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United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 55 of Security Council resolution [2612 \(2021\)](#), covers developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 17 September to 30 November 2022. It describes progress and challenges in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

II. Political developments

2. The reporting period was marked by the parliamentary session dedicated to budgetary matters, electoral preparations and efforts to address insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo amid heightened tensions between Kinshasa and Kigali.

3. On 1 November, the 2023 finance bill was declared admissible by the National Assembly and sent to the lower house Economic and Finance Standing Committee for final adjustments. The 2023 budget, amounting to \$14.5 billion, an increase of 32.6 per cent compared with 2022, includes \$405 million for electoral operations and the functioning of the Independent National Electoral Commission, \$1.5 million for the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme (P-DDRCS) and \$441 million for the 145-territory development programme. Parliament also examined the Military Programming Law for 2022–2025. On 10 and 14 November, respectively, the National Assembly and the Senate extended the state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri for a 15-day period for the thirty-sixth time.

4. On 21 October, the Independent National Electoral Commission launched an outreach and sensitization campaign in Kinshasa ahead of voter registration, which is due to start in December 2022, with a pilot phase involving the Congolese diaspora in Belgium, Canada, France, South Africa and the United States of America. The Catholic and Protestant Churches jointly requested accreditation of 600 long-term observers. On 24 September, the Commission held its second consultation framework meeting with political parties, focusing on the implementation of the new Electoral Law and revision of the voters' register. On 31 October, the Commission received approximately 1.7 million voter cards and other logistical supplies to train its staff.



5. Following the resumption of M23 attacks against the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) on 20 October and the seizure of Kiwanja and Rutshuru on 29 October, tensions increased between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, with the Congolese authorities accusing Rwanda of providing support to the armed group. On 29 October, the Democratic Republic of the Congo expelled the Rwandan Ambassador and decided to restrict the entry of Rwandans into the country and to reinforce FARDC, while reiterating Kinshasa's commitment to the Nairobi and Luanda processes. Majority members Ensemble pour le changement and Union sacrée de la nation welcomed the decision and called for the expulsion of the Ugandan Ambassador for his country's alleged support for M23. On 30 October, the Government of Rwanda indicated that Rwandan security forces at the Congolese border had been placed on high alert. On 8 November, the Congolese National Assembly declared M23 a terrorist group and adopted a recommendation prohibiting negotiations and integration of armed group members into national defence and security forces.

6. On 3 November, in an address to the nation, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Felix Tshisekedi, called on Congolese youth to enrol in the army and encouraged the creation of vigilante groups to complement military efforts against M23. He also warned that severe sanctions would be applied in case of stigmatization, xenophobia and hate speech against Rwandophone populations. President Tshisekedi met with delegations of the Congolese Tutsi and Hutu communities on 4 and 10 November, respectively, and affirmed his commitment to ensuring that all Congolese live in peaceful cohesion without discrimination.

7. On 7 November, the Government of Rwanda denounced a violation of its airspace by a Congolese fighter jet, which the Congolese authorities acknowledged as unintentional. On 19 November, an individual wearing military attire reportedly crossed the Congolese border at Goma and was shot and killed by the Rwandan Defence Force, which called on the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism to investigate the incident.

8. Diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions continued. On 20 September, in New York, on the margins of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, facilitated a meeting in support of the Luanda process between President Tshisekedi and the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, who committed to cooperate to end the activities of M23. On 13 October, the Minister of External Relations of Angola, Tete António, met with President Tshisekedi in Kinshasa and introduced Lieutenant-General João Nassone of Angola as Head of the ad hoc verification mechanism under the Luanda road map. On 29 and 30 October, the Secretary-General held separate discussions with the Heads of State of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda, as well as Senegal in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union, to call for immediate de-escalation and to reiterate the support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

9. On 5 November, in Luanda, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda decided to accelerate the implementation of the Luanda road map. On 9 November, the members of the ad hoc verification mechanism deployed to Goma. The President of Angola, João Lourenço, met with President Kagame in Kigali on 11 November and with President Tshisekedi in Kinshasa on 12 November.

10. On 7 November, on the margins of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the Presidents of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde, and the Secretary-General of the East African Community (EAC), Peter Mathuki, agreed to appoint a technical adviser from each partner State to support the Nairobi process facilitator, encouraged the harmonious implementation of the Nairobi process with the Luanda road map and reaffirmed the need for coordination and synergy between MONUSCO and the EAC regional force. On 8 November, the Chiefs of General Staff of the EAC armed forces met in Bujumbura, Burundi, to discuss the deployment of the regional force. The MONUSCO Force Commander attended the meeting to discuss potential coordination mechanisms.

11. From 13 to 15 November, the then President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, in his capacity as facilitator of the EAC-led Nairobi process, visited Kinshasa and Goma, met President Tshisekedi and held consultations with Nairobi process stakeholders. During his visit, MONUSCO supported preparatory work for the third round of Nairobi process consultations, scheduled to begin on 27 November. Following his visit, the Consulate of Kenya in Goma issued a statement deploring the dire humanitarian situation and ongoing fighting, observing that M23 had not honoured the terms of the Nairobi conclaves, and calling on the parties to respect their commitments and on the international community and all partners to respond urgently to the humanitarian situation. On 18 November, Mr. Kenyatta held separate phone conversations with the Presidents of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

12. On 23 November, President Lourenço convened a mini-summit in Luanda attended by President Tshisekedi, the President of Burundi, Évariste Ndayishimiye, in his capacity as Chairperson of EAC, and Mr. Kenyatta. Rwanda was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also attended the meeting, along with the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The participants in the mini-summit agreed on measures to address the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including a timetable for the implementation of priority actions to achieve a cessation of hostilities and the immediate withdrawal of M23 from occupied localities, and on coordination of efforts under the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

13. Operationalization of the EAC regional force continued with the establishment of the EAC regional force headquarters on 5 November and the beginning of deployment, on 18 November, of a Kenyan battalion to Goma. Burundi National Defence Force personnel continued to operate in South Kivu Province in the framework of the regional force, while the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) continued to operate in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces under bilateral agreements renewed on 20 September. On 18 November, UPDF announced the deployment of one battalion under the EAC regional force.

