



Security Council

Distr.: General
1 July 2020

Original: English and French

Letter dated 29 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Mr. Jamal Usseni, Director of Save Act Mine, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa (on behalf of the three African countries that are members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo convened on Thursday, 25 June 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicolas **de Rivière**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Leila Zerrougui**

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to present the various challenges that we are currently facing in the country, in a context marked by political tensions and an upswing of violence in certain parts of the east, amid a fragile socioeconomic situation. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has introduced an additional layer of complexity and concern into the existing issues that we face in the country.

The Government has, understandably, been focused these past several months on the immediate response to the threat posed by the global pandemic. Assisted by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council (S/2020/554), the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have undertaken a variety of efforts to limit the spread of the virus and alleviate the additional socioeconomic burden placed on the population by the movement restrictions, border closures and other measures taken to deal with the pandemic. That necessary work has nonetheless slowed the pace of the Government's programme and reform agenda.

With respect to the overall political situation, to date the ruling coalition, composed of President Tshisekedi's Cap pour le changement and former President Kabila's Front commun pour le Congo, continues to hold together. I believe that there has been an understanding on the part of the political leadership that maintaining this political coalition intact is a fundamental prerequisite for making progress on the wide array of governance, security and socioeconomic challenges that still stand in the way of the country's long-term stabilization.

At the same time, there are indeed serious tensions within the coalition, which is frequently unsettled by partisan manoeuvring leading to an erosion of trust between its partners. Unfortunately, over the course of the past days, the coalition has been put to the test following the introduction of three bills by Front commun pour le Congo parliamentarians that are considered by both the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS) and the opposition to undermine the separation of powers and weaken the independence of the judiciary. Yesterday a large number of UDPS supporters breached the enclosure of the National Assembly and vandalized a number of private properties to demonstrate that development. Those actions were broadly condemned, including by the President.

Maintaining popular support for the Cap pour le changement-Front commun pour le Congo coalition and the overall political dispensation has also been challenged by the trial, conviction and sentencing of the President's Chief of Staff, Vital Kamerhe, and disagreements over the renewal of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

I therefore spare no effort in the context of my good offices to remind interlocutors of the opportunity presented to them by the outcome of the 2018 electoral process and of the fact that the country's progress rests on the readiness of actors across the political spectrum to put aside partisanship in order to prevent a political crisis that could have major consequences for the stability of the country.

At the same time, many parts of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to be torn by violence as a result of the activities of armed groups and intercommunity conflicts. That trend has been fuelled by the effects of the political turmoil and the pandemic, which have an impact on the Government's ability to take structured and comprehensive measures against actors perpetrating violence against civilians.

The situation in parts of Ituri in particular has gravely deteriorated over the past months. An intensification of attacks on civilians and security forces by assailants associated with the Lendu community has in turn triggered Hema and Alur youth to create self-defence groups, sparking fears of a further ethnicization of the conflict. Equally, reports of incursions by elements of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in Aru territory, northern Ituri, have led to additional protection-of-civilians concerns and the displacement of the local population.

In North Kivu, there is concern over what appears to be the intention of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) to regroup and intensify attacks, resulting in increased civilian casualties. On 22 June, a MONUSCO convoy was ambushed by presumed ADF elements close to Beni town while returning to base after reconstructing a damaged bridge. One Indonesian peacekeeper lost his life and one was injured in that tragic incident. This is a stark reminder of the ultimate sacrifice that our peacekeepers are willing to make to protect civilians and advance peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate my condolences and that of the entire Mission to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the family of the deceased.

In the hauts plateaux of South Kivu, ongoing intercommunity conflicts have further degenerated with the proliferation of militias among all communities. I condemn in the strongest terms attacks on displaced populations and the use of hate speech, which incite further violence. Efforts to de-solidarize communities from those militias and preventing external actors from supporting their agendas will be vital to addressing the escalation of tensions in the area.

Finally, in Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika province, more than 100 civilians have been killed in intercommunity conflicts between Twa and Bantu over the course of the past months, and tensions remain high in neighbouring areas.

