

Withdrawal of M23 rebels in Goma applauded

PRETORIA: Cabinet has praised the leaders of the Great Lakes region for negotiating the withdrawal of the M23 rebels from the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The mining hub of Goma, the main city in eastern DRC, fell to the M23 rebels in November, sparking fears of yet another fully-fledged conflict in the region.

"Cabinet congratulated the leaders of the Great Lakes region for negotiating the withdrawal of rebel forces from the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," said Minister in the Presidency responsible for Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Administration, Collins Chabane on Thursday.

Speaking at a Post-Cabinet briefing in Pretoria, Chabane said while the situation remained fragile, the withdrawal was a positive development for stability to return to the region.

However, Chabane said Cabinet expressed concern with regard to the situation in Mali where two rebel groups seized control of the northern part of the country in April, splitting the country in two and triggering a crisis.

He said while Cabinet called for the return to constitutional normalcy in the country, it also agreed with the African Union (AU) that Mali was faced with overlapping crises characterised by the occupation in the north by armed groups as well as the institutional crisis that arose as a result of the coup d'etat in March this year.

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