

**We, the undersigned civil society actors representing organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have formed an ad hoc coalition, *Mobilization for the Safeguarding of Congolese Sovereignty and Autonomy* (MOSSAC), to convey our concerns to the Congolese people and their elected officials and traditional leaders, and to the international community and decision-makers around the world.**

**An Existential Crisis for the Democratic Republic of the Congo:  
Declaration of concerns about the negotiations currently underway  
between DRC and Rwanda, under the direction of the Trump regime in the US**

This Declaration is addressed to the following entities and constituencies:

- \* the Congolese people and their elected officials and traditional leaders;
- \* the international community and decision-makers around the world; and
- \* parties involved in the current negotiation of an agreement for a ceasefire and business deal between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and the United States.

**Overview**

On 18 May 2025, the M23 and AFC organized a religious service in occupied Goma to celebrate the war. Colonel Kanyami Bwalewa of [the M23 declared](#) that: "The war is not over because we have not yet achieved the objective." This comes despite a [truce that was recently agreed on](#) between M23 and the RDC.

A peace accord and business deal is currently being developed for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and the United States (US), under the direction of representatives of the Donald J. Trump administration of the US. This deal is intended to end the current conflict in eastern DRC, and replace it with a structured business arrangement in which Rwanda and the US play a strong role in extracting, processing, selling, purchasing, or otherwise utilizing resources from the DRC, while mercenaries from the US provide security for their own interests.

On 25 April 2025, a "Statement of Principles" was signed in Washington DC by representatives of the Congolese and the Rwandan governments, under the eye of the US Secretary of State. This Statement was presented as a first step in the negotiation of the intended peace accord and business deal. After reviewing this "Statement of Principles", MOSSAC is very concerned that the direction taken by this negotiation will end up usurping the sovereignty of the DRC over its own lands, resources, governance, economy and military. We present our demands and discuss our reasons for concern under the following five headings:

1. The Negotiated Agreement must provide clear requirements and monitoring mechanisms that will bring about an end to the violence, conflict and occupation.
2. The Negotiated Agreement must provide clear directives that end impunity and ensure justice.

3. The Negotiated Agreement must be developed following a legitimate democratic process that prioritizes the sovereignty and interests of the Congolese people.
4. The Negotiated Agreement must restore the sovereignty and inviolability of the DRC over its territory, its borders, its resources and its economic relations.
5. The Negotiated Agreement must protect the DRC's sovereignty over its own military.

## **Details of Our Concerns**

### **1. The Negotiated Agreement must provide clear requirements and monitoring mechanisms that will bring about an end to the violence, conflict and occupation.**

All uninvited foreign troops and foreign-funded non-state armed groups must put down their arms and leave the DRC immediately, following a firm timetable. No further agreements can be finalized until this happens.

Resolution 2773, adopted by the UN Security Council on 21 February 2025, must be implemented by all the parties named in the Resolution. Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege has emphasized the need to fully implement this Resolution, which demands an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, calls on Rwanda to end its support for the M23 and withdraw its troops from Congolese territory without preconditions, and to dismantle the parallel administrations established in the occupied zones. In his view (and ours), there is no need to further condition the implementation of these measures, which are already required under international law.

A strong, neutral monitoring and enforcement mechanism, not dependent on parties to the conflict, must be put in place to enforce any ceasefire, and to prevent any further armed incursions or harm to the local communities, civil society, journalists, elected officials and traditional leaders. The Statement of Principles mentions the need for an interposition force to facilitate the implementation of commitments, but it does not address in detail how these forces will be composed and deployed, nor their capacity to confront non-state armed groups. The absence of clarity concerning a ceasefire monitoring mechanism and a credible interposition force will undermine diplomatic efforts as well as implementation of any agreement. These weaknesses leave the field open to repeated violations of any agreements that are adopted.

Terms such as "cooperation on shared priorities" and "facilitating safe and voluntary return" lack clarity. This can lead to differing interpretations between the parties regarding what constitutes adequate cooperation or "safe and voluntary" return. Furthermore, although the agreement mentions compliance with international legal obligations, it does not specify what these obligations are nor how they will be integrated into the concrete actions of the participants, which could lead to a lack of accountability.

## **2. The Negotiated Agreement must provide clear directives that end impunity and ensure justice.**

We oppose any peace agreement that enshrines a general amnesty for those responsible for serious crimes committed by any parties during the conflict. The perpetrators and sponsors of the killings, rape of women, forced recruitment, looting/destruction of natural resources, and all other crimes must be held accountable. A peace accord that ignores the victims' need for justice and reparations for current and past crimes cannot lead to peace.