To address those issues, MONUSCO continues to pursue a comprehensive approach that combines active troop deployments to hotspot areas; community engagement; the development of targeted protection strategies; and the provision of critical, large-scale logistical support for Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) operations.

I would like to highlight and pay tribute to the soldiers of the FARDC and the uniformed contingents of MONUSCO, who are performing in an extremely difficult and dangerous environment. The security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo need our full support for the work that they do and are indeed in need of continued significant assistance to improve their logistical, training and operational capacities. Security-sector reform therefore must continue to be a priority for the Government and a vital area that the Mission and the international community must support.

It is important to note that, notwithstanding the increased violence in several provinces, the Mission continued to actively seize opportunities to support the Government in its local reconciliation efforts. In southern Irumu territory, for instance, the security situation has continued to improve since the signing of the peace agreement with the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI), laying the foundation to overcome a conflict that has lasted almost two decades.

In view of the interlinked nature of political stabilization, security and socioeconomic development, MONUSCO, along with the United Nations country team, is giving priority to the implementation of programmes to support transition in areas moving towards a state of post-conflict. We are therefore looking to enhance cooperation with the World Bank and other partners to assist with economic development and social cohesion in the Kasais. I believe strongly that the implementation of such transition programming is a crucial element of ensuring an environment that permits the responsible and sustainable exit of the Mission.

I would also like to take this opportunity to underline the synergies that MONUSCO benefits from in the efforts to improve the political climate in the broader Great Lakes region.

In that regard, the Mission works closely with the Office of the Special Envoy on a range of issues, including to promote non-military measures to resolve conflict in the region. The African Union and regional organizations also continue to play an essential role in promoting peace and development in the subregion. The Southern African Development Community, for example, remains a key partner in these efforts, as demonstrated by its active role in helping to resolve the recent border dispute between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia.

As I have emphasized in my recent briefings, there remains an opportunity for long-term progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which can pave the way for a responsible and sustainable withdrawal of the Mission in the coming years.

While restrictions linked to COVID-19 and the increased violence in the east have hampered efforts to hold a structured dialogue with the Government, as requested by the Council, the Mission is pursuing its internal planning and hopes to build on the constructive relationship to accelerate the development of a joint strategy as soon as the context becomes more conducive.

In that regard, I ask the Council today for its continued support for MONUSCO's work and the United Nations country team, including to stop the spread of COVID-19 and respond to the multiplicity of humanitarian emergencies that the population continues to face.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, which have demonstrated great flexibility in terms of the temporary halt on troop rotations that have been necessary to ensure that the Mission itself does not become a vector for the transmission of COVID-19. I also thank the Mission's civilian staff, who are carrying out indispensable work in this time of increased uncertainty and movement restrictions.

Annex II

Statement by the Director of Save Act Mine, Jamal Usseni

Allow me today to present to Council members my most fraternal greetings, wishing them and their family members good health during this period marked by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I would like to thank the Council for having given me this opportunity to brief it on the situation regarding the financing of armed groups operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the exploitation and illicit trade of minerals, particularly gold.

In my remarks, I will briefly present the context and the situation of the activities of armed groups in the areas where artisanal gold mining is taking place. I will also analyse the facts and their implications for efforts to bring peace to the region. In conclusion, I will propose possible solutions that can be applied at the national, regional and international levels.

In order for the Council to grasp the quintessence of what I am saying, allow me to present the contextual elements of the region evoked here.

The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is reputed to be very rich in gold deposits. The area extends from the extreme north-east, in the province of Ituri, to the extreme south-east, in the province of Tanganyika, in Ex-Katanga, where important artisanal gold-mining activities have been taking place for decades. It is estimated that between 300 kilograms and 50 tons of gold are produced in this area. Unfortunately, there is no official figure to determine the real production capacity of artisanal gold mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, given the low level of formalization of the sector and the very significant illicit cross-border gold-trafficking activities between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours, including Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya.

Since 1996, the area has experienced several wars, the most important of which were the so-called liberation wars led by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) and the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD), with military support from Rwanda and Uganda. After much effort by the international community through the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a semblance of peace had started to return before being disrupted again between 2004 and 2013 by the actions of rebel groups such as the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), which is still supported by Rwanda and Uganda.

