

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WASHINGTON PEACE AGREEMENT: ONE MONTH AFTER ITS SIGNATURE (JUNE 27-JULY 27)

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Summary

On June 27, 2025, under the diplomatic leadership of the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda signed a Peace Agreement in Washington aimed at ending a protracted conflict in eastern DRC. This ambitious Agreement is based on a set of pillars, including respect for the territorial integrity of the states concerned, the cessation of hostilities, the disarmament and conditional reintegration of non-state armed groups, regional economic cooperation, the protection of civilians, and respect for international humanitarian law, as well as a joint security mechanism.

One month after its signing, this paper presents a preliminary assessment of the overall implementation of the commitments contained in the Washington Peace Agreement, utilizing a Peace Agreement Implementation Measurement Tool (PAIMT) designed explicitly for this purpose. This assessment follows up on a reflection note published in June 2025, which recommended the use of the PAIMT as a rigorous and structured instrument to evaluate the implementation of the Agreement, which was then under negotiation between the DRC and Rwanda. While assessing the implementation status of the Agreement only one month after its signing may seem premature, the exercise is justified by the urgency of building trust, verifying initial commitments (such as the cessation of hostile acts), and promptly identifying obstacles to implementation.

Analysis of the period from June 27 to July 27, 2025, reveals that **only 26.6%** of the tasks stipulated in the Agreement (i.e., **8 tasks out of a total of 30**) have begun implementation (at an initial, minimal, or intermediate level). However, the majority of the 22 remaining tasks that had not yet been implemented could not be carried out independently, as their completion was conditional on the prior completion of priority tasks. This functional interdependence underscores the importance of a sequenced, strategic, and coordinated approach to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation process. Furthermore, the cumulative implementation score for the eight partially implemented tasks stands at **27.5 points** out of a **possible 80**, representing an implementation rate of about **34%**. While this figure may seem modest from an arithmetical perspective, it nevertheless represents a positive signal, demonstrating an initial willingness to implement the Agreement concretely. It thus represents an encouraging starting point on which the stakeholders can build the subsequent stages of the peace process.

Three positive and encouraging findings have marked this first phase: a significant decrease in belligerent rhetoric, a notable reduction in hostilities despite a few isolated incidents of reported fighting, and a renewed surge in diplomatic engagement through bilateral contacts between the Congolese and Rwandan governments. At the same time, several concerns call for rapid adjustments to avoid the process getting bogged down: the absence of a clear and binding implementation schedule for many tasks, the inoperability of the joint security coordination mechanism, the inadequacy between specific clauses of the Agreement and the reality on the ground, as well as the delay in setting up monitoring bodies.

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1. CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

On June 27, 2025, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda signed a Peace Agreement in Washington (of which the Concept of Operations of the Harmonized Plan for the Neutralization of the FDLR and the Disengagement of Forces/Lifting of Defensive Measures by Rwanda, "CONOPS," of October 31, 2024, is an integral part). The signing of the Washington Peace Agreement, which was facilitated by the strong political will and leadership of U.S. President Donald Trump, represents a historic milestone in efforts to end recurring conflicts in the Great Lakes region, particularly in eastern DRC.

To support the technical and analytical monitoring of the implementation of this Washington Peace Agreement, the Peace Agreement Implementation Measurement Tool (PAIMT) was developed. This tool assesses the progress of each task on a scale of 0 to 10 points, using a rigorous methodology based on observable evidence.

Based on the PAIMT, the Washington Peace Agreement is structured around 30 specific tasks, covering the fundamental pillars (namely: respect for the territorial integrity of the states concerned, cessation of hostilities, disarmament and conditional reintegration of non-state armed groups, regional economic cooperation, protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law, as well as the joint security mechanism).