Dr. Denis Mukwege urges us to learn from past mistakes, noting that agreements driven by short-term interests have never brought lasting peace. He advocates for a holistic national transitional justice strategy, welcoming the UN Human Rights Council's establishment of a commission of inquiry into serious crimes committed in the DRC.

Justice, not impunity, is essential in any agreement between DRC and its illegal occupiers. Maxime Patrick Robert Albert Prevot, the head of Belgian diplomacy, reiterated that his country has always fought against impunity and hoped that those leading the negotiations would focus on accountability, saying "...there will be no reconciliation if the prevailing sentiment is... one of impunity for those who committed atrocious atrocities."

This agreement omits a key point: explicit recognition of Rwandan aggression, which is well documented by the UN. This omission weakens the Congolese position and could, through legal ambiguity, legitimize Kigali's incursions under the pretext of fighting armed groups like the FDLR. All war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ordinary crimes perpetrated during the course of the armed invasion and occupation of the eastern DRC must be brought to justice, with decision-makers (military commanders and civilian officials) in particular held accountable.

The investigations already launched by the UN's Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights must be brought to completion, with assistance and safe passage provided by the Congolese, Rwandan and Ugandan governments as needed in order to assess the harms caused during the period of invasion and occupation, and establish responsibilities.

Parties responsible for the decisions on and implementation of the invasion and occupation of eastern DRC must pay reparations to the individuals and communities harmed for the damages incurred and for the life, property and income lost due to the invasion and occupation. These parties may include members of the international community who provided funds that were used by Rwanda to support the invasion and occupation.

## **3. The Negotiated Agreement must be developed following a legitimate democratic process that prioritizes the sovereignty and interests of the Congolese people.**

Dr. Denis Mukwege warned against negotiating under the threat of arms, believing that this would amount to institutionalizing the law of "might makes right", and legitimizing aggression and the illegal occupation of Congolese territory. In other words, the DRC must not be forced into the position of being held hostage to a choice between continued war and occupation on

the one hand, versus a business deal that is not beneficial to the people of the DRC on the other hand. They must instead be allowed the time and political space needed to develop their own plan for an economy based on sovereign control over their own lands, resources, environment and labor force.

DRC needs to develop their own list of requirements, make demands and fight hard for what they need in any peace accord. They should not depend on the US to develop the peace accord with the help of a few hand-picked politicians, especially given that the US has been funding and supporting Rwanda and Uganda for many years.

There must be a clear, agreed-upon process to ensure that the citizens of the DRC, directly or through their civil society organizations, local governments and parliamentary representatives, participate in developing, reviewing and adopting the agreement. The exclusion of local groups, including conflict-affected communities, could compromise the legitimacy and effectiveness of any agreement adopted. Without such participation, the commitments made under this agreement could encounter resistance from governments or local populations, which could hinder its implementation.

The inclusion of multiple processes (Nairobi, Luanda, Doha) and a multitude of actors (regional governments, MONUSCO, the United States) may complicate coordination and effective implementation of the agreement.

Peace agreements signed abroad without consulting Parliament directly threaten Congolese national sovereignty. The country's sovereignty and resources are in danger of being handed over to foreign powers, paving the way for multiple potential crises. We call on parliamentarians to demand total transparency and a national debate, and urge the Congolese people to mobilize peacefully to defend the integrity of the territory.

#### **4. The Negotiated Agreement must restore the sovereignty and inviolability of the DRC over its territory, its borders, its resources and its economic relations.**

The agreement must strengthen the sovereignty and guarantee the inviolability of Congolese borders against any form of aggression or foreign interference, while promoting a peaceful environment for the Congolese population.

All territory and property occupied by, or under the control of, uninvited foreign entities (state or private) must be relinquished to its former owner(s) immediately, following a firm timetable. Although the agreement aims to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), it does not address the conditions necessary to ensure their safety and reintegration. Issues such as land restitution, access to basic services, and local reconciliation must be clarified in order to prevent future conflicts and strengthen social cohesion between returnees and those encountered.

The timing and context of this negotiation raise serious concerns. Does this deal provide a veneer of legitimacy to a long-criticized minerals laundering system that allows Congolese resources to be exported as Rwandan? Rwanda officially mines tin, tantalum, and tungsten.

However, the volume of Rwanda's exports appears to far exceed the production capacity of its modest mineral reserves. Critics argue these small mines provide a convenient façade behind which far larger illicit flows of Congolese minerals can be hidden and rebranded. If signed without robust safeguards, a Rwanda–U.S. minerals agreement could legitimize a fragile and opaque system of illicit resource extraction and export. Far from promoting stability, it may exacerbate conflict dynamics, entrench war economies, and weaken state authority in eastern Congo.

