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Public Information Division  
Office of Spokesperson and Media Relations

## Press Release

### **MONUSCO applauds the decision rendered by the South Kivu Military Court in the Kavumu trial against Frederic Batumike, a provincial member of Parliament from South-Kivu province, and 11 people involved in the kidnapping and rape of 38 children.**

**Kinshasa, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017** - MONUSCO applauds the decision rendered by the South Kivu Military Court in the Kavumu trial on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017, for the kidnapping and rapes of 38 children in which the South Kivu provincial Member of Parliament, Frederic Batumike, and 11 other persons were sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity for rape and murder. Furthermore, the Court awarded reparations to the victims.

Maman Sidikou, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in the DRC and Chief of the UN Stabilization Mission in Congo MONUSCO welcomed the holding of this unprecedented trial and the ensuing court's decision, which he refers to as a major landmark in the fight against impunity for sexual violence in DRC.

With this decision, the Congolese justice system, through the military court, has sent a clear signal that no one is above the law, whatever the rank. Although the convicted persons are allowed to appeal against the decision, this is an encouraging signal for the many victims of sexual violence and gross human rights violations, whose perpetrators often go unpunished.

"I urge the Congolese authorities to pursue their efforts to bring to justice all those who violate human rights, international humanitarian law and commit other serious crimes, irrespective of their rank," declared the Special Representative.

"MONUSCO, with Congolese and international justice partners, as well as the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, has advocated since 2014 for the opening of the investigations, the protection of victims and witnesses, and has provided logistics and security support which has enabled the Congolese judicial authorities to conduct the investigations and organize a fair trial in the city of Kavumu.



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Finally, MONUSCO applauds the fact that the holding of the trial, which has been closely followed by both the local and the international communities, is the fruit of the collective and continued efforts made by the Personal Representative of the Congolese Head of State in charge of the fight against sexual violence and child recruitment, as well as by the various actors engaged in the fight against impunity.

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