



PRESS RELEASE

SADC condemns gruesome attacks by M23 on Internally Displaced Persons Camp in eastern DRC resulting in 16 deaths and injuries to 30 civilians

05th May, 2024, Gaborone, Botswana: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) strongly condemn the horrific attacks by M23 rebels on the Mugunga Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camp on 3rd May 2024 in Goma, which has caused the death of at least 16 civilians and wounded around 30 civilians. The SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC) confirmed that the attacks affected innocent civilians, many of whom were women and children. The deliberate targeting of innocent civilians is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights laws and principles.

The attacks by M23 rebels have triggered massive displacement of the population, blocking supply routes to Goma, and worsening the humanitarian situation. Meanwhile, the main roads to Goma, which are crucial for the movement of civilians, goods, and humanitarian aid, have become impassable due to armed groups' atrocities, further restricting access to essential services and supplies.

The SAMIDRC in cooperation with the Democratic Republic of Congo National Army (FARDC), will conduct operations to neutralise M23 rebels and maintain peace and security in creating a secure environment as well as protect civilians and their properties under imminent threats or attacks. The operations intend to open the supply routes, and ensure that civilians are free from intimidation, displacement, and killings so that communities can run their daily lives without any interference or threats.

During the operations, SAMIDRC will comply with human rights aspects as stipulated in the Law of armed conflict and international Human Rights Law, the United Nations Charter, Laws of Armed Conflicts, International Humanitarian Law, and the Laws of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Furthermore, SAMIDRC will continue to cooperate with various Stakeholders to improve the humanitarian and security situation in the DRC.

SADC conveys its heartfelt condolences to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and especially to the families of those who lost their loved ones in these unhuman attacks.

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SADC in Brief

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August, 1992 transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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