Alongside those movements, there has also been strong activity on the part of local armed groups, including the Mayi-Mayi, the Raia Mutomboki and other popular self-defence groups. Those groups have been ruthless and extremely violent towards the population they claim to be defending.

I cannot fail to mention the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU), which continue to sow death and desolation among the Congolese civilian population. Fresh in our memory are the images of the victims of the ADF-NALU in the Beni zone, women and children raped or decapitated with machetes.

To understand the economic dynamics behind the armed conflicts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, one must face the evidence of their dual nature: first, at the socio-political level, the actors justify their actions by identity-based claims aimed at the conquest of power or the control of a portion of the national

territory; and, secondly, at the economic level, those actors take control of rich mining areas that are exploited by different armed groups.

In my remarks, I will dwell more on the second aspect by dividing the troubled period in two.

During the 1996-2013 period, the AFDL, the RCD, the RCD-Kisangani/Mouvement de libération, the FDLR, the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri, the CNDP, the M-23 and various Mayi-Mayi movements and local self-defence groups were active in the field of operations.

The strategy of armed groups and their sponsors consisted of three steps: first, taking control of rich mining areas, exploiting them and exporting raw minerals from the armed groups' sponsor countries; secondly, using local and foreign economic actors to conduct business between the occupied areas and the armed group's sponsor countries; and, thirdly, collecting taxes and various payments from local mining operators. Then, the minerals particularly targeted were coltan, tin and tungsten.

Between 2014 and 2020, the ADF-NALU, the FDLR, various Mayi-Mayi movements and local self-defence groups were active in the field. Here again, the economic strategy can be summarized in three points: first, keeping control over rich mining areas, exploiting them and smuggling the minerals to the countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo; secondly, using local actors financed by the outside, who ensure the purchase of minerals, as well as foreign actors, who position themselves in the countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo to buy and export minerals under cover of the host countries; and, finally, collecting various payments from local mining operators. The primary mineral of interest during this period is gold.

I now turn to initiatives to put an end to the conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To help the region recover, the Security Council adopted resolution 1952 (2010), which calls on actors to follow up on the recommendations on due diligence based on the guidelines of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The United States of America reinforced that commitment by incorporating sections 1502 and 1504 into the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to require all companies listed on United States stock exchanges to exercise due diligence with regard to their mineral supply chains.

At the regional level, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) launched the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources to combat the illicit trade of minerals in the region.

At the national level, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has launched the process of qualification and validation of mining sites, with a focus on the traceability of minerals and the exercise of the duty of care in accordance with the OECD's guiding principles.

The European Union has put the finishing touches to the process by drafting a regulation — expected to enter into force in 2021 — on minerals from conflict or high-risk zones.

I would like to underline to participants a key element of that assistance. Those initiatives on the ground have had a largely positive synergistic effect on the stanniferous minerals coltan, tin and tungsten. However, that is not the case for gold, which continues to be a secure source of funding for armed groups.

With regard to armed groups' control over mining locations, of the 2,789 listed stanniferous, gold and diamond mining sites in the eastern part of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, 1,746 are gold-bearing, that is 62 per cent. Out of 377,772 listed diggers, 274,004, or 72.5 per cent, are active in gold mining.

Of the 1,746 gold mines listed, 515 are under the direct control of local and foreign arms groups, or 29.4 per cent. Of those, 69 — 4 per cent — are under the direct control of foreign armed groups operating on Congolese soil, with 5,169 — 1.8 per cent — of identified miners; and 396, or 21 per cent, of registered gold mines, are under the direct control of local armed groups, with 67,595 — 24 per cent — of identified miners.

