

APPEAL by Dr Denis MUKWEGE

“Stop the massacres of the Congolese, peace is possible”.

The macabre toll of recent fighting between the Congolese army and the Rwandan armed forces and their M23 auxiliaries in the town of Goma. According to a report by the World Health Organization, as of January 31, 2025, 773 lifeless bodies had been counted, and others were still littering the avenues, in a state of advanced decomposition. In addition to the dead, some 3,000 people are injured, without assistance.

This horrific human butchery adds to the statistics of over six million men, women and children killed over the past three decades in the endless wars imposed on the Congolese people.

Once again, the international community will not say it didn't know. UN reports have been pointing the finger at Rwanda's responsibility in the organization and conduct of these wars, but to date, nothing significant has been done to stop these serious violations of international and humanitarian law. On the contrary, the European Union and several Western countries have maintained their cooperation with Rwanda and continue to indirectly finance its war expeditions to the tune of millions of dollars, and the plundering of its mineral resources.

For decades, and again in recent weeks, I have been constantly alerting and mobilizing international opinion on the urgent need to impose peace in DR Congo and in the Great Lakes region, but to no avail. Compared to the Ukraine, the war in the Congo is a neglected war, and Congolese lives seen as insufficient value to merit attention.

It's the double standards and two-speed humanism that we've decried and denounced on several occasions.

And yet, solutions exist to put a lasting stop to this catastrophe. First and foremost, we urgently need to cut off military and financial aid to Rwanda and impose economic sanctions.

Secondly, the Framework Agreement on Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the region, known as the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement, signed on February 24, 2013 by 11 countries (DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, South Sudan, Central African Republic) joined by Kenya and Sudan on January 31, 2014, as well as the UN, the African Union, the ICGLR, the SADC and sponsored by the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium and France had already paved the way for a just and lasting peace in the African Great Lakes sub-region. It is more than urgent to implement its recommendations.

Finally, since the exploitation of natural resources is the real sinew of war, for weeks now, and at this very moment, I've been travelling around speaking to Europe governments, international institutions, companies and civil society organizations on the importance of the lawful, peaceful and win-win supply of resources from a “Business for peace” perspective, which promotes the sustainable interests of the Congolese people.

This is why, echoing and supporting the Pacte de la Paix initiative of the Catholic and Protestant Churches of the Congo (CENCO-ECC), I renew my call for the organization of an “International Conference on Sustainable Peace in DR Congo and the African Great Lakes Region”.

I strongly condemn this new attack by Rwanda-M23 and the massacres that that followed. I strongly condemn the complicit silence and inaction of the international community in the face of the serious violations of human and humanitarian rights committed in DR Congo.

I call on the Congolese people to unite around peace through the initiatives of the CENCO-ECC and an International Conference on Peace. I express my sympathy to the people of North Kivu and Goma in their painful ordeal.

I extend my deepest condolences to the families of our fallen soldiers and to all those who have lost loved ones in this war. I express my full support to the people of South Kivu and Bukavu, who live in fear, haunted by the spectre of a war that is dangerously close. I pledge to relentlessly pursue my national and international advocacy for Peace in DR Congo and the African Great Lakes region. Hang in there my dear compatriots, GOD IS FOR US.

Oslo, February 02, 2025