The DRC must govern and manage its own lands and resources, with full sovereignty, and may choose to enter into beneficial business partnerships or not, without being pressured by external forces who have their own separate geopolitical agenda. In the case of the United States under President Trump, the primary agenda is to take over the critical minerals trade globally, and to diminish the influence of China. As Massad Boulos, Donald Trump's special envoy for Africa, said: ["Our mission is to promote the interests of the United States and our vision of international partnership"](#).

The DRC's decisions must be based on the DRC's national interests, and made collectively through the DRC's democratic process – not by individual Congolese “compradors” who make deals with foreign companies or countries to increase their own wealth and power.

This current Statement of Principles is a deal of business interests, influence, and exploitation, disguised as diplomacy towards a peace accord. It is an economic, security and geopolitical agreement, carefully worded to the detriment of Congolese sovereignty. According to Congolese opposition figure Prince Epenge, spokesperson for the LAMUKA coalition, “Kagame has obtained in the Washington agreement what he could not obtain by force of arms at the front.”

The following concepts have no place in a peace accord :

- Joint hydroelectric development: This means that the DRC and Rwanda will jointly build and manage dams and power plants, but these projects will be on Congolese rivers, while the profits will be shared or even directed towards Kigali.
- Joint management of national parks: This means that Congolese nature reserves like Virunga or Kahuzi-Biega will be co-managed with Rwanda, even though they are on Congolese soil. This joint management conceals an economic maneuver: Virunga National Park contains potential oil deposits, while Kahuzi-Biega National Park is rich in precious timber, gold, and other minerals. These areas have become disguised targets under the guise of "ecological protection." But behind the ecology, it is the resources that are being controlled.
- “Transparent” and “legal” mineral supply chains: In other words, minerals like coltan, gold, tungsten, or lithium will be extracted from DRC, certified as “clean,” and then exported to the US or Europe by Rwanda as one of the main actors in the supply chain, even though Rwanda does not possess these resources at home.
- Involvement of American investors in mining: This means that large American companies will now have direct access to the Congolese mines, especially those in the East. In exchange, they promise “security.” That is, the riches of Eastern Congo will be extracted, processed, and exported through DRC-Rwanda cooperation, under the supervision of the

United States and its mercenaries. The DRC's wealth will now be shared with Rwanda, thus legitimizing illegal Rwandan extractivism in the eastern DRC.

## **5. The Negotiated Agreement must protect the DRC's sovereignty over its own military.**

It is well understood by the Congolese people that the Congolese military (the FARDC) is dysfunctional and ineffective in large part because different sections of the army give their allegiance to competing factions, sometimes including Rwanda and its allies inside the DRC.

No mercenaries funded by foreign governments or businesses (including those said to protect land or resources) may operate on Congolese soil, because this allows whoever pays them to control them, which undercuts Congolese sovereignty. This is particularly a problem since Trump has invited in the mercenary firm run by Erik Prince (formerly of Blackwater, well-known to commit crimes in conflict zones) to protect investments at mine sites ([see Reuters 17 April 2025](#)). He is already recruiting mercenaries from former troops of the French Foreign Legion for this purpose ([see the newsletter "Africa Intelligence" 12 May 2025](#)).

No foreign funding or material support, state or private, may be provided to any non-state armed groups nor to any individual section (division, battalion, etc.) of Congolese armed forces (the FARDC, PNC or ANR).

In addition to being illegal, the collective integration of rebels into the security services contributes to their weakening. A peace agreement that enshrines the collective integration of rebels into the army will destroy efforts to build a strong, dissuasive, and loyal national army capable of protecting our territory and our people. It is absolutely essential to end the legitimization of the use of arms as a means of accessing political power. To this end, any attempt to grant political responsibility to individuals, simply because they have committed crimes or threatened to commit them, destroys democracy and normalizes the culture of resorting to violence to make political gains. This must end.

In November of 2022, Congolese national deputies adopted a statement prohibiting the integration of elements from terrorist and other armed groups within the armed forces, the national police, and other security services of the DRC, in order to protect Congolese national security services from infiltration. The "Statement of Principles" and the negotiations towards a peace agreement have raised concerns about the potential for reintegration of M23 and AFC elements into the army and DRC's political institutions, which would violate that Resolution.

