



EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' FORUM
Strengthening Civil Society in the Integration Processes
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STATEMENT ON THE URGENT APPEAL FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN GOMA AND EASTERN DRC

3rd February 2025

We, the East Africa Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOFF), express deep concern over the worsening humanitarian and security crisis in Goma, North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The escalating violence has resulted in mass displacement, loss of lives, and a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, posing a grave threat not only to the stability of the DRC but also to the security, peace, and economic integration of the broader East African region. The continued suffering of civilians, the destruction of livelihoods, and the disruption of essential services demand urgent regional and international intervention.

We recently convened a consultative meeting with civil society organizations from across the region, with special participation from DRC-based CSOs, who shared first-hand accounts of the realities on the ground. Testimonies from our colleagues in Goma paint a heartbreaking picture of communities in distress, families forced to flee their homes, and a severe shortage of essential services, including food, water, and medical assistance. The ongoing violence has disproportionately affected civilians, particularly women, children, and internally displaced persons, who continue to bear the brunt of insecurity. Reports of violence against women, destruction of livelihoods, and restricted humanitarian access underscore the urgent need for coordinated efforts to protect civilians. Critical infrastructure such as electricity, water supply, and communication networks remain disrupted, further exacerbating the suffering of affected communities. The people of Goma need urgent protection, relief, and a sustainable path to peace.

We acknowledge the diplomatic efforts of regional and international bodies, including the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, as the situation worsens, it is clear that stronger and more coordinated regional action is required to prevent further humanitarian catastrophe. We call upon the EAC, AU, and ICGLR to reinforce diplomatic engagement and enforce a ceasefire. A peaceful resolution must be prioritized, and all armed groups must withdraw from civilian areas in accordance with existing peace agreements, including the Luanda Roadmap (2022) and the Nairobi Process (2022).

We further recommend the establishment of a High-Level Mediation Committee, composed of respected African diplomats, peace negotiators, and conflict resolution experts, to facilitate an inclusive and structured dialogue process aimed at achieving a lasting political solution.

We urge unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations. The DRC government must ensure that humanitarian corridors remain open, allowing emergency aid to reach those in need. International donors and humanitarian agencies must scale up their response efforts to address the urgent needs of displaced populations. The principles of humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions and the Kampala Convention on Internally Displaced Persons (2009, AU), must be upheld to ensure civilian protection and the provision of essential aid. Regional security cooperation is also crucial to prevent further destabilization. Border security mechanisms must be reinforced to curb the movement of armed groups and the illicit trade of weapons. We urge the EAC and SADC to strengthen regional peacekeeping efforts and ensure that civilians in Eastern DRC are protected in accordance with international law and regional peace and security commitments under the EAC Treaty (1999) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 1981).

We reaffirm that accountability for human rights violations must be ensured. Those responsible for war crimes, attacks on civilians, and violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable under regional and international legal frameworks, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 1998). Efforts to protect human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society actors must also be reinforced to safeguard civic space and freedom of expression. Our commitment remains unwavering in working in solidarity with regional and international partners, governments, and communities affected by the crisis. Our role as civil society is to amplify the voices of those suffering, advocate for peace, and ensure that regional and international leaders take urgent and effective action.

Now is the time for decisive leadership and a coordinated regional response to end the suffering in Eastern DRC. This crisis is not just a Congolese issue – it is a test of our collective commitment to regional stability, human dignity, and lasting peace. We urge all stakeholders to act swiftly, ensuring that human lives are protected, diplomatic engagements are strengthened, and a peaceful resolution is secured without further delay.



Mr. Edmund Yakan
PRESIDENT EACSOA

February 3 - 2025