With regard to illicit trafficking corridors from the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards member countries of the ICGLR, gold mines not under the direct control of armed groups fuel the networks of illicit gold trafficking to East African countries. In the Ituri corridor of the north-east extreme, gold produced in the region of Bafwasende, Buta and Ituri provinces is transported to Bunia and then on to Kampala and Nairobi. In the far-north corridor, the gold produced in Beni territory, Lubero territory and the northern part of Walikale territory goes either to the city of Butembo or the city of Kirumba, closer to Lake Albert, and then to Kampala or Nairobi. In the Little North corridor, the gold coming from the north of Maniema territory, including Lubutu, from Walikale territory and Masisi passes through the city of Goma to be transported to Kigali or Kampala. In the Bukavu corridor, the gold produced in the Walungu, Mwenga and Shabunda territories in South Kivu passes through the city of Bukavu and is then transported to Kigali or Bujumbura. In the Uvira corridor, gold produced in the territory of Uvira and in the territory of Fizi passes through the city of Uvira to be transported to the city of Bujumbura in Burundi. In the Baraka corridor, gold produced in Fizi territory and in and around the Itombwe reserve in Mwenga territory is transported to Baraka to be brought to Kigoma in Tanzania and then to Dar es Salaam. In the Kalemie corridor, gold from south Maniema and Tanganyika province is brought to the city of Kalemie and then to Dar es Salaam via Kigoma.

As to the link between gold production and exportation by ICGLR member countries, the situation described above gives rise to an extremely unbalanced relationship between gold production and export statistics at the regional level. Taking just the publicly available data, here is what emerges.

In 2018, Uganda officially produced 12 kilograms of gold and exported 12 tons — 25 tons in 2019. In 2019, Rwanda exported 5 tons of gold, but there is no data on the country's gold production. In 2018, Burundi produced 598 kilograms and exported 1,112.49 kilograms. Unfortunately, Tanzania does not disclose any statistical data on gold production and exportation on its territory.

Turning to analysis and forecasts, in view of the situation presented above, the solution lies in the implementation of responsible supply chains that respect due diligence and ensure the traceability of gold in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In order to achieve that goal, we must overcome the following challenges: first, the lack of political will at the level of the major actors in the Great Lakes region conflict, including Rwanda and Uganda; secondly, the context of the gold trade in the region and in the world; and, thirdly, the relationship between the availability and value of gold — low availability results in high prices, which incentivizes smuggling.

It should be noted that the export of large quantities of gold from Uganda, Rwanda and other ICGLR countries violates resolution 1952 (2010), the guidelines of the OECD, as well as the requirements of the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism for minerals.

From that perspective, it will be very difficult for the United Nations to achieve a sustainable easing of tensions in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as long as armed groups continue to play the main role in the extraction and trading of gold in the region. As to the pathways towards a solution to put an end to this situation, we must adopt a holistic approach on three levels.

First, at the national level, the export tax rate for the mining and marketing of artisanal gold must be lowered; secondly, justice mechanisms must hold accountable the national and foreign gold traffickers involved in the illicit gold trade; thirdly, the Central Bank of the Congo must purchase artisanal gold; and, fourthly, responsible supply chains must be established for artisanal gold.

At the regional level, a mine geophysical footprint analysis must be integrated into the ICGLR certification of origin mechanism.

At the international level, actors involved in the illicit trafficking of gold in eastern must be sanctioned.

In conclusion, it is time for the United Nations community to speak with one voice and act accordingly so that those who benefit from the illicit gold trade in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo understand that this region needs peace and that gold can be traded in other ways without the daily shedding of innocent blood.

Annex III

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve

We would like to thank Special Representative Zerrougui and Mr. Usseni for their insightful briefings. They clearly attest to the usefulness of regular discussions on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), especially at this critical juncture of a worsened humanitarian situation and a quickly approaching deadline for further MONUSCO transitioning.

We also want to seize this opportunity to make a couple of points. First of all, we are concerned with the overall humanitarian situation. The Secretary-General most recent report on this issue (S/2020/554) mentions an estimated 25.6 million people in need of assistance and 5.5 million individuals being internally displaced. It also refers to recent negative developments, including displacement in Ituri, severe flooding across several eastern provinces, the re-emergence of the Ebola virus and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The humanitarian crisis is compounded by the ongoing measles and cholera epidemics, which have unfortunately claimed even more victims than the combined death toll of the Ebola and coronavirus epidemics. Moreover, if not properly handled, the escalating violence in Ituri may degrade the situation even further.