The "Statement of Principles" provides for the creation of a joint mechanism to combat armed groups. This raises concerns about the reintroduction of Rwandan military operations in the DRC, which could reignite instability, and could be used as a framework to justify an armed presence by Rwanda in the east. The civil society organization LUCHA has expressed its concern, recalling that previous dialogues with armed rebellions supported by foreign states, including the AFDL, the M23, the RCD and the CNDP, have failed to bring peace to the Congo but have instead resulted in agreements enshrining total impunity for serious crimes committed against civilians, the gradual dismantling of security forces through the collective integration of rebels

mixed with their foreign supporters, and undemocratic access to political power. The citizen movement Filimbi has expressed the same concerns, saying : "There should be no mixing or political integration of armed groups, and no amnesty should be granted for serious crimes."

### **An existential crisis for the DRC**

In conclusion, the statements and actions of the power-brokers involved, the anti-democratic process being followed, and the likely endpoints of this negotiation as indicated in the "Statement of Principles", lead us to conclude that any negotiated agreement will end up diminishing the sovereignty of the DRC over its own lands, resources, governance, economy and military. We anticipate, instead, that it will provide a framework to legitimize the current illicit resource and power grabs underway by Rwanda, the M23, the AFC and their other allies, including Western powers that covet the DRC's minerals and support Rwanda with financial aid.

This is an existential crisis for the DRC, and must be responded to as such.

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## **ATTACHMENT 2. List of References used in Compiling Our Concerns**

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Les pourparlers de paix menés par les États-Unis pourraient stimuler le traitement des minéraux du Congo par le Rwanda, selon des sources

20-05-2025

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In Goma, the M23 organized a thanksgiving service 3 months after the conquest of the city.

18-05-2025

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### **DRC: US billionaire Erik Prince's firm hiring former French soldiers for security contract**

RDC : la société du milliardaire américain Erik Prince recrute d'anciens militaires français pour un contrat de sécurité

12-05-2025

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### **Déclaration des principes Kinshasa-Kigali : HRW juge impératif que le lien entre les conflits, les abus, la corruption et l'exploitation des ressources soit pris en compte pour éviter la violation des droits humains**

Kinshasa-Kigali Declaration of Principles: HRW considers it imperative that the link between conflict, abuse, corruption and resource exploitation be addressed to avoid human rights violations

11-05-2025

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11-05-2025

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### **Déclaration d'Anaëlmarlon Luzayamo, analyste politique, diffusée sur WhatsApp**

Statement by Anaëlmarlon Luzayamo, political analyst, circulated on WhatsApp  
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**Trump administration ruthlessly pursues of mineral wealth in growing competition with China**  
L'administration Trump poursuit impitoyablement l'exploitation des richesses minérales dans une concurrence croissante avec la Chine

08-05-2025

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Caricature: Congolese mining resources at the heart of a partnership between Kinshasa and Washington

05-05-2025

<https://actualite.cd/2025/05/05/caricature-les-ressources-minieres-congolaise-au-coeur-dun-partenariat-entre-kinshasa-et-washington>

**Accords de principes RDC-Rwanda : "Je suis confiant que l'ensemble des parties prenantes qui vont façonner ces futurs accords de paix puissent aussi réserver l'attention nécessaire au principe de la redevabilité" (Maxime Prévot)**

DRC-Rwanda Agreements of Principles: "I am confident that all stakeholders who will shape these future peace agreements can also pay due attention to the principle of accountability" (Maxime Prévot)

02-05-2025

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02-05-2025

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Signing of the Declaration of Principles for Peace in the DRC: Kinshasa Women Express Doubts About the Results

29-04-2025

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Declaration of Principles between Kinshasa and Kigali: Pessimistic about the outcome of the conflict, the opposition believes that the US initiative will benefit Rwanda more

28-04-2025

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Eastern DRC: Opponents "outraged by Kinshasa's rush to make new commitments with Rwanda"

28-04-2025

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War of aggression in eastern DRC: Rwandan army and its M23-AFC auxiliaries flout Doha and Washington agreements and strengthen their positions in North and South Kivu

28-04-2025

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Dialogue between Kinshasa and the AFC/M23: Lucha warns against peace agreements that reward criminals at the expense of victims

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DRC-Rwanda: Denis Mukwege calls for vigilance after the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington

27-04-2025

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Des militants congolais dénoncent l'accord minier entre les États-Unis et le Congo

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Exclusif : Prince, partisan de Trump, conclut un accord avec le Congo pour contribuer à sécuriser les richesses minérales

17-04-2025

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Mukwege criticizes direct negotiations between the DRC and the M23 and calls for an international peace conference

17-03-2025

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