The 30 specific tasks listed in the Washington Agreement include:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prohibition of hostile acts/aggression or ceasefire, 2. Respect for the territorial integrity of each country, 3. Implementation of the harmonized plan for neutralization of the FDLR, 4. Implementation of the harmonized plan for the disengagement of forces/lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures (CONOPS), 5. Preparation, identification, and location of the FDLR, 6. Neutralization of the FDLR, 7. Withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the DRC (i.e., disengagement of forces/lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures), 8. Evaluation of the neutralization of the FDLR and the withdrawal of Rwandan troops, 9. Prohibition of state support for armed groups to attack either country, 10. Prevention of hostilities by non-state armed groups, 11. Coordination of the disengagement of non-state armed groups, 12. Coordination of the disarmament of non-state armed groups, 13. Coordination of the integration of non-state armed groups, 14. Conditional integration of armed groups (e.g., M23) into the FARDC and PNC, 15. Implementation: Establishment of a joint security coordination mechanism between the DRC and Rwanda, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Adoption of common operational procedures to ensure transparency in the operations of the joint security coordination mechanism, 17. Promotion of stability, security, and development in the region, 18. Protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law, 19. Return of refugees, 20. Return of internally displaced people, 21. Provision of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, 22. Support from the DRC and Rwanda for the work of MONUSCO and other multilateral peacekeeping forces, 23. Support from the regional and international community to the signatories of the agreement, 24. Launch of the regional economic integration framework, 25. Launch or expansion of bilateral cooperation on the management of national parks and resources in Lake Kivu, 26. Launch of bilateral cooperation on hydropower development and derisking of mineral supply chains, 27. Economic monitoring and combating corruption in mineral supply chains and infrastructure projects, 28. Establishment of the Joint Oversight Committee, 29. Amicable settlement of disputes and 30. Monitoring the effective implementation of the Agreement. |
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Among these 30 tasks, some must be implemented indiscriminately by both the Congolese and Rwandan governments, such as the prohibition of hostile or aggressive acts and respect for the territorial integrity of each country. Other tasks fall under the exclusive responsibility of the Congolese government, such as the conditional integration of the M23 into the national army and police, or the Rwandan government, including the disengagement of Rwandan forces and the lifting of its defensive measures from the DRC territory. Finally, a few other tasks are assigned to mediators, international partners, or other third parties.

Therefore, the assessment of the level of implementation of the Washington Agreement can be carried out in two ways: collectively, by considering all the signatory parties; and individually, by analyzing the degree of implementation by each party separately.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The coding methodology for assessing the completion of each of the 30 Washington Accord tasks ranges from 0 to 10 points. A score of:

- **0 point** signifies an Uninitiated Execution (E_0): This represents the *status quo*. The parties have not taken any action or any observable measures to begin the implementation of the task.
- **2.5 points** means an Initiated Execution (E_i): This represents some observable measures of the beginning of the execution of the task, meaning that the parties have established a date of the execution of the task or are having formal or informal discussions on the execution of the task concerned. For example, in the context of constitutional reform, an E_i implies that the parties have created a commission to write or amend the Constitution and set a date for that commission to start its activities. In other words, an E_i indicates that while there are signs of the beginning of progress, progress towards full execution has not yet been achieved.
- **5 points** signifies Minimal Execution (E_m): This represents the situation where the parties have made some efforts towards the execution of the task, but these efforts are not enough for the task concerned to be completed by the end of the established deadline given the current pace of the process. In other words, the execution of the task has been initiated, but there is an unlikelihood that the process itself will be completed as expected. For example, in the context of constitutional reform, an E_m indicates that the process of drafting the constitution may be ongoing, but that the actual constitutional reform is not yet fulfilled, and that there is a likelihood that the constitutional reform will be delayed.
- **7.5 points** implies an Intermediate Execution (E_I): This represents the situation where the parties have made some efforts towards the execution of the task, and there is a likelihood that the task can be completed by the end of the established deadline if the current pace continues. For instance, in the context of constitutional reform, an (E_I) indicates that the commission has adopted a draft-project of the Constitution specifying evident changes to be incorporated into that Constitution. The commission also submitted that draft-project to the Parliament for its formal adoption, and it is still possible that the Parliament would send the bill amending the Constitution to the President of the Republic for its promulgation by the end of the established period, if the process continues at the current pace.
- **10 points** implies a Complete Execution (E_c): This represents the situation where the task is nearly executed or fully executed given how the task is specified in the Peace Agreement. For instance, in the context of constitutional reform, a E_c indicates that the Constitution has been changed considering the stipulation of the peace agreement, and that the Constitution has been promulgated and published in an official journal.

