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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the hema - lendu conflict in north-eastern DRC**

The European Union is deeply concerned about the continued news of violent clashes between the hema and lendu groups, and massacres in the Bunia region of north-eastern DRC's Oriental Province. The fighting has resulted in substantial displacement of the population.

Traditional rivalry between the two communities has been reinforced by the conflict in the DRC.

The situation has been exacerbated by the continued military presence of the Ugandan army in this part of the DRC, which hampers the efforts to re-establish peace there. The region is at present under de facto control of the Ugandan army and the recently created Congolese Liberation Front (CLF), the latter not including the RCD-ML faction lead by Mr Wamba dia Wamba.

Notwithstanding its firm position regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces from the DRC in conformity with the Lusaka Agreement and relevant UN security Council resolutions, the European Union calls on Ugandan authorities, responsible for upholding the respect for human rights in areas under their control, to do their utmost to put an end to these massacres, and to use their influence on the DRC rebel movements in the area to likewise concur with this objective.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.