14. On 5 October, President Tshisekedi met in Kinshasa with the Governors of Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu and Kwango Provinces to address an intercommunity conflict between the Teke and other communities, predominantly the Yaka community, in Kwamouth territory of Mai-Ndombe. The Government subsequently established three subcommissions composed of national and provincial deputies, experts from provincial ministries and religious leaders. On 20 October, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo presented the results of a fact-finding mission he led to Mai-Ndombe Province to Prime Minister Sama Lukonde and warned that there was a risk that the conflict would spread to other areas, including Kinshasa.

III. Security situation

15. The security situation was marked by persistent violence perpetrated mostly by the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO), Zaire, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and M23 in Ituri and North Kivu, notwithstanding the continued extension of the state of siege in the two provinces. In South Kivu, Mai-Mai groups continued to attack civilians. On 30 September, the Twirwaneho militia attacked a MONUSCO base in Minembwe, killing a peacekeeper.

A. Ituri Province

16. The security situation in Ituri remained volatile. Between 17 September and 17 November, 47 security incidents involving armed groups were recorded. Eighty-one civilians were reportedly killed, including at least eight women and four children, while at least 49 civilians, including seven women, were reportedly abducted. The redeployment of FARDC to the Petit Nord area of North Kivu to address the threat posed by M23 contributed to persistent insecurity in Ituri.

17. In the Mongbwalu area of western Djugu territory, CODECO and Zaire militias continued to clash and commit violence against civilians to assert control over illegal mining sites. ADF perpetrated multiple attacks in eastern Mambasa and western Irumu territories, as well as in eastern Irumu territory, where they clashed with UPDF and FARDC.

18. On 14 October, a new local self-defence group, Chini ya Tuna, reportedly associated with the Lesse community, fuelled intercommunal tensions in the Komanda area by killing 17 Nande civilians. In the eastern part of Djugu territory, CODECO factions generally observed the commitment they made in June to ceasing hostilities, as evidenced by the fact that there were relatively few incidents. However, exactions, harassment of civilians and lootings continued to be recorded along the Lake Albert littoral.

19. Lendu-Alur relations improved, as the provincial government and MONUSCO continued to facilitate dialogue within and between communities. As a result, no incidents were recorded in Mahagi territory during the period under review.

B. North Kivu Province

20. In the Grand Nord area, between 17 September and 17 November, 109 security incidents involving armed groups were recorded. ADF perpetrated at least 31 attacks, in which at least 98 civilians, including 10 women, were killed.

21. Despite the extension of joint Congolese and Ugandan offensive operations, the geographical scope of ADF violence expanded, causing widespread violence against civilians against the backdrop of significant shortages of security forces since their redeployment to Rutshuru territory. On 1 October, the former chief of the Isale-Vuhovi group was killed by unknown assailants in Busalya, Bashu chiefdom. On 3 October, an improvised explosive device detonated in Butembo, injuring 12 civilians, including eight children (all boys). Islamic State Central Africa Province claimed responsibility for the explosion.

22. The situation continued to deteriorate in Butembo and Lubero territories, with growing levels of Mai-Mai activity. Clashes between armed groups also resumed in Masisi territory, threatening civilians.

23. In the Petit Nord area, 113 security incidents involving armed groups were recorded, in which 102 civilians were reportedly killed and 109 civilians were injured. On 20 October, M23 launched assaults on FARDC positions in Swima and Ntamugenga, in Rutshuru territory and expanded its control over parts of the territory, locations along the route nationale 2 and in the town of Bunagana on the Congolese-Ugandan border. The group maintained a parallel administration in Jomba where it levied taxes on residents. As of 17 November, the M23 had seized control of Kiwanja, Kibumba, Tongo, Mabenga bridge and Rutshuru localities, clashed with FARDC in Nyiragongo territory and moved further south towards Goma. In Masisi territory, the resumption in September of clashes between rival armed groups over control of mining sites and illegal taxation, involving primarily the Mai-Mai groups Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain and the Mapenzi faction of Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové, led to the displacement of hundreds of households.

C. South Kivu and Maniema Provinces

24. In South Kivu, foreign and local armed groups continued to attack civilians and security forces, notably in Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira territories. Between 17 September and 18 November, 201 security incidents were recorded, in which 44 civilians, including at least five women, were killed and another 22 injured. Joint Congolese and Burundian operations continued, shifting further south to the Bijombo, Mikenge and Minembwe areas. On 23 October, Congolese-Burundian troops clashed with the Burundian armed group Forces nationales de libération (FNL), resulting in three FNL fighters being killed.

25. As Congolese and Burundian offensive operations proceeded, the Twirwaneho armed group reinforced its control over Minembwe. Individuals with ties to Twirwaneho began obstructing the MONUSCO base in Minembwe in protest of the Mission's role in facilitating the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of former Twirwaneho elements. On 30 September, six suspected Twirwaneho staged a fake surrender at the Minembwe base, opening fire on MONUSCO military personnel and killing one peacekeeper. In response, the base was reinforced with reserve troops, who repelled a second attack by suspected Twirwaneho on 5 October.