In short, there are five levels of implementation: E_0 (0 point), E_i (2.5 points), E_m (5 points), E_I (7.5 points) and E_c (10 points).

Finally, the evaluation team collected data on the implementation of each task outlined in the Washington Peace Agreement through meetings with some key stakeholders in the DRC peace process, analysis of official statements/announcements from stakeholders, and a review of press articles and local and international NGO reports from June 27 to July 27, 2025.

3. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION: ONE MONTH ON

Of the 30 priority tasks identified in the Washington Agreement, one (1) task has undergone intermediate implementation, one (1) has undergone minimal implementation, and six (6) have begun initial implementation. The other 22 tasks remain unimplemented to date, with no concrete initiative to initiate them.

3.1. Implementation Scorecard by Task

N°	Task	Actor Responsible for Executing the Task	Level of Execution	Score (out of 10)
1	Prohibition of hostile acts/aggression or ceasefire	DRC and Rwanda	Minimal Execution	5
2	Respect for the territorial integrity of each country	DRC and Rwanda	Initiated Execution	2.5
15	Establishment of a joint Security Coordination Mechanism between the DRC and Rwanda	DRC and Rwanda	Initiated Execution	2.5
18	Protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law	DRC, Rwanda, and MONUSCO	Initiated Execution	2.5
19	Return of refugees	DRC, Rwanda, and HCR	Initiated Execution	2.5
20.	Return of internally displaced persons	DRC	Initiated Execution	2.5

23	Support from the regional and international community to the signatories of the agreement	AU, SADC-EAC, Qatar, and USA	Intermediate Execution	7.5
28	Establishment of the Joint Oversight Committee	DRC, Rwanda, AU, Qatar, and USA	Initiated Execution	2.5
	Other tasks (3-14, 16-17, 21-22, 24-27 and 29-30)	-----	Non-initiated Execution	0

3.2. Insights on Partially Implemented Tasks

- **1. Prohibition of Hostile Acts/Aggression between the DRC and Rwanda (Score: 5 - Minimal Execution):** Positive signs are observed on the ground, including a decrease in belligerent rhetoric between the authorities of the two states. Despite recurring public accusations of implicit support for armed groups, the authorities of both countries are striving to avoid escalation and reaffirm their commitment to the prohibition of hostility.
- **2. Respect for the Territorial Integrity of Each Country (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** Official declarations in favor of respecting the territorial integrity of each country were made by both sides after the signing of the Agreement. However, the disengagement of Rwandan forces or the lifting of Rwandan defensive measures (in other words, the withdrawal of Rwandan troops) from Congolese territory has not yet been initiated.
- **15. Establishment of a Joint Security Coordination Mechanism between the DRC and Rwanda (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** Bilateral discussions (formal or informal) have taken place on the need for a joint mechanism. As the DRC Minister of Foreign Affairs revealed, the DRC had already finalized the selection and appointment of its delegates to the joint security coordination mechanism.¹
- **18. Protection of Civilians and Respect for International Humanitarian Law (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** Encouraging signs are being observed on the ground with the intensification of MONUSCO's efforts to protect civilian populations in conflict zones in eastern DRC. However, governments have failed to ensure comprehensive protection of civilians against frequent acts of violence. A recent report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) highlighted numerous concerns regarding security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC between June 1 and 30, 2025.²
- **19. Return of Refugees (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** The tripartite Agreement between the DRC, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Rwanda has established the principles of voluntary repatriation of refugees. A joint communiqué was signed on July 24 in Addis Ababa between the DRC and Rwanda.³
- **20. Return of Internally Displaced Persons (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** Representatives of the DRC government and those of the AFC-M23 (supported by Rwanda) committed, through the Declaration of Principles signed in Doha on July 19, 2025, to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their areas of origin. Yet, no date for the start of the return has been set, nor has any infrastructure or reintegration plan been established.
- **23. Support from the Regional and International Community to the Signatories of the Agreement (Score: 7.5 - Intermediate Execution):** There have been concrete manifestations of support from the international community. The panel of facilitators from the African Union, led by Catherine Samba-Panza, former President of the Central African Republic, and Sahle-Work Zewde, former President of Ethiopia, carried out a mission to Kinshasa from July 14 to 19, 2025.⁴ This mission was part of the Washington Peace Agreement and aimed to promote dialogue, peace, and a lasting political solution to the persistent crisis in the eastern DRC. At the same time, Qatar, the African Union, and the United States (in their capacity as

