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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
324<sup>th</sup> MEETING  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
21 JUNE 2012

PSC/PR/COMM(CCCXXIV)

**PRESS STATEMENT**

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 324<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 21 June 2012, received a briefing from the Commission on the situation in North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Council was also briefed by the representatives of the DRC, Rwanda and South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as by the United Nations.

Council stressed, once again, that recourse to armed rebellion poses a serious threat to peace, security and stability in Africa, as well as to the viability of the ongoing democratization processes on the continent. Recalling the many agreements concluded between the national armed groups and the Government of the DRC, Council strongly condemned the action of the armed elements involved in attacks against the Congolese state.

Council stressed the need for all the elements of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) to scrupulously comply with the commitment made by the CNDP, in the Goma Agreement of 23 March 2009, to transform itself into a political party and to pursue its concerns through political channels, in strict compliance with institutional order and the laws of the Republic. Council demanded the immediate dissolution of the military wing of M23. Council also demanded that the dissident officers and soldiers lay down their arms without delay and reintegrate the units of the armed forces of the DRC in the North and South Kivu.

Council expressed deep concern at the humanitarian impact of the current fighting, including on vulnerable groups, and warned the leaders of M23 that they will be held accountable for their acts.

Council, in particular, expressed outrage at the continued violence against women in Eastern DRC, and urged for an immediate end to these crimes and for measures to ensure their protection and rehabilitate the victims. Council stressed that it is Africa's duty to play a leading role in these efforts, in cooperation with the rest of the international community.

Council expressed its full support to the efforts of the Government of the DRC to fully restore state authority. Council urged the Congolese population and political actors to demonstrate utmost responsibility and to join their efforts towards the early restoration of peace, security and stability in the towns of North Kivu affected by the current fighting.

Council encouraged the countries of the region to make use of the mechanisms provided by the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes region to extend full support to the DRC in its efforts to restore security in North Kivu. In this regard, Council welcomed the working visit to Kinshasa by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo, from 18 to 19 June 2012, and the results achieved on that occasion.

Council agreed to convene, in due course, a meeting on the situation in eastern DRC, to review the developments on the ground, including violence directed against women, and to take the required decisions.