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UK Condemns Civilian Killings in Eastern DRC

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The United Kingdom has strongly condemned recent civilian killings and human rights abuses in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), urging all armed groups to respect international humanitarian law and adhere to ceasefire agreements. Reports indicate escalating violence in Rutshuru territory and Ituri province, with armed groups such as the Rwanda-backed M23 and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) accused of widespread attacks, including sexual violence.

The UK government welcomed progress in peace negotiations facilitated by regional and international partners. Officials praised the efforts of the East African Community (EAC),

Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the African Union (AU), alongside agreements such as the Peace Agreement between DRC and Rwanda in Washington and the Declaration of Principles between DRC and M23 in Doha. These initiatives were highlighted as key steps toward regional stability.

Despite these developments, the UK expressed concern over ongoing violations. British officials called on M23 and Wazalendo forces to immediately halt hostilities, avoid inflammatory rhetoric, and fully protect civilians. The government also urged all parties to exercise restraint to prevent further escalation and to engage constructively in the peace process.

Restrictions imposed by M23 on United Nations peacekeeping operations (MONUSCO) were identified as a pressing issue. The UK stressed that UN forces must have full freedom of movement to carry out mandated operations. It welcomed recent improvements, including the resumption of fuel and water supplies and approval of essential troop rotations, and urged that these measures continue without obstruction.

The UK reaffirmed its support for mediators from the United States, Qatar, and the African Union, who continue to lead negotiations aimed at securing long-term peace. Officials emphasized the need for the DRC government and M23 representatives to fully implement ceasefire agreements and safeguard civilians.

In its statement, the United Kingdom highlighted that sustainable peace and prosperity in eastern DRC depend on the compliance of all parties. It called on the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, to maintain attention to the region and ensure that peace initiatives are effectively executed.

By endorsing these regional and international efforts, the UK reaffirmed its commitment to stability in eastern DRC, stressing that civilian protection and respect for international law must remain central to all peacebuilding initiatives.