

7. The situation in the Great Lakes region

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council considered various aspects of the political and humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region, holding four meetings and adopting one resolution and one presidential statement. The Council focused on developments regarding the implementation of the Nairobi communiqué by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as well as the security threats posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In addition, the Council heard two briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region in regard to his facilitation of peace processes in the region.

13 March 2008: decision concerning the presence of armed groups

On 13 March 2008, the Council adopted resolution 1804 (2008), in which it demanded that the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR)/Interahamwe, and other Rwandan armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo immediately lay down their arms and present themselves to the Congolese authorities and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for their disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration; stop recruiting children; and end gender-based violence. The Council further called upon the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda to intensify their cooperation to implement their commitments under the Nairobi communiqué.

22 December 2008: presidential statement on the failure of the Lord's Resistance Army to sign the peace agreement

By a presidential statement of 22 December 2008, the Council, inter alia, condemned the repeated failure of the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony, to sign the Final Peace Agreement, and called upon LRA to sign and honour the Agreement immediately and begin the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to ensure a peaceful, political solution. The Council demanded that LRA cease its recruitment and use of children and release all

women, children and other non-combatants, in accordance with resolution 1612 (2005). In addition, the Council welcomed the joint efforts made by States in the region to address the security threat posed by LRA, and welcomed the re-establishment of peace and security in northern Uganda.⁷⁸

15 January to 9 November 2009: briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region

On 15 January 2009, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region briefed Council members on his ongoing facilitation of the peace processes in the region. Reporting on the progress made, he stated that relations between Kinshasa and Kigali, which had deteriorated previously, had improved, and that Presidents Joseph Kabila and Paul Kagame were engaged in discussions. In addition, talks were under way between the Kinshasa Government and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP), and the prospect of a military takeover of the town of Goma by CNDP had considerably receded. He noted, however, that progress concerning the dialogue had remained slower than desirable, although all the parties strongly reaffirmed their commitment to the Nairobi dialogue. Noting the significant challenges remaining, he stated that the pace of the dialogue remained slow and appealed to the Council to use whatever leverage it might have on the parties to encourage progress. Secondly, at CNDP insistence, the dialogue remained a bilateral one, exclusively between it and the Government. He therefore suggested that it was important to find an effective way to link the interests and commitments made by more than 20 armed groups under the Goma agreement to the final outcome of the present dialogue. Thirdly, the long-term presence on Congolese soil of foreign armed groups — FDLR, LRA and others — remained a major factor that needed to be resolved through the right combination of measures. Finally, he assured the Council that he would leave no stone unturned to help the concerned parties arrive at a comprehensive and realistic agreement.⁷⁹

On 9 November 2009, the Special Envoy, reporting that the situation had transformed

⁷⁸ S/PRST/2008/48.

⁷⁹ S/PV.6067, pp. 2-4.

dramatically, stated that the humanitarian situation had greatly improved and CNDP no longer existed as a politico-military organization. The threat to regional peace posed by the armed groups, in particular FDLR, had been considerably reduced and there had been notable warming in regional relationships. The Special Envoy recalled his concerted rounds of consultations with regional heads of State and the leadership of CNDP, stating that it won him the confidence and approval of all to organize direct dialogue between CNDP and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which also laid the groundwork for the peace agreements signed on 23 March 2009 in Goma. With respect to the implementation of the 23 March agreements, he reported that there had been substantial progress, although some important provisions still remained unimplemented, such as the establishment of a national reconciliation mechanism

and the identification of means to foster a more direct participation of elements of former armed groups in the political life of the nation. He stated that he had informed President Kabila of his intention as well as that of former President Benjamin Mkapa (United Republic of Tanzania) to take a step back from an active role in the region, and reassured President Kabila they remained on alert should the region need to call on their good offices again. Finally, to address underlying causes of recurring crisis, he recommended an umbrella approach, bringing together the United Nations, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa and international development partners in a concerted effort to strengthen governance institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ S/PV.6215, pp. 2-5.

Meetings: the situation in the Great Lakes region

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
5852nd 13 March 2008		Draft resolution (S/2008/171)	Rule 37 Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda		Resolution 1804 (2008) 15-0-0
6058th 22 December 2008			Rule 37 Uganda		S/PRST/2008/48
6067th 15 January 2009			Rule 39 Special Envoy of the Secretary- General on the Great Lakes region	Special Envoy of the Secretary- General on the Great Lakes region	
6215th 9 November 2009			Rule 39 Special Envoy of the Secretary- General on the Great Lakes region	Special Envoy of the Secretary- General on the Great Lakes region	