

For the attention of Mr Jozef Síkela, European Commissioner for International Partnerships

Cc: Ms Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs
Mr Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

Brussels, 29th January 2025

Subject: Rwanda's war of aggression in the DRC and the Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Raw Materials Value Chains

Honorable Commissioner,

We write to express grave concerns regarding Rwanda's responsibility in the war ravaging North Kivu and in the humanitarian situation in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), particularly in Goma over the last few days. Despite the MoU concluded by your predecessor with Kigali's regime, European Union's commitment to peace and stability in Central Africa necessitates immediate action to address the situation.

The city of Goma, one of the most populated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is on the verge of falling into the hands of the armed group M23, which is supported and supervised by Rwanda's armed forces. The humanitarian situation is alarming: the M23 is notorious for its atrocities against civilians and hundreds of thousands of residents are expected to flee the fighting. Five UN peacekeepers have already been killed. For decades, Kigali has violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the DRC, and its influence over the eastern part of the country has only grown. Today, the territory controlled by Rwanda, either directly or through armed groups, has reached unprecedented levels, facilitating the systematic plundering of natural resources, particularly minerals, to the benefit of its economy. We urge you to take strong measures to compel Rwanda to end its invasion and atrocities.

During your hearing at the European Parliament, you emphasized "Rwanda's importance as a key EU partner in Africa" and stated that you were "unaware" of the atrocities committed by Rwanda in the DRC. However, several UN reports—attached herewith—clearly document Rwanda's support for the M23 armed group. These reports highlight that such support makes Rwanda responsible for the atrocities committed by M23¹ and establishes Rwanda as a *de facto* party to the international conflict that has devastated the Kivu region for over 20 years, and which has already caused more than six million deaths since 1998². Pursuing a goal of "territorial conquest"³, the armed forces involved continue to commit documented atrocities such as the forced recruitment of child soldiers⁴ and the use of rape as a weapon of war⁵.

This war of aggression led by Rwanda taints our hands with blood through our cooperation with the Kagame regime. The coltan extraction zone in Rubaya, controlled by M23, accounts for 15% of the global supply of tantalum⁶. M23 controls all mining activities there, including illegal extraction, illicit trade, transportation outside official channels, and the taxation of minerals

¹ S/2024/432 para 45 p. 13

² <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo>

³ Ibid.

⁴ S/2024/432, paras. 37, 100-108, and annex 65 ; S/2024/969 Annex 14 ; S/2024/689 para 30, p.9

⁵ S/2024/689 para 31 p.9 ; S/2024/432 para 92 p.21 ; annex 60 p.192

⁶ S/2024/689 para 20 p.4

produced⁷. As a result, Rwanda recorded a 50% increase in its coltan exports in 2023, becoming the world's leading exporter—far exceeding its national production capacity⁸. The latest report describes this as "the largest contamination of mineral supply chains in the Great Lakes region recorded to date."⁹

The MoU on "sustainable raw material value chains" signed with Rwanda in 2024 fails to take into account the regional context and Rwanda's active role in eastern DRC. Furthermore, it unjustifiably grants international legitimacy to the Rwandan regime. The agreement stipulates that the extraction and processing of raw materials must respect human rights, ensure transparency and traceability, and contribute to regional stability. However, the reality on the ground demonstrates the contrary. The EU must not be complicit in the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in North Kivu.

We therefore call on you to:

- 1. Suspend the Memorandum of Understanding, as the situation on the ground entirely contradicts the principles enshrined in the agreement.**
- 2. Publish the Roadmap developed under this agreement in the interest of transparency.**
- 3. Work with other Commissioners to impose targeted sanctions against the Kagame regime and those responsible for atrocities in the DRC.**
- 4. Suspend all funding for military activities of the Rwandan army, as in the case of Mozambique, to prevent the diversion of funds toward other objectives.**

We await your response and remain available to discuss the measures required to ensure the coherence of the European Union's actions in addressing this humanitarian and security crisis.

Co-signatories:

Mounir Satouri (Greens/EFA)
Barry Andrews (Renew)
Jaume Asens (Greens/EFA)
Marc Botenga (Left)
Saskia Bricmont (Greens/EFA)
Damien Careme (Left)
David Cormand (Greens/EFA)
Estelle Ceulemans (S&D)
Elio Di Rupo (S&D)
Sebastian Everding (Left)
Cristina Guarda (Greens/EFA)
Bernard Guetta (Renew)
Rima Hassan (Left)
Hannes Heide (S&D)
Rudi Kennes (Left)

⁷ S/2024/969 para 57 p.14, annex 28 p.110, and annex 29 p.114; S/2024/432 paras 138-148

⁸ S/2024/432 para 144 p.30

⁹ S/2024/969 paras 57 and 64-66

Katrin Langensiepen (Greens/EFA)
Erik Marquardt (Greens/EFA)
Catarina Martins (Left)
Sara Matthieu (Greens/EFA)
Aodhán Ó Ríordán (S&D)
Leoluca Orlando (Greens/EFA)
Vladimir Prebilič (Green/EFA)
Thijs Reuten (Greens/EFA)
Diana Riba i Giner (Greens/EFA)
Ilaria Salis (Left)
Majdouline Sbai (Greens/EFA)
Maco Tarquinio (S&D)
Marie Toussaint (Greens/EFA)
Catarina Vieira (Greens/EFA)