26. In the Lulenge sector of Fizi territory, recurrent fighting between Twirwaneho and the Mai-Mai group Biloze Bishambuke continued, with clashes on 5 October in Bigaragara that displaced more than 1,000 households. Mai-Mai groups also continued endangering civilians in Fizi territory along the areas that border Maniema and Tanganyika Provinces. Furthermore, the Yakutumba and Biloze Bishambuke groups continued to clash over control of mining sites.

IV. Human rights situation

27. During the period under review, MONUSCO documented 845 human rights violations and abuses, which was similar to the 847 violations and abuses documented in June and July 2022. Armed groups were allegedly responsible for 60 per cent of those violations and abuses. At least 346 persons were victims of alleged extrajudicial and summary killings (178 men, 51 women and 17 children), a significant decrease from the 428 recorded in June and July, due in part to variations in ADF activity and related human rights abuses.

28. About 88 per cent of the violations and abuses were committed in conflict-affected provinces. In North Kivu Province, Nyatura factions were allegedly responsible for the most abuses (130), followed by Mai-Mai factions (80), ADF (51), M23 (35), the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (25), the Forces

démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) (23) and Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) (5). From 20 October to 18 November, clashes between M23 and FARDC resulted in 36 civilian deaths (19 men, 4 women and 13 children) and at least 40 people injured. In Ituri Province, CODECO combatants were allegedly responsible for the most abuses (39), followed by ADF (21), Chini ya Tuna (6) and Mai-Mai groups (4). Among State agents, Congolese police forces allegedly committed 148 human rights violations, approximately the same number as in the previous reporting period (145). FARDC allegedly committed 123 violations, including the extrajudicial killing of 16 men, 1 woman and 2 children, a 7 per cent increase compared with the previous period. MONUSCO was informed that on 1 September, a joint patrol led by FARDC and officers of the Burundi National Defence Force had allegedly arbitrarily arrested 22 people (6 women, 2 children and 14 men) in Masangu village in Uvira territory of South Kivu Province, accusing them of complicity with armed groups, and subjected them to inhuman and degrading treatment before releasing them.

29. The intercommunity conflict in Mai-Ndombe Province intensified and expanded geographically. In September and October, at least 74 persons were killed, and dozens of houses burnt in attacks in Kwamouth territory, Mai-Ndombe Province, and Bagata territory, Kwilu Province.

30. Documented violations related to restrictions of democratic space increased by 49 per cent compared with the previous period. There was an increase in the number of demonstrations against the continuation of the state of siege, the occupation of parts of Rutshuru territory by M23 and the presence of MONUSCO. In North Kivu, 1 man was killed, 21 men and 2 women were ill-treated and 67 men and 13 women were arrested by the police while participating in peaceful protests. Violations allegedly committed by the Agence nationale des renseignements increased by 84 per cent, compared with June and July 2022, and the agency allegedly continues to illegally detain more than 43 individuals in several official and unofficial facilities in Kinshasa.

31. MONUSCO continued to provide technical and financial support for efforts to fight impunity, which led, from September to October 2022, to the trial and conviction of at least 3 FARDC soldiers, 1 officer of the Congolese National Police and 16 members of armed groups for crimes related to violations and abuses of human rights. MONUSCO also provided technical support to the judicial authorities for an investigation mission in Bulambika, Kabare territory, South Kivu Province, from 5 to 12 October 2022 relating to crimes against humanity committed by the armed group Raia Mutomboki.

V. Humanitarian situation

32. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo deteriorated on multiple fronts. The country still has the largest caseload of internally displaced persons in Africa, at 5.7 million, 51 per cent of whom are women and girls. Since the beginning of 2022 alone, approximately 1.5 million people have been displaced, and more than 80 per cent of the displacements were due to armed attacks and clashes. Since the beginning of 2022, more than 76,000 Congolese refugees have arrived in neighbouring countries, bringing the total to more than 1 million in the region.

33. The actions of M23 significantly exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation in North Kivu. On 17 November, approximately 280,000 newly displaced people, of which 51 per cent were women, were recorded in Rutshuru territory following the resumption of armed violence between M23 and FARDC on 20 October. Approximately 128,000 are sheltered in schools, churches, hospitals, households and improvised sites in Nyiragongo territory. In addition, over 12,000 have sought refuge

in Uganda. As at 24 October, some 83,000 people affected by the violence had received humanitarian assistance, but a substantial gap remained in covering existing needs as a result of persistent access and security challenges as well as underfunding of the humanitarian response plan. As at 24 October, the intercommunal conflict in Kwamouth territory of Mai-Ndombe Province resulted in the displacement of 48,169 people, mostly women and children, of whom 2,600 fled to the Republic of the Congo and 7,500 returned as the security situation improved.

34. The country continued to face multiple recurring epidemics, including cholera, measles, polio, Ebola virus disease and coronavirus disease. The fifteenth outbreak of Ebola virus disease, which started in Beni, North Kivu, ended on 27 September, 42 days after the burial of the sole victim. Vaccination again played an important part in the response, as 51 direct contacts of the victim and 303 contacts of contacts were vaccinated. Since 20 September, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has strengthened surveillance and developed a national preparedness and response plan to address the Ebola outbreak in Uganda.

35. As at 2 November 2022, the \$1.88 billion humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2022, targeting 8.8 million people, had received 43 per cent of the required funding.

