



Crisis in DRC: NGOs call for EU sanctions against Rwanda

Brussels, 8/12/04 – European NGOs are calling for the EU to take urgent measures to end the crisis in DRC, provoked by Rwandan military intervention. The Council should impose diplomatic and budgetary sanctions on Rwanda in order to guarantee the respect of international law and to prevent a new humanitarian disaster.

By sending troops to North Kivu (DR Congo), Rwanda has carried out its threats. They are said to be fighting against Rwandan rebels, the ex-Interahamwe and FDLR. There are reports of skirmishes between these troops and the Congolese army (FARDC) as well as of rifle fire with the Ugandan army at the Ugandan border. In Rutshuru, Masisi and Lubero (approximately 200 km north of Goma), thousands of civilians are fleeing the fighting and its repercussions. Countless villages have already been pillaged and burned. Those who do not flee rapidly enough, fear for their lives. The luckiest will be taken into displaced camps, run by the few humanitarian organizations remaining in the region. The others will have to survive, hidden in the forest.

This unilateral action against the Rwandan rebels, with its consequences on the rural population, is seriously detrimental to the peace and transition processes in the region. The Congolese government is responsible for the disarmament of militia and armed forces on its territory, is implementing this program slowly and has now been destabilized. Anger among the Congolese population is flaring up against so-called ‘non-natives’, with the risk of new tragedies and a new pretext for an intervention from Rwanda. The vicious circle of regional destabilization begins again, in spite of months of diplomatic efforts.

EurAC, the European Network of NGOs for Central Africa, **calls on the European Union and its Member States** to:

- **Condemn the presence of Rwandan troops on Congolese territory as well as the violations of human rights**, of which they are guilty, and demand their immediate withdrawal ;
- **Take immediate diplomatic and budgetary sanctions against Rwanda** as long as the country continues to act unilaterally. More concretely, EurAC calls for those partners of Rwanda giving direct budgetary support (European Union, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the UK (Dfid), Sweden (SIDA), the African

Development Bank) to immediately suspend aid and grants (notably by the activation of the article 96 of the Cotonou Agreements). EurAC further recommends that the EU envisage restrictions to the granting of visas and the freezing of property of Rwandan officials;

- **Ensure that the Congolese authorities give their immediate attention to the restructuring and unification of the security forces and of the army**, in order to re-establish State authority across the entire territory and to carry out, with the support of MONUC, the foreseen disarmament and dismantling of armed militia in the East of the country ;
- **Ensure that MONUC troops are deployed in the conflict zones, that they guarantee respect for the arms embargo and accelerate the DDRRR** of ex rebel combatants. **Ensure that they document the current human rights violations and war crimes**, for investigation by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, EurAC calls upon Member States of the European Union to give positive responses to Kofi Annan's call to strengthen the peacekeeping operation, as decided by the UN Security Council on 1st October.

EurAC is the European Network of NGOs for Central Africa. EurAC is made up of 40 member organizations from 11 European countries (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Norway, United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland) working for development and humanitarian relief in Central Africa.

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