It is therefore essential to fully support the 2020 humanitarian response plan and the new national COVID-19 multisectoral humanitarian response plan. In that regard, Belgium and its European Union partners, including France, have taken the lead, as attested by our recent humanitarian flights to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Secondly, our short-term concerns should not blur the fact that we, collectively, need to keep working on a realistic, conditions-based and progressive transfer of MONUSCO's tasks to the Congolese authorities in the years ahead. In that regard, we note that several factors have impeded the development of a joint strategy and that detailed discussions with the Government have yet to begin.

However, MONUSCO's exit benchmarks are due by 20 October. We therefore welcome the report's repeated recommendations to deal with this issue as a matter of national priority. National ownership of security sector reform and a vision on the implementation thereof will need to be at the heart the process.

Moreover, it remains essential that the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade have the means and political willingness to complete its respective tasks. The recommendations of the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*, should therefore be fully and unabatedly implemented.

Thirdly, the development of MONUSCO's progressive exit strategy should go hand in hand with adequate attention to counter the root causes of conflict, including the illegal exploitation of natural resources. We therefore highly welcome Mr. Usseni's interesting briefing today. We also intend to organize an Arria Formula meeting on this topic in July, in cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States and South Africa. The illegal exploitation of natural resources has been recognized as one of the main underlying causes and effects of conflict in the Great Lakes region. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the illegal exploitation of gold, coltan and other resources has fuelled conflict for more than 20 years, involving a wide variety of national, regional and international State and non-State actors. We are also convinced that the ongoing development of a new United Nations regional strategy for the Great Lakes would provide a good opportunity for further and deeper exchanges on this topic.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

Allow me to express once again our deepest condolences to the Indonesian delegation and to the families of the fallen peacekeeper in the attack on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) a few days ago. We hope for the swift recovery of the wounded soldier and expect that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

We thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui for her briefing and Mr. Jamal Usseni for his valuable information and leadership in the fight against illicit mineral trafficking in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Dominican Republic is pleased that, despite tensions in the political dynamics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the main actors have supported the efforts to contain the impact and spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). However, we are concerned that, in addition to the resulting health emergency and economic imbalance, the pandemic also affects diplomatic activities aimed at strengthening regional unity, as well as the search for peaceful solutions to the border dispute between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia.

The presence of troops from both countries in their respective border territories and the death of several soldiers as a result of clashes makes for a sensitive situation that could quickly devolve, with serious consequences. In that regard, we thank the Southern African Development Community for accepting to mediate, and, taking advantage of the restated willingness of both States to find a solution through diplomatic channels, we call for preventive and peaceful conflict-resolution measures.

The constant level of violence and insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, triggered by confrontations, looting, kidnappings and ambushes by the Allied Democratic Forces and other armed groups against the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO, is very disturbing. It has resulted in ongoing deaths and violence against authorities and innocent civilians, including women and children, who are disproportionately affected.

The Dominican Republic deplores and condemns those attacks and calls for the continued strengthening of MONUSCO's intelligence systems and the FARDC's resources, with a stronger and more coordinated joint strategy to more effectively and efficiently cope with and neutralize the armed groups while minimizing casualties.

Those measures, in turn, would also help prevent other forms of violence exacerbated by the armed groups such as inter-ethnic and intercommunal clashes and human rights violations, including extrajudicial or summary executions and considerable conflict-related sexual violence.

In that regard, it is also essential to continue working with the Government to develop a comprehensive strategy to definitively eradicate the abominable abuses against children and conflict-related sexual violence.

Due to the constant displacement of civilian populations, the aftermath of violence intensifies the humanitarian crisis. An estimated 25.6 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are in need of assistance, and 5.5 million are internally displaced and living in deplorable conditions. Those vulnerabilities are multiplied by the recurrence of deadly floods that destroy homes, farmland and basic infrastructure. They are further overwhelmed by several simultaneous health emergencies in the form of the Ebola virus, the measles outbreak and the

current COVID-19 pandemic. In that context, we celebrate that the World Health Organization declared the end of the Ebola virus in the eastern part of the country.

