14 December to 15 December 2024, stated that “the Democratic Republic of the Congo agreed to dialogue with M23 within the framework of the Nairobi process”. It is in that understanding that Rwanda agreed to participate in the summit, with was convened with a single agenda item: the signing of the agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

14. To prepare for that document, a seventh ministerial meeting was convened on 14 December 2024 to agree on the M23 question, as well as outstanding paragraphs. After nearly nine hours of intense discussions with several consultation breaks,

Rwanda was surprised by the change of position of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which categorically refused the use of the word “dialogue” between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23, within the framework of the Nairobi process.

15. In the meantime, the Angolan facilitator had proposed that the facilitators of the Nairobi and Luanda processes consult M23 in the presence of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to find a way forward. Rwanda supported that approach, hoping that a written proposal would be put forward and lead to a dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23. Unfortunately, the two delegations could not come to an agreement on the only remaining contentious issue in the draft agreement.

16. Given that the signing of the document was the only item on the agenda, the summit became irrelevant. Rwanda therefore requested the postponement of the summit to allow for further consultations that would lead to the resolution of the M23 question.

17. In the light of the facts and chronology of events above, Rwanda was therefore surprised by the false claims of the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that Rwanda had raised the M23 question as a “last minute condition” to signing the agreement. Rwanda was further surprised that the Minister went as far as to assert, in a diplomatic briefing in Kinshasa, that Rwanda had demanded that the dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 take place before the summit, which is factually incorrect and virtually impossible. Rwanda merely requested the inclusion, in the draft agreement, of a commitment by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to direct talks with M23.

18. Despite significant achievements in the Luanda process, namely, the agreement on the 4 August 2024 ceasefire between warring parties in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the inauguration of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism on 5 November 2024 in Goma and the adoption of the concept of operations on 25 November 2024, the situation on the ground is increasingly worrisome.

19. Rwanda has observed dangerous developments in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo with the acquisition by FARDC of heavy weapons and attack drones, the presence of additional Congolese and Burundian troops in North Kivu since October 2024 and the relocation of Paul Rusesabagina’s FLN armed group from Fizi territory in South Kivu to regions near the Rwanda border. In that context, several attacks have been carried out since 12 October 2024 against M23 positions, in blatant violation of the ceasefire.

20. Adding to the gravity of the situation is the continuous engagement between senior FARDC officers and FDLR leadership in the form of joint operations meetings, which have taken place as recently as 25 November 2024 and 5 December 2024 in the Nyiragongo territory, further revealing the disingenuous posture of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the peace process.

21. This militarization of FARDC in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken place in a context of several bellicose statements made by President Tshisekedi over the past two years, including recently in Haut Katanga on 17 November 2024, in which he vowed to inflict regime change in Rwanda if he was allowed to revise the constitution.

22. Rwanda deplores these statements and the lack of reaction of the Security Council to publicly denounce them. By turning a blind eye on these belligerent statements, the Council enables the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its aggressive posture and emboldens its quest for a military solution.

23. Rwanda believes in genuine solutions to address the root causes of the conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, rather than optics that please the international community. Rwanda wishes to state that, since the 1999 Lusaka ceasefire, more than 10 agreements have been signed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo calling for the neutralization of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe or FDLR, but, to date, none of those agreements have been implemented. This includes a road map between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 signed in Kigali in October 2019, under the mediation of Rwanda.

24. This above context shows that the fundamental problem is the lack of political will and consistent bad faith exhibited by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, as reminded in meetings with certain members of the Security Council, Rwanda should not be vilified for a rational approach to protect and defend its territory, which is a justifiable response to multiple violations of its sovereignty, including cross-border shellings, shootings at border posts resulting in the wounding of innocent civilians, and violations of Rwandan airspace by fighter jets of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

25. Rwanda remains committed to continuing to engage in the Luanda process and to participating in a future summit with the aim of signing an agreement addressing the three security concerns between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are the neutralization of FDLR, the lifting of the defensive measures of Rwanda and the resolution of the M23 question.

26. In closing, Rwanda calls on the Security Council to support the ongoing peace process and play a positive role in its implementation on the ground. This can only be achieved if the international community adopts a fair and exhaustive approach to the examination of all causal factors, which include the marginalization of Congolese Tutsi, the underlying genocide ideology and the fixation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on regime change in Rwanda.

27. Without prejudice to the good faith demonstrated by Rwanda as a mediator between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 between 2013 and 2021, and as host to over 100,000 Congolese refugees, as well as the continued restraint in the face of regular provocation and inflammatory rhetoric, the Security Council and its members should act decisively and hold the Democratic Republic of the Congo accountable for failing to meet its obligation to its nationals, to neighbouring countries and to the world at large.