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**Security Council Renews Democratic Republic of Congo Sanctions Regime, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2688 (2023)**

Amid ongoing violence perpetrated by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council today renewed the sanctions regime imposed on that country and extended until 1 August 2024 the mandate of the Group of Experts overseeing its implementation.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2688 (2023) (to be issued as document [S/RES/2688(2023)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2688(2023))) and acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council decided to renew until 1 July 2024 the measures set out in paragraphs 1 through 6 of resolution 2293 (2016) related to arms, transport, finance and travel. It also demanded that States ensure that all measures taken by them to implement the resolution comply with their obligations under international law.

Among other provisions, the text reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the safety and security of the members of the Group of Experts and recalled the Secretary-General’s commitment that the United Nations will do everything possible to ensure that the perpetrators of the killing of two of the Group’s members — and four Congolese nationals accompanying them — are brought to justice.

Following the adoption, speakers voiced their support for the resolution and lauded the Council’s December 2022 removal of the advance notification requirement set forth in resolution 1533 (2004).

Michel Xavier Biang (Gabon), noting a trend in efforts to improve the security landscape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said the resolution aims to tighten the noose around armed groups and offers Congolese authorities full capacity to effectively counter them.  The complete lifting of the obligation to notify allows the Congolese armed forces to better defend the territorial integrity of their country, he added, welcoming the Government’s submission of its confidential report.  He called on the Council to maintain consensus on the situation in the country, also urging the international community to remain mobilized to end the chronic cycle of violence.

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation), reaffirming his delegation’s support for the draft text prepared by France, pointed out that sanctions must be reviewed and adjusted — up to their full lifting — when they impede national Governments in statebuilding and creating effective armed forces.   In December 2022, the Council made such a decision and lifted the notification regime on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  He underscored that Moscow — as a matter of principle — opposes the implementation of a sanctions regime against that country through illegitimate unilateral measures.

Serge Ngoy Banza (Democratic Republic of the Congo) expressed hope that the renewed measures will break the financial and military spine of armed and criminal groups operating in the eastern region of his country.  Those behind the tragedy playing out there must be exposed, he asserted, noting his Government’s submission of its confidential report on the management of arms and munition stocks.  Further, the Congolese judiciary is working closely with the United Nations Mechanism that continues its inquiries into the killings of two United Nations experts.  Finally, he thanked the Council for its historic lifting of the notification clause in 2022.