In conclusion, we thank MONUSCO for its efforts in helping the Congolese deal with these difficult health and safety circumstances. We also commend the arrest of Trésor Mputu Kankonde, implicated in the murder of two United Nations experts, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp.

In that respect, the Dominican Republic requests that the Under-Secretary-General, as an extraordinary measure, extend the contract of the United Nations experts assigned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo follow-up mechanism by six months. These experts already have the case knowledge and experience to conclude it and bring all perpetrators to justice.

Despite all efforts, the Democratic Republic of the Congo faces security, health and economic challenges, as well as a lack of development. Those, compounded by the impact of COVID-19, could trigger a socioeconomic crisis with regional effects. In that context, the Dominican Republic reiterates the need for an urgent and coordinated regional and global strategy in response to the current and post-COVID-19 challenges.

Only with comprehensive prevention, resolution and development strategies can we bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I thank the President for convening today's meeting. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Jamal Usseni Jamael and Special Representative Leila Zerrougui for their valuable insights.

I would like to extend my condolences to Indonesia for the casualties it suffered in the recent attack against peacekeepers in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and to others who have paid the greatest price while working to establish peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Despite a stable political situation, peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains elusive. The Allied Democratic Forces have carried out dozens of attacks, which have left over 100 people dead, mostly civilians. Several other groups have also increased their attacks in Kivu, including the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové, whose leader, Guidon Mwissa, remains a fugitive at large. In Ituri, attacks against civilians and security forces by the Lendu have claimed hundreds of lives.

I would like to commend MONUSCO for its quick reaction to these conflicts, which has undoubtedly saved many lives. I also understand that the cooperation between MONUSCO and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo has been steadily improving, which will hopefully help save even more lives in future. It is also good to hear that, despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), there has been progress with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. I hope that the pandemic will not stop provincial and national initiatives on DDR, which are necessary to ensuring that former combatants remain former combatants.

In addition to the security situation, I remain most concerned over the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The violence of armed groups during the first three months of 2020 has been accompanied by some 2,000 human rights violations and abuses, including cases of sexual and gender-based violence. The fact that the Congolese security forces perpetrated many of these acts remains a significant problem. Accountability for such violations and abuses must be established in order to avoid the prevalence of a culture of impunity and build trust in the country's security forces. Strengthening the rule of law and justice institutions is a critical component of efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. MONUSCO's assistance in the investigation and prosecution of those who need to be held to account is very welcome, as is the assistance towards security sector reform.

The challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo are numerous and diverse: from armed-group violence and the illicit export of minerals to floods, the Ebola virus disease and now COVID-19.

I would like to conclude by commending MONUSCO, the Congolese authorities and all partners for their continued commitment to establishing peace in the country.

Annex VI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière

I thank Ms. Zerrougui and Mr. Usseni Jamael for their briefings.

I take this opportunity to address my deepest condolences to Indonesia and its Ambassador after the tragic death of its peacekeeper.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo still faces many challenges. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is helping, but the Mission cannot replace the action of the Congolese authorities. The country's long-term stability will depend on their ability to develop the capacity to bring security and stability to the citizens of the Democratic Republic.

The election of President Tshilombo Tshisekedi has raised prospects that are encouraging. Progress is being made on the fight against corruption, on the implementation of certain aspects of the Government's programme and on reconciliation.

On the security front, some regions are entering a post-conflict phase, and the focus must now be put on State-building and development to consolidate their stability. In these regions, the Congolese authorities can take over from MONUSCO, enabling the Mission to refocus its efforts on the regions that are still suffering from the actions of Congolese and foreign armed groups, intercommunal violence, the plundering of natural resources and numerous human rights violations perpetrated against civilian populations, particularly women and children.

In these regions, a determined commitment by the national and provincial authorities is necessary, so that, beyond the military aspect, a socioeconomic response can be provided to address the root causes of conflict. This is the case in Ituri, where the re-emergence of a 20-year-old conflict illustrates the long-term risks to not addressing structural causes. As Mr. Usseni Jamael has shown us, that also requires strong action to stop the illicit exploitation and export of natural resources. France calls on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the region to act decisively on this issue.