VI. Protection of civilians

A. Mission strategies and political processes

36. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, MONUSCO continued to implement a comprehensive, mission-wide approach to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, leveraging civilian, military and police capacities through dialogue, static presence and projection, and the fostering of a protective environment. The Mission continued to be guided by area-based strategies, complemented by local or thematic plans, in coordination with the United Nations country team, the Congolese authorities and civil society. The Mission's senior leadership maintained high-level advocacy with Congolese authorities for the deployment of military and police forces to vulnerable areas experiencing shortages in State security presence.

37. Mission components deployed 14 assessment missions, frequently with the involvement of authorities, in response to existing threats or in anticipation of emerging threats to civilians, to help inform coherent and integrated responses to conflict dynamics, drawing upon the complementary capacities of the Mission's civilian and uniformed components and of the wider United Nations system.

38. On 14 September, the Mission adopted a revised laydown determining the deployment pattern for its military component, geared towards maximizing the delivery of physical protection by maintaining an agile posture, accounting for limited troop numbers and changing armed group dynamics. A mission-wide task force was established to implement the revised deployment pattern and ensure that the Congolese authorities and civil society clearly understood the movements and objectives of MONUSCO troops.

B. Field-level responses

39. In Ituri, MONUSCO sustained its efforts to promote durable conflict resolution through intracommunal and intercommunal dialogue. Mission personnel liaised with community leaders to advance the ongoing series of intracommunal and intercommunal

dialogues. The Mission also worked to enhance physical protection in vulnerable areas through advocacy with provincial authorities to deploy Congolese defence and security forces, the reinforcement of early warning mechanisms and the redeployment of an Intervention Brigade quick reaction force from the Petit Nord area of North Kivu to Irumu territory in Ituri. MONUSCO also contributed to strengthening the protective environment, notably through support for the fight against impunity. On 10 October, following a week of hearings supported by MONUSCO, 16 CODECO elements were found guilty of crimes against humanity by the military court of Ituri.

40. In the Grand Nord area of North Kivu, MONUSCO engaged with stakeholders to address hostile attitudes towards the Mission and enable the regular conduct of its activities. The Mission also continued to deliver physical protection through various patrols and, alongside Congolese soldiers, conducted search-and-destroy operations in the Mamove area of Beni territory.

41. In the Petit Nord area of North Kivu, the Mission liaised with provincial authorities to initiate a trilateral dialogue involving the Mission, the provincial government and civil society to restore confidence and collaboration following recent anti-MONUSCO demonstrations. The Mission's military and police components increased robust patrols, including jointly with FARDC and the Congolese National Police, in and around Goma to ensure the protection of civilians and to deter M23 from advancing further towards the city. The Mission established four additional community alert networks in Rutshuru and Masisi territories to enhance early warning capacities.

42. In South Kivu, in view of the closure of the permanent operating base in Shabunda, a joint assessment was conducted with the Congolese authorities to ensure the effective handover of responsibilities and establish adequate measures to mitigate protection threats. The Mission also held workshops with members of local protection committees, during which four community protection plans were updated. MONUSCO and provincial authorities engaged with community representatives in Minembwe to defuse tensions over the Mission's facilitation of voluntary disarmament and demobilization. Direct physical protection also continued to be provided for some 6,750 displaced persons in Mikenge and Bijombo.

43. The Mission's community alert network system received 622 alerts between 17 September and 18 November, of which 45 per cent originated in South Kivu, 43 per cent in North Kivu and 5 per cent in Ituri. The remaining 7 per cent of the alerts were from Tanganyika, Maniema, Kinshasa, Kwilu and Lomami Provinces. State security forces and MONUSCO responded to 66 per cent of the alerts received. The remaining 34 per cent were either too imprecise or they originated in remote locations that prohibited the timely provision of assistance.

44. Through the Mine Action Service, MONUSCO conducted 123 spot tasks in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu between 17 September and 17 November, destroying 447 items of unexploded ordnance and 90,900 rounds of small arms ammunition. In addition, MONUSCO conducted 20 risk-awareness sessions on explosive ordnance for 490 residents of Beni town and held 34 explosive hazard assessment trainings for members of FARDC. The Mission also installed 16 containers for FARDC in Beni territory to facilitate the safe and secure storage of weapons and ammunition.

VII. Stabilization and the strengthening of State institutions

A. Stabilization and drivers of conflict

45. On 14 November, the national steering board of the Stabilization Coherence Fund approved a special allocation of \$6 million to implement the first pilot phase of P-DDRCS projects in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. The International Organization for Migration will be in charge of the first implementation phase of the projects in prioritized zones, which will focus on short-term dialogue and cash-for-work activities. A second phase of medium-term activities to capitalize on achievements through continuous dialogue, targeting the drivers of conflict and prioritizing stabilization concerns of communities, is currently being planned with P-DDRCS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

46. With the support of MONUSCO and UNDP, three workshops were held in Bunia, Bukavu and Goma to develop the P-DDRCS provincial operational plans, integrating the needs and expectations of the community members through an inclusive and participative process.

47. Four projects implemented under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy were completed. They included three projects in Ituri Province (Djugu and Irumu territories) and one in Beni, North Kivu Province, which reached over 5,500 direct beneficiaries, half of whom were women. Achievements included the training of personnel of 45 small businesses and 8 agricultural cooperatives, the establishment of 8 local women's associations, the handover of key State security and judicial infrastructure, including the peace tribunal in Djugu and the police stations in Djugu and Fataki, and the establishment of permanent dialogue structures.

