Leaders of the East African Community (EAC) unanimously voted Tuesday to extend the mandate of their regional military force which had been deployed to stop violence in the troubled eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The decision was made in Nairobi on Tuesday, following a meeting between Presidents William Ruto (Kenya), Evariste Nayishimiye (Burundi), Salva Kiir (South Sudan), Paul Kagame (Rwanda) and Samia Suluhu (Tanzania).

“The heads of state agreed to extend the duration of the mandate of the EACRF and the status of the forces agreement for a further period of three months from September 9, 2023, to December 8, 2023, pending an evaluation report from the council of ministers,” a statement from the East African Community reads.

“The Heads of State took note of the operational milestones by the EAC regional force in restoring security in eastern DRC,” said the communique.

The regional military force was first deployed to eastern DRC in November last year. Since then, it has played a pivotal role in facilitating a successful cease-fire in many areas where the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) and the M23 rebel group had been engaged in intense conflict.

The situation in eastern DRC has been a matter of concern for the international community due to the prolonged violence and its impact on the civilian population.

In addition, the communique also expressed gratitude for the African Union Commission’s generous financial contribution of $2 million towards the East African Community Regional Force (EACRF), acknowledging their commitment to regional peace and stability.