On the health and humanitarian front, the situation remains worrisome because of the multiplicity of ongoing epidemics. The Government is engaging in voluntary action in this area and can count on France's support, as demonstrated by the visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, on 8 and 9 June.

These encouraging prospects and persistent challenges must be taken into account in the establishment of a joint road map between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations towards an exit for MONUSCO. This work must be completed as soon as possible. France encourages the Congolese authorities to commit themselves fully to this exercise.

In the meantime, the constant improvement of MONUSCO's performance remains crucial. In particular, an ambitious reform of the Intervention Brigade is critical. Rapid progress must be made in this regard, and the commitment of the contributing countries is necessary to that end. We owe it to the populations that are suffering every day from attacks by armed groups.

Annex VII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Juergen Schulz

I would like to express Germany's deepest condolences to the Government of Indonesia and the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life in the ambush on 22 June. The incident tragically demonstrates the level of persisting violence.

We remain extremely concerned about the deteriorating situation in the east and the increasing activities of armed groups, especially in North Kivu and Ituri. Germany agrees with the Secretary-General, who, in his report (S/2020/554), observes that a military-only strategy will not lead to lasting stability.

We are particularly concerned about the high number of human rights violations, most notably sexual and gender-based violence. Although the number of such violations committed by State security actors has decreased, the overall high numbers of human rights violations remains alarming.

The dire humanitarian situation continues to hit the most vulnerable groups — women, children and internally displaced people — the hardest. Given that some 300,000 new internally displaced persons have arrived since the beginning of the year in Ituri alone, the protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance must remain the top priority. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. We urge all armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to adhere this call.

We would like to reiterate Germany's support for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui. MONUSCO remains essential in supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The situation has become even more challenging due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the unsatisfactory security situation. We commend Special Representative Zerrougui and the Mission for adapting to the new conditions on the ground. We encourage the Mission to further enhance its abilities in the country to implement the recommendations made in the report by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz and to put a special focus on fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians.

On the reconfiguration of MONUSCO, we understand the difficulties posed by COVID-19. Still, it remains important to ensure national ownership in developing benchmarks. These benchmarks must be realistic if we want to achieve a sustainable and conditions-based reconfiguration.

COVID-19 has a worrisome impact on the security, socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. For instance, due to limited capacities, as vaccination rates are low and decreasing, so the vulnerability of children to such diseases as polio, measles and yellow fever is increasing. This shows that international support and solidarity is urgently needed.

As part of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, Germany has already provided €300 million in additional funds for COVID-19-related humanitarian assistance, and is currently the fourth-largest donor to the Plan. The Plan includes a regional response plan and a humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, Germany is very positively disposed towards providing support to MONUSCO in the form of medical facilities through its Enable and Enhance Initiative.

We are concerned that the pandemic might undermine political, security and socioeconomic reforms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For this reason, it is important that the Government continue on its path of reform, especially in terms of the security sector, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the justice sector. The population needs a new perspective: powerful democratic institutions, a strengthened rule of law and the fight against impunity and corruption are key to achieving sustainable peace, stability and development.

Before concluding, let me also say a word about regional cooperation. Against the background of severe security, socioeconomic, health and humanitarian challenges, such cooperation is absolutely crucial. Supply networks empowering armed groups must be cut off, and illicit war economies must be eliminated. But regional collaboration creates new legal and sustainable opportunities for development and economic growth. In this context, Mr. Usseni Jamael's assessment is very important: fighting the illicit trafficking in minerals and transforming such activities into legitimate sources of revenue are an essential part of the reform process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

At the outset, allow me to thank the briefers — the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, and the Director of civil society organization Save Act Mine, Mr. Jamal Usseni Jamael.

I will focus my comments on three points. But before I begin, allow me to thank the Special Representative, the United Nations and members of the Security Council for the support and the kind words of sympathy they offered for the fallen Indonesian peacekeeper from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

It is a sad time for us in Indonesia, as we had never had a casualty from an attack since we started joining United Nations peacekeeping missions in 1957. In our 63-year course of services to the United Nations, we have contributed more than 44,800 troops, and this is the first time we have experienced a fatality as the result of an attack. The most difficult and painful task that I have ever had to fulfil in my years-long service as an Indonesian Ambassador to the United Nations is to write a personal letter to the family of the fallen, expressing our condolences. I will convey all the messages of condolences I have received from Council members to my Government and to the family of the fallen peacekeeper, as well as to the other peacekeeper who, wounded in the incident, is recuperating.

