

Statement by Adama Dieng, United Nations Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, on his visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(Kinshasa, 24 June 2017) I decided to come to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in response to alarming reports of an unprecedented deterioration in the security and human rights situation in the three Kasai provinces and increased intercommunal tensions in the east of the country, in particular in North Kivu province. My objective was to meet with the local inhabitants, political leaders and civil society to initiate a dialogue on the situation.

at his willingness to share them. It is imperative to immediately reduce the militarisation of the government's response and to prioritise instead a dialogue with all parties to the conflict in order to enable humanitarian access, free the children mobilised by militias, facilitate a civil disarmament programme and move towards the non-violent resolution of the conflict.

I encourage the government, as I did in *an!an\$#a, to enhance the capacity of the national police force to restore the civil authority of the State and prevent the excessive use of force. I welcome the efforts of the provincial authorities and the Ministry of the Interior to establish a consultation and reconciliation framework with traditional leaders and to organise a peace and reconciliation forum with a view to bringing about the peaceful resolution of the local conflicts and the tensions affecting the region, which were the root cause of the Kamina & sapu revolt. I encourage them to pursue those efforts through transparent consultations and close partnership with civil society.

I call on the Military, Prosecutor's Department, which has already initiated legal proceedings against the security forces, to significantly increase its efforts and, if necessary, to make an urgent appeal for regional and international support to resolutely prosecute the crimes committed by militias and the defence and security forces. Its action should be at the centre of efforts to prevent renewed violence, resolve the crisis and bring about healing in order to restore civilian confidence in the government and its institutions. I stand ready to help mobilise the resources aimed at supporting such efforts.

I have also asked the Minister of the Interior to publicly condemn the formation and mobilisation of self-defence groups and militias by politicians throughout the country and to have police investigations carried out to enable the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic to undertake the necessary prosecutions. In the wake of an electoral process that promises to be difficult, prosecuting politicians who mobilise armed groups or incite their communities to hatred is part of a violence/prevention policy essential to the stability of the country.

These dangerous practices, which severely affect North Kivu and other provinces, must be stopped immediately. The government, the provincial authorities and the entire political class of North Kivu have an urgent responsibility to prevent a new outbreak of intercommunal violence in the province, the dissemination of hate speech in the media and on social networks and the forced displacement of people. The Minister of Human Rights and I have agreed that I will support the swift development of appropriate legislation to punish hate speech that constitutes incitement to violence and discrimination in the country. At this point, I would like to commend the efforts that have been made, and the progress that has been achieved, in the area of combating sexual violence and the recruitment of children by the Personal Representative of the Head of State and the Justice System of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I encourage them to continue those efforts.

Given that voter registration has begun, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is once again at a critical juncture in its history. It is up to all political leaders, whether they are part of the government or the opposition, to ensure that a new crisis does not arise in the coming months. I will continue to follow the situation closely and will keep the Secretary General up-to-

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