B. Security sector and justice system reforms

48. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping commitments towards host State cooperation, from 11 to 13 October, MONUSCO facilitated the pre-validation of the contents of the manual on the code of conduct and ethics of FARDC, as a first phase of the project aimed at reinforcing military rules, values and goals. On 27 October, MONUSCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children and civil society stakeholders, facilitated a workshop within the project on leveraging the strength of women in advancing security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enhance women's active participation in the security sector reform process.

49. From 1 to 4 November, the Comité de suivi de la réforme de la Police nationale congolaise, supported by MONUSCO, organized a three-day workshop to foster consensus on legislative and regulatory texts and raise awareness of the reform of the Congolese National Police in the framework of its five-year action plan for the period 2020–2024. On 29 November, the ministerial focal points held a working session on procedures for the twelfth ministerial meeting of the Comité de suivi de la réforme de la Police nationale congolaise scheduled for the first week of December, which will be dedicated to a midterm evaluation of the five-year action plan.

50. The Mission maintained support for the national corrections system, with a focus on 12 priority prisons. Prison conditions and security remained challenging, with an overcrowding rate of 458 per cent in all detention facilities including an increase of 523 prisoners, from 24,319 to 24,842 (24,214 males and 628 females, including 779 juveniles) as at 11 November. The proportion of pretrial detainees remained consistent with the previous reporting period, at 75 per cent, a decrease of

1 per cent. As at 11 November, the number of convicted detainees had increased from 5,951 to 6,129, representing 25 per cent of the prison population.

51. As at 24 October, 37 deaths had occurred in seven priority prisons, compared with 52 deaths in the previous reporting period, as a result of overcrowding and its consequences, including malnutrition and tuberculosis. The highest death tolls were recorded in Kalemie prison (9), Bunia prison (7) and Goma prison (5). While the deaths illustrate the continued grave situation in prisons, the downward trend is attributed to a targeted feeding programme for vulnerable prisoners, reinforcement of health care and a review of prison subvention allocation mechanisms to increase equity and accountability, which indicated where further efforts were needed to improve conditions. In addition, the Mission conducted joint evaluation missions with UNDP and national and provincial authorities to rally support for improving prison conditions in Bukavu, Uvira, Kabare and Goma. As a result, 50 detainees held for minor offences, including 1 woman, were released from Beni prison.

52. The Mission supported the drafting of a prison deradicalization strategy. In parallel, work continued to upgrade Kabare prison into a medium-security prison by June 2024, including a dedicated unit for ADF detainees currently being housed in Ndolo prison, Kinshasa.

53. From 11 to 15 October, MONUSCO organized a gender retreat in Kinshasa which brought together MONUSCO female correctional experts and their national counterparts under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice. The retreat was aimed at defining a national prison gender strategy as well as at sensitizing national authorities towards gender mainstreaming.

54. The implementation of the national justice reform policy for 2017–2026 continued with the support of the Mission through the joint justice reform support programme. The construction of the peace tribunal of Nyunzu and the courthouse of Tanganyika is progressing. They are expected to be completed in February 2023 and October 2023, respectively.

55. MONUSCO technical and logistical support for the fight against sexual violence resulted in 25 convictions, of 6 Congolese soldiers, 1 police officer and 18 civilians, for rape in Cantine locality in the Beni area in September and October.

56. On 2 November, the Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature issued two decisions related to two lists of 2,500 magistrates each to be recruited in 2023 and 2024. In total, 5,000 magistrates were selected after the recruitment test, instead of 3,000 as initially planned.

57. National public consultations on transitional justice were concluded in Haut-Lomami province on 21 September. On 24 October, a technical committee on transitional justice launched the development of a draft national strategy on transitional justice. MONUSCO continued to support the Government in the implementation of two laws, on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, promulgated on 1 June, and on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, adopted on 14 June.

C. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

58. Between 17 September and 18 November, the Mission disarmed and provided reintegration support to 18 Congolese former combatants, including one woman and two children, and facilitated their return to their communities of origin. In addition, nine Rwandan ex-combatants (all male) affiliated with the Union des patriotes pour la défense des innocents, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi, Twirwaneho and the Conseil National pour le renouveau et

la démocratie, along with five dependants, were repatriated, while three Burundian ex-combatants (all male) were disarmed, demobilized and handed over to their families for reintegration in Burundi.

59. In North Kivu, in collaboration with the P-DDRCS provincial coordination team, MONUSCO began to develop a communications strategy to sensitize stakeholders to the programme, encourage armed group combatants to disengage and persuade communities and civil society groups to refrain from offering support to armed groups. In addition, MONUSCO is supporting the P-DDRCS provincial coordination team in the formulation of a project for the community reinsertion of ex-combatants assembled in Mubambiro.

VIII. Women and peace and security

60. In collaboration with UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), MONUSCO helped advance the development of a national strategy for women's political participation in democratic governance, led by the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, which was initiated in 2018. The strategy aims to reduce gender inequality by strengthening public action regarding the participation of Congolese women in democratic governance and decision-making bodies.

61. On 17 September, MONUSCO concluded a series of dialogues with women leaders from Beni, Butembo and Lubero on the participation of women in peace processes. The dialogue sessions encouraged 50 women leaders previously trained in mediation to put into practice skills gained through MONUSCO-led workshops and to contribute to peacebuilding in their communities. The initiative helped restore trust between civil society and the Mission by reopening communication channels with women leaders in Beni and Butembo. On 22 October 2022, MONUSCO strengthened the capacity of 10 members (4 women and 6 men) of the local protection committee of Nyangezi, South Kivu Province, supporting the inclusion of gender perspectives in their protection of civilians initiatives.