¹ Actualite CD, « Accord RDC-Rwanda: la partie congolaise dit avoir finalisé la sélection et la désignation de ses délégués au mécanisme conjoint de coordination de la sécurité ». https://actualite.cd/2025/07/04/accord-rdc-rwanda-la-partie-congolaise-dit-avoir-finalise-la-selection-et-la-designation#google_vignette

² OCHA, « RD Congo : Situation Humanitaire dans la Province du Sud-Kivu », Rapport de Situation #6, 21 juillet 2025.

³ Radio Okapi, « La RDC, le Rwanda et le HCR s'accordent sur les principes de rapatriement volontaire des réfugiés ».

<https://www.radiookapi.net/2025/07/24/actualite/securite/la-rdc-le-rwanda-et-le-hcr-saccordent-sur-les-principes-de>

⁴ Radio Okapi, « Les anciennes présidentes Sahle-Work Zewde et Catherine Samba-Panza satisfaites de leur mission de facilitation pour la paix en RDC ». <https://www.radiookapi.net/2025/07/22/actualite/politique/les-anciennes-presidentes-sahle-work-zewde-et-catherine-samba-panza>

mediators and facilitators in the peace process) supported the DRC government and the AFC-M23 movement (supported by Rwanda) in adopting a Declaration of Principles on the ceasefire, which was signed on July 19, 2025.

- **28. Creation of the Joint Monitoring Committee (Score: 2.5 - Initiated Execution):** Multilateral discussions (formal or informal) have taken place regarding the establishment of the Joint Monitoring Committee, which is composed of the DRC, Rwanda, the AU, the United States, and Qatar. Moreover, the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee is scheduled for August 11, 2025, at the latest.

In other words:

- **Only 26.6%** of the tasks set out in the Washington Agreement—**8 out of a total of 30**—began implementation between June 27 and July 27, 2025, at either an initial, minimal, or intermediate level. However, it should be noted that the majority of the 22 remaining unimplemented tasks could not be implemented independently. Their completion depends directly on the prior completion of specific key tasks. Several of these actions are closely linked to key stages of the peace process and can therefore only be activated once the essential conditions—set by other priority tasks—have been met. This interdependence highlights the importance of a strategic and coordinated approach in implementing the Agreement.
- Considering only the 8 partially completed tasks, their cumulative Achieved Execution Score (AES) amounts to **27.5 points** (i.e. $5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 7.5 + 2.5$), out of a **possible total of 80 points** (corresponding to the maximum score if these 8 tasks had been fully completed). This represents an implementation rate of **34.3%**.
- Although this rate may seem relatively low in strictly mathematical terms, it is an encouraging result given that the Agreement was signed barely a month ago. This level of implementation at this stage reflects, to some extent, an initial commitment to implementation and should be interpreted as a starting point on which further building can be made.

4. KEY OBSERVATIONS AND EMERGING TRENDS

4.1. Positive Signals and Early Gains

- Decline in belligerent rhetoric.* Public discourse by Congolese and Rwandan authorities has shown a degree of moderation since the signing of the Agreement. Although mutual accusations persist in some quarters, the leaders of both countries are exercising restraint, particularly through official channels of communication.
- A significant decrease in hostilities* has been observed on the ground since the signing of the Agreement, despite a few isolated incidents of fighting reported between the M23 and pro-government Wazalendo militias, notably in Nyamilima and Kisharo, in Rutshuru territory (North Kivu).⁵ Furthermore, the Congolese government has warned of a reinforcement of the front lines by AFC/M23 elements (supported by Rwanda) in preparation for a possible attempt to take control of the city of Uvira, in the South Kivu province.⁶ However, no major offensive has been recorded to date, suggesting that the signatory parties are beginning to respect the ceasefire.
- Renewed diplomatic engagement.* Bilateral contacts between the governments of the DRC and Rwanda have continued in the spirit of the Agreement, with the active support of the United States, Qatar, and the African Union. The continued involvement of the American facilitator constitutes a stabilizing factor in the implementation phase.

