Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in North Kivu

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative expresses concern following the fighting which broke out at the beginning of the week close to Goma between the M23 movement, an armed group under United Nations sanctions, and the Congolese Army, and welcomes the ceasefire which was announced yesterday.

At a time when efforts to bring lasting solutions to the challenges of the region are being stepped up, the High Representative calls on the parties concerned to exercise restraint and to comply strictly with the commitments made under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region signed in Addis Ababa in February 2013. She calls for the rapid deployment of the international intervention brigade provided for in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2098 (2013) and condemns all threats against the peace-keeping troops present in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The United Nations have a central role to play in overseeing this agreement under the aegis of the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and the EU is ready to contribute to this in an active and substantial manner.

The first meeting of the regional oversight mechanism in Addis Ababa in a few days' time will be an important opportunity for renewing the commitments made by all signatories to lasting peace in the region. Furthermore, the High Representative hopes that the imminent establishment of the national Congolese oversight mechanism will allow for trusting and constructive cooperation for implementing the Framework Agreement.

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