IX. Child protection

62. Between 17 September and 31 October, MONUSCO verified 172 grave violations perpetrated against 160 children (128 boys and 32 girls), including 19 children who were killed (12 boys and 7 girls). Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke was responsible for the largest number of verified violations (38). State security forces were allegedly responsible for the killing of one boy, sexual violence against three girls and one attack on a school.

63. Between 17 September and 31 October, 88 children (79 boys and 9 girls) who had escaped from, were separated from or had been voluntarily released by armed groups were verified as having been recruited and used. Following advocacy by MONUSCO, the Mai-Mai groups Biloze Bishambuke and Machine released 47 children (45 boys and 2 girls). The commander of Mai-Mai Machine signed a unilateral declaration to end and prevent child recruitment and other grave violations against children, bringing the number of signatory armed groups to 44. On 23 September, the Military Court of Bukavu rejected an appeal of the commander of Mai-Mai Chance, confirming a life sentence for grave violations against children in Kabare territory in South Kivu.

X. Conflict-related sexual violence

64. In September and October, at least 69 women were victims of conflict-related sexual violence. Armed groups were allegedly responsible for incidents affecting 64 women. Nyatura factions perpetrated the most abuses (19 women) followed by different Mai-Mai factions (10 women), CODECO (8 women), Raia Mutomboki (8 women), the Force de résistance patriotique de Ituri (7 women), the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (7 women) and other armed groups (5 women). State agents were allegedly responsible for cases involving three victims, attributed respectively to the FARDC (2 women) and the police (1 woman). In addition, two women were victims of conflict-related sexual violence allegedly committed by members of the Burundi National Defence Force amid joint military operations with FARDC in South Kivu. During the reporting period, the cases were recorded in North Kivu (40 per cent), South Kivu (29 per cent), Ituri (22 per cent) and Tanganyika (9 per cent). Insecurity continued to hamper access for monitoring and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence in areas controlled by armed groups, including M23.

65. MONUSCO provided technical advice to the Congolese authorities on the development of legislation on the protection of victims and witnesses of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as a law on reparations for victims and the establishment of a reparations fund. The Mission and its Joint Human Rights Office recommended measures to further align a proposed law that had been approved on 9 September by the Council of Ministers with international human rights standards.

XI. Exit strategy and transition

66. The Mission leadership continued its engagement with national stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth associations, to sensitize them about the joint transition plan and its benchmarks. On 15 November, Prime Minister Sama Lukonde presided over a meeting with MONUSCO and members of the Government to follow up on the President's request, announced in August 2022, to re-evaluate the transition plan, during which it was decided to continue consultations through a joint working group.

67. Following the closure of the Mission's Tanganyika field office in June 2022, local authorities, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other stakeholders in the province developed a joint United Nations workplan for Tanganyika Province to sustain the gains achieved, based on recommendations and follow-up actions agreed in five thematic groups on protection and human rights, stabilization, support to State institutions, operations and strategic communications. MONUSCO continued to relocate the residual team comprised of 29 personnel in Tanganyika to the premises of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Kalemie, a process that was initiated in July.

68. Building on the five-year action plan of the Congolese National Police, MONUSCO provided support to the Congolese National Police to facilitate the handover of security responsibilities in Tanganyika. In the framework of its withdrawal, MONUSCO provided logistical support to 80 police officers recently deployed to Bendera, Tanganyika Province, on the basis of priorities identified by national and provincial authorities. The Mission also supported the establishment and equipment of four new police posts in Kalemie, Tanganyika Province. In addition, support was provided for the construction and equipment of Congolese National Police headquarters in Beni and Oicha, the construction of a new police station in

Kabare (Bukavu) and the construction of the Inspection générale de la Police nationale congolaise antennas in Kalemie and Kinshasa to enhance accountability.

69. Between 17 and 20 October, the Mission facilitated a workshop which resulted in the elaboration of the provincial operational plan for P-DDRCS in Tanganyika. In parallel, a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration was signed on 17 October on the implementation of a joint project to address intercommunity tensions between Bantu and Twa communities in Lambo Katenga, Kalemie territory.

XII. Mission effectiveness

A. Mission performance: assessment of the performance of the uniformed and civilian components

1. Military component

70. As at 18 November, the military component of MONUSCO had deployed 12,531 troops, 6 per cent of whom were women, and 490 United Nations military experts on mission, 25 per cent of whom were women, of an authorized strength of 13,500 troops and 490 United Nations military experts on mission. From 17 September to 18 November, MONUSCO implemented 13 standing combat deployments and conducted 5,828 day patrols, 4,594 night patrols, 453 long-range patrols and missions, 565 joint patrols, 763 escorts and 4 aerial reconnaissance operations. These operations assisted in locating armed groups and facilitated the conduct of offensive operations to restrict their movements.

71. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus commitments, the Mission conducted evaluations, using the new task, standards and indicators methodology, of nine military units, covering seven infantry battalions, one special forces company and one quick reaction force. All evaluated units were rated as having met the required standard. The evaluations revealed positive indicators in terms of professionalism, morale, high standards during exercises and discipline of personnel. Two of the evaluated units showed shortfalls in military peacekeeping intelligence, protection of civilians and community engagement, while one unit showed the need for improvement in the areas of conduct and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. A performance improvement plan was developed for each unit to implement corrective measures.

72. The operational effectiveness index teams continued to highlight the need to increase the number of female engagement teams, with 14 engagement teams currently deployed, representing 9 per cent of the force's total strength. Other outstanding issues related to the maintenance of accommodations and other facilities. As part of the ongoing strengthening of the military unit evaluations, the military component conducted in-mission evaluations that are still under review, using the task, standards and indicators methodology developed by the Office of Military Affairs and already rolled out for infantry units. In addition, pilot evaluations for military engineering, logistics and military aviation units are under way.