4.2. Challenges and Barriers to Implementation

- Lack of a comprehensive, detailed, and binding timetable for the execution of many tasks.* While some provisions of the Agreement include specific deadlines (such as the implementation of the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the FDLR and the disengagement of forces/lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures), other essential tasks are formulated without mention of a clear implementation deadline (such as the promotion of stability, security, and development in the region; or the return of refugees/displaced persons).
- Absence of an operational joint security coordination mechanism.* Although discussions have been initiated to establish a joint security coordination mechanism between the DRC and Rwanda, it remains non-operational. This absence limits the effective implementation of the security tasks provided for in the Agreement, some of which were supposed to be completed within one month of its signing.
- Mismatch between some clauses of the Agreement and the reality on the ground.* Between the adoption of the CONOPS in October 2024 and the signing of the Washington Agreement in June 2025, the security situation on the ground changed

⁵ Radio Okapi, «Paralysie des activités à Nyamilima et Kisharo à la suite des combats M23-Wazalendo ».

<https://www.radiookapi.net/2025/07/14/actualite/securite/paralysie-des-activites-nyamilima-et-kisharo-la-suite-des-combats-m23>

⁶ Actualite CD, «RDC-M23: malgré la présence des délégués à Doha, Kinshasa fait état d'un renforcement significatif des « agresseurs rwandais » sur les lignes de front dans l'objectif de prendre Uvira ». https://actualite.cd/2025/07/13/rdc-m23-malgre-la-presence-des-delegues-doha-kinshasa-fait-etat-dun-renforcement#google_vignette

profoundly, as areas initially targeted for operations to neutralize the FDLR have now come under the control of the AFC-M23 (supported by Rwanda). This reversal of territorial control would de facto deprive the Congolese government of the ability to directly execute a task under its responsibility, as provided for in the Agreement.

- d. *Slow pace of implementation of monitoring bodies.* The Joint Oversight Committee is not yet in place; its inaugural meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2025, nearly two months after the Agreement was signed.

5. CONCLUSION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluating the implementation of a peace agreement only one month after its signing may, at first glance, seem premature, especially from a strict technical and methodological perspective. Indeed, most of the tasks outlined in the Washington Agreement require careful planning, initiation, and execution—some are even contingent upon the establishment of prior institutional mechanisms, such as the demobilization of combatants or the creation of monitoring bodies.

However, in the specific context of the Great Lakes region and given the pressing expectations of populations affected by the conflict, an early assessment, even a partial one, is fully justified. It meets several imperatives:

- Reassure civilian populations of the genuine commitment of the signatory parties to fulfill their obligations, in a climate where trust is still fragile;
- Verify the effectiveness of immediate commitments, particularly about compliance with the ceasefire, the end of hostile acts, and public signals of de-escalation; and
- Quickly detect and correct any blockages or discrepancies between the Agreement's commitments and the reality on the ground.

The assessment exercise conducted from June 27 to July 27, 2025, reveals encouraging signals, but also several areas of concern that, if not addressed promptly, risk hindering the proper implementation of the Washington Peace Agreement.

In this regard, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Develop a technical timeline to complement the Agreement**, with clear and realistic deadlines for each task, including those still vaguely formulated (e.g., refugee returns, regional development, security reforms);
2. **Accelerate the establishment of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism**, with standardized procedures, and an independent verification mechanism;
3. **Revise the 2024 CONOPS considering the new reality on the ground**, including the Congolese government's loss of control of specific areas. This revision could be the subject of a technical addendum redefining the practical modalities for neutralizing the FDLR and disengaging Rwandese forces;
4. **Immediately establish the Joint Oversight Committee** by organizing a preparatory meeting as soon as possible ahead of the inaugural session scheduled for August 11, 2025; and
5. **Include or strengthen the involvement of regional structures and local civil society in monitoring the implementation of the Agreement** by providing them with adequate logistical, methodological, and financial support to operate continuously.