



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, CGH, PHD, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND CO-CHAIR OF THE
JOINT SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE OF THE EAST
AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) AND SOUTHERN
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) ON
THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EASTERN
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

**Your Excellency and Co-Chair, Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, Chairperson of SADC and President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of EAC and SADC member states;
Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs and External Relations of EAC and SADC;
Secretaries General of EAC and SADC;
Distinguished Delegates;
Esteemed Guests,**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I will take this earliest opportunity to sincerely thank my dear sister, H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, for hosting this joint Summit today. I also thank you, Excellencies, for taking the time to prepare for and attend this Joint Summit of the EAC and SADC. Equally importantly, I appreciate the efforts made by the two regions, through our respective communities, to mobilise with urgency and convene the separate extraordinary summits in order to deliberate on the concerning security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Excellencies,

2. Together, we find ourselves standing face-to-face with a grave and protracted security, diplomatic and humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a situation that demands our immediate, collective and sustained attention.



The Eastern region of the DRC has been engulfed in a devastating conflict for over two decades now, and this tragedy has claimed thousands of lives, displaced countless civilians, inflicted unbearable suffering and loss and set back the developmental momentum of one of the most promising places in the world. The recent escalation of hostilities in Goma and the surrounding areas is a stark reminder of the increasing fragility the situation presents and that only urgent collective action to facilitate a negotiated solution will offer relief.

3. Today, we join together in order to reiterate our calls to the parties to this tragic conflict to immediately cease hostilities and take positive actions to allow meaningful dialogue aimed at the restoration of stability. Specifically, we stand together to call on all parties to actualize the ceasefire; and specifically, on the M23 to halt further advancement and the armed forces of the DRC, to cease all retaliatory measures. An immediate ceasefire is the only way by which we can create the necessary conditions for constructive dialogue and implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement.
4. As members of the African Union and the United Nations, we stand bound by fundamental principles of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations and the principle of good neighbourliness. These twin principles are the surest safeguards for the realization of peaceful coexistence.
5. Equally, we as responsible members of the international community are bound by the obligation to ensure the safety of diplomatic assets, civilians, and personnel, as well as peacekeepers within our countries.



The wanton disregard for the sanctity of life, diplomatic missions, and peacekeepers is not only a brazen demonstration of lawless and unprincipled pursuit of violent harm and destruction, it is a grave affront to the rules-based international order. It must stop at once.

Excellencies,

5. Our presence here underscores our consensus that the time for action is now. The lives of millions depend on our ability to navigate this complex and challenging situation with wisdom, clarity of mind, empathy for the millions whose lives and livelihoods have been plunged into uncertainty, concern for the DRC's lost opportunity to accelerate its growth and development, and a steadfast commitment to peace and justice.
6. A terrible yet indisputable fact is that the humanitarian cost of the conflict in the DRC has been staggering. Millions of civilians have been displaced, and many live under the persistent threat of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence against women and children and the recruitment of children to take part in combat. We have a historic opportunity to rise to our moral duty of making the protection of civilians our foremost priority and of taking measures to ensure that the necessary resources and support are provided. For many well-known reasons, the situation in the DRC implicates the broader global community. Therefore, we call upon the international community to step up and do its part in supporting regional efforts in delivering for the DRC and, critically, collaborating with the government of the DRC to deliver support and security to those most in need.



7. It is clear that the conflict in the DRC is complex, delicate, and protracted and involves multiple actors pursuing different interests. The issues at stake span a wide historical, economic and political spectrum, run back in time for many decades, and spill across national and regional borders. There is also a clandestine international dimension at work, whose persistent, cynical and destructive effects must neither be underestimated or ignored any longer. For this reason, it is equally clear that such a conflict cannot be resolved through military means. We must resist the temptation of thinking that we can somehow shoot or bombard our way into a solution in the face of the complexity involved. Instead, we have to agree that only a comprehensive diplomatic approach- one that addresses the root causes of the crisis, secures the territorial integrity of the DRC, and affirms the sovereignty of its people and their aspirations for freedom, justice, and development will establish enduring peace. Such an approach must also bring together multiple stakeholders – regional states, international bodies, political organisations, civil society groups, and the Congolese government itself – to dialogue and collaborate in order to explore, develop and implement a lasting solution.
8. Excellencies, I am confident that you agree with me that dialogue is not a sign of weakness; it is a testament to our collective wisdom and strength, both as leaders and as a community. It shows our capacity to articulate issues patiently and clearly, listen to each other, consult comprehensively with a common goal in mind, and negotiate patiently until we reach a better outcome than the bitter result of bloodshed.



It is in this spirit that we must encourage all parties to put aside their differences and mobilise for engagements in constructive dialogue aimed at achieving the sustainable resolution of conflict by peacefully addressing all underlying issues.

Excellencies,

9. I believe that we have a singular opportunity to build on the gains and lessons of **Luanda** and **Nairobi** peace processes. We have a historic opportunity as the broader neighbourhood of the DRC to mobilize our collective will into a fused, single and coherent initiative towards the resolution of this complex crisis. Such an approach will bring all our assets to bear and minimize the possibility of parallel initiatives that duplicate and undermine progress towards peace.
10. My dear brothers and Sister, this calls for our unwavering political support. I therefore urge Your Excellencies at this Extraordinary Joint Summit to deploy our best effort and muster our total commitment to facilitate a sustainable settlement that lays the foundation for a stable and prosperous Democratic Republic of Congo.
11. For this reason, it may also be prudent for the consolidated single EAC-SADC initiative on this matter to be supported by a strong secretariat that can provide the necessary coordination, monitoring, and enforcement to ensure effective implementation of outcomes.
12. The international community must stand in solidarity with the people of DRC during this time by aligning their support with this initiative.



Excellencies,

12. I conclude by reaffirming our robust commitment to achieving sustainable peace, development, and integration across the region. The security of the DRC is essential not only to the stability of the country but also to the prosperity and cohesion of the entire EAC and SADC. We call upon all parties to prioritize dialogue, cooperation, and, above all, the protection of civilian lives.

I thank you once again for being able to be here on this important mission, and I look forward to engaging in discussions and participating in collaborative efforts over the coming days as we support our brothers and sisters of the DRC.

May Almighty God bless you all, and may God bless Africa.

**Asante sana,
Merci beaucoup,
Muy obrigado,
Thank you.**

###