73. Women represent 26.27 per cent of MONUSCO military staff officers and military observers, compared with 26.05 per cent during the previous quarter, while contingent female participation decreased from 5.64 per cent in the previous quarter to 4.67 per cent. Female and mixed engagement teams conducted over 30 activities, including civil-military cooperation, outreach projects that focused on reaching women and children, engagement patrols, gender-sensitive long-range patrols and foot patrols to address security and protection needs.

2. Police component

74. As at 22 November, the police component had deployed 1,623 personnel, including 1,238 formed police unit personnel (199 women and 385 individual police officers (118 women), of the authorized 1,410 formed police unit personnel and 591 individual police officers. MONUSCO continued to work towards increasing the number of women in formed police units and identified the need to prioritize gender-responsive infrastructure improvements, including housing, and to undertake efforts to enhance the enabling environment for women. Formed police units achieved 693 quick response interventions, 145 VIP escorts, 627 patrols, 304 joint patrols with individual police officers, 44 joint patrols with the Congolese National Police and 3 joint patrols with the MONUSCO force.

75. During the reporting period, the overall performance assessment score of individual police officers was 78 per cent. This represented a 5 per cent reduction from the previous period owing to newly onboarded police officers who had lower operational and professional ratings, as they were at the start of their tours of duty. Additional training will be provided to bring the performance of new police officers to the required level. Eight formed police units were evaluated against criteria such as support to mandate implementation, command and control, training, discipline, the sustainability of logistical capacity and medical support. All units were rated as satisfactory. Performance improvement plans were put in place to rectify minor shortfalls and further strengthen the units' performance. In order to sustain and improve their performance and to boost their capacity to respond to security challenges, 17 operational readiness inspections, 818 training sessions and 64 training inspections were conducted for all formed police units.

3. Civilian component

76. As at 18 November 2022, 2,146 civilian personnel (20.8 per cent women), including 302 United Nations Volunteers and 34 government-provided correctional personnel, were serving with MONUSCO. This represents 91.9 per cent of the approved positions.

4. Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System

77. The Mission's Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System framework and database continued to serve as the basis for the development of the fact sheets that used to support briefings to the Security Council, with infographics depicting trends in the security and operational environment and the correlation between threats to civilians and measures taken by the Mission. In addition, MONUSCO undertook its impact assessment covering the period from April to October during a two-day session on 12 and 13 October. The impact assessment identified trends in the Mission's impact on the threat of armed groups, the national capacity to protect civilians, resolve conflicts, deliver justice and meet international human rights obligations, and inclusive participation in political processes, and will be used to support the Mission's political engagement and mandate implementation.

B. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

78. Between 1 September and 31 October 2022, MONUSCO recorded 11 new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in cases which occurred between 2009 and 2016. The allegations involved 18 uniformed personnel as alleged perpetrators, 18 alleged victims and 8 paternity claims. Eight of the eleven allegations are pending investigation by the relevant troop-contributing countries and by the United Nations,

while three of the allegations were investigated, found to be unsubstantiated and closed.

79. In coordination with the Senior Victims' Rights Officer, MONUSCO ensured that the 18 alleged victims, including 7 children, and those subject to paternity claims were supported and received appropriate assistance, notably medical and psychosocial support, in a timely manner, in accordance with the victim assistance protocols established with service providers, including the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund.

80. In line with the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary-General with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, MONUSCO further reinforced its prevention strategies, including its ongoing risk assessments and the implementation of mitigation measures. MONUSCO, in partnership with local authorities, in particular with the 43 community-based complaint mechanism networks, and civil society organizations, carried out extensive awareness-raising activities, especially in areas where the Mission had a strong presence of uniformed personnel. In addition, the Mission continued to take all necessary measures to ensure compliance with the policy and shared the outcome of investigation reports and related recommendations with relevant United Nations entities.

XIII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

81. Anti-MONUSCO demonstrations in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued, but with decreasing intensity, including several occurrences of stone pelting of peacekeepers and an attempt to force entry into the Mission's premises in Munigi on 1 November, which was repelled with the support of the Congolese police. MONUSCO faced obstacles to its freedom of movement, including vehicle obstructions and being targeted with projectiles, including stones. On 12 and 13 October, the Mission organized sensitization meetings to counter anti-MONUSCO sentiment in North and South Kivu, targeting women, youth and media representatives.

82. Security and safety incidents since the last report increased from 130 to 160, including 4 incidents related to armed conflict, 71 crime-related incidents, 51 civil unrest cases and 34 cases of hazards. A total of 91 United Nations personnel, including 63 national personnel (59 men and 4 women) and 28 international personnel (21 men and 7 women), were affected.

83. Twenty-one suspects were referred to the garrison military tribunal in Goma, which opened a trial on 3 November in two cases relating to the attacks against MONUSCO premises during the July and August demonstrations in Goma. On 21 September, MONUSCO was informed that the military prosecutor of Rutshuru had opened a case for the attack on the Mission's helicopter that killed eight peacekeepers in Tshanzu, North Kivu Province, in March 2022. However, insecurity in Rutshuru is hindering progress in the investigations. Appeals hearings in the trial of the assassination of two United Nations experts in Kananga in March 2017 began on 12 October before the High Military Court in Kinshasa.