The fallen Indonesian peacekeeper was an engineer charged with building a bridge near Beni in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was there to strengthen the local infrastructure and support the livelihoods of the people in the eastern part of the country. Just like us, he was doing his job under the banner of United Nations idealism with a view to saving and improving the lives of the Congolese.

I pay tribute to all other fallen Blue Helmets who have served with honour in MONUSCO and in other United Nations missions all over the world and made the ultimate sacrifice for global peace and security. We shall never forget their service.

This tragedy brings me to my first point, which is the need to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. Increasing numbers of attacks by such armed groups as the Allied Democratic Forces have claimed numerous civilian lives, and now they have claimed the life of a peacekeeper. This was the first casualty in MONUSCO from attacks in two years. To be able to carry out its mandate of protecting civilians, MONUSCO needs to first protect itself.

We have heard that attacks directed against peacekeepers in United Nations peacekeeping missions have increased across the board. This is indeed worrisome, since United Nations peacekeeping missions are the face of the Organization on the ground. Attacks on its peacekeepers are an attack on the United Nations itself.

It is time for us to seriously look at our peacekeeping efforts and increase professionalism and performance, as well as funding and capacity. The safety and security of peacekeepers remains high on Indonesia's list of priorities. We will continue our efforts aimed at saving lives and protecting civilians through community engagement, winning the hearts and minds of the people and building their trust. Our commitment has helped the Mission's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, including facilitating the surrender of more than 300 former combatants and more than 50 weapons.

Secondly, we need to maintain the momentum of peace that began in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year. The Central African and the Great

Lakes regions have been positively affected by the peaceful transfer of power in the country in 2019. This is indeed an opportunity that should not be missed. We call for all partners to use this momentum to strengthen their support and assistance to the Democratic Republic.

Nevertheless, having heard the Special Representative's briefing just now, we are deeply concerned at the rise of intercommunal conflicts, the proliferation of militias and armed groups, the killing of civilians and the use of hate speech. We concur with her assertions that efforts to de-soldier communities from militias is vital if we are to tackle the escalation of tensions. We condemn all attacks against innocent civilians.

We need to enhance efforts to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues on a path of peace so that its people may experience peace, stability and prosperity. To that end, we recognize the role that the country's neighbours and regional organizations have to play to help maintain this peaceful climate.

Thirdly, we need to increase humanitarian assistance in the country. We join the Secretary-General in commending the Congolese Government for taking swift and decisive action to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Nevertheless, we also realize that the pandemic's socioeconomic impact on the country complicates the efforts to address the political, developmental and humanitarian challenges facing the country. The re-emergence of the Ebola virus disease has also presented the country with additional public-health challenges.

I join the call of the Secretary-General for armed groups to lay down their weapons so that efforts to combat these public health challenges can continue unimpeded. We also call for all partners to increase their humanitarian support for the country. We should ensure that our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue on the path of peace. Indonesia will continue to support efforts to this end with its own sons and daughters on the ground.

Annex IX**Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

We thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for her informative briefing. We also thank Mr. Jamal Usseni Jamael, civil society representative, for the information he provided.

Let me start by expressing our sincere condolences to Indonesia for the attack on a MONUSCO patrol near Beni earlier this week, during which an Indonesian peacekeeper was killed and another was wounded. We ask our dear friends to accept our words of sympathy.

We have carefully studied the latest Secretary-General's report on MONUSCO (S/2020/554) and have to admit with regret that, despite the coronavirus, violence in the eastern provinces has not subsided. On the contrary, in an apparent refusal to adhere to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, the Allied Democratic Forces and other armed groups seem to be taking full advantage of the pandemic to step up their attacks against Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and civilians.

Particularly concerning is the deteriorating security situation in Ituri province, where the Lendu and Hema conflict, as well as