XIV. Observations

84. The Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserve credit for their continued determination and resilience in confronting the daunting array of challenges facing their nation. Thanks to the country's strong economic performance, the Government has put forward a robust budget that seeks to address

the needs of the Congolese people and ensure that the electoral process is funded. It has also pursued institutional reforms that are essential to preserve the gains achieved with the support of MONUSCO and create the conditions for the Mission's progressive and phased drawdown. I applaud these efforts and encourage the international partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to accompany the Government as it seeks to deliver on the goals set out in its programme of action in a challenging regional and international context.

85. I welcome the continued efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Government to prepare for elections in 2023. The United Nations system stands ready to do its part in helping to create a conducive environment for the timely holding of transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful elections. In the meantime, I encourage the Commission to pursue consultations with all stakeholders to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth in the electoral process, build trust and defuse political tensions.

86. As elections draw nearer, the growing restrictions on political space, freedom of expression and freedom of the press in the context of the state of siege are concerning. Furthermore, I am extremely troubled by the rise in hate speech and incitement to violence targeting political actors, ethnic communities, journalists and civil society actors. I welcome the statements of the President and the Government condemning such dangerous rhetoric and underscore the importance of respect for fundamental rights and liberties.

87. The surge in intercommunal violence in Mai-Ndombe Province is deeply disturbing. I commend the efforts of the Government and other actors to resolve the conflict between the Teke and the Yaka communities and welcome the humanitarian response currently under way.

88. In North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, insecurity fuelled by armed groups continues to take an unacceptable toll on civilians, particularly women, children and internally displaced persons. I deplore the targeting of civilians by armed groups, both local and foreign. I urge them all to lay down their weapons unconditionally and join the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme or return to their countries of origin.

89. The ongoing activities and level of organization of M23 and its systematic conduct of hostilities in the direction of Goma pose a clear and grave threat to peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The nature, extent and urgency of this threat should not be underestimated, and every effort should be expended to address it immediately. M23 must cease hostilities. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be respected and support to M23 or any other armed group, whether Congolese or foreign, must cease immediately.

90. The security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation endured by civilians, including through mass displacement and obstruction of life-saving humanitarian assistance for thousands of affected people. As I commend the tireless efforts of humanitarian actors to deliver assistance under trying circumstances, I am deeply troubled by severe restrictions on humanitarian access, particularly in areas under M23 control. I am concerned about the chronic underfunding of the humanitarian response plan, and I urge partners to redouble their efforts to support the humanitarian response by providing the necessary funding.

91. I am deeply concerned over growing tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and I commend the diplomatic efforts of President João Lourenço of Angola, former President Kenyatta and other regional leaders to

de-escalate tensions and pave the way for lasting peace, stability and development in the Great Lakes region. I welcome the mini-summit on peace and security in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was held in Luanda on 23 November, and the decisions taken by regional leaders to establish a ceasefire and effect the withdrawal of M23 from occupied areas. I reiterate the full support of the United Nations for the Luanda road map and the Nairobi process, including through technical expertise and logistical support that MONUSCO has provided to consultations under the Nairobi process, and encourage partners to lend their full support to these initiatives. MONUSCO stands ready to leverage its capabilities to enable the swift operationalization of the ad hoc verification mechanism established under the Luanda road map and to continue to support the successful pursuit of consultations with armed groups within the framework of the Nairobi process.

92. I welcome the concerted efforts of regional partners to restore security on the ground and an environment conducive to political solutions to these challenges, including through the ongoing deployment of the East African Community regional force. The deployment of the force could complement ongoing diplomatic efforts as well as MONUSCO operations in support of FARDC and to protect civilians. To achieve this potential, I call on the countries contributing troops to the regional force to coordinate with MONUSCO and ensure that military operations against armed groups are conducted in full compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law. I welcome steps taken to this end, including with the Congolese authorities and the Chiefs of General Staff of the EAC armed forces, and I underscore the readiness of MONUSCO to continually strengthen coordination with all forces deployed in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

93. In line with the principles of Action for Peacekeeping Plus, I am determined to ensure that MONUSCO delivers on its core mandated responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as possible, while ensuring the safety and security of our peacekeeping personnel. I urge troop-contributing countries to contribute to the Mission's efforts in this regard by maintaining a robust posture in defence of the mandate and call on Member States to provide MONUSCO with the resources required to implement its mandate.

94. I strongly condemn the 30 September attack on a MONUSCO base in Minembwe, South Kivu, by Twirwaneho, which resulted in the death of one peacekeeper. I express my deepest condolences to the family of the fallen peacekeeper. I recall that attacks against United Nations peacekeepers may constitute a war crime under international law and call on the Congolese authorities to investigate this incident and swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

95. The United Nations remains committed to taking the necessary steps to restore trust and confidence between MONUSCO and communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Through constant dialogue and communication, the misperceptions about the Mission's mandate and role that may have helped to fuel negative sentiments towards the Mission can be addressed and overcome. I welcome the cooperation of the national authorities and civil society partners in this regard and look forward to their continued support.

96. The management of the Mission's transition in Tanganyika has provided a solid foundation for the consolidation of the gains achieved during the Mission's presence in the province. The President's request to review the joint transition plan for MONUSCO and the steps taken by the Congolese Prime Minister on 15 November to that end will help identify the core priorities on which the Government, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team and key partners must focus their efforts in order to enable the responsible, conditions-based withdrawal of the Mission. In the meantime, given the continued political, security and humanitarian challenges

outlined in the present report, I recommend that the Security Council renew the Mission's mandate for an additional year at its current authorized strength.

97. Lastly, I wish to express gratitude to my Special Representative, Bintou Keita, for her efforts and leadership. In addition, I wish to acknowledge and thank all MONUSCO personnel, members of the United Nations system, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region for their steadfast commitment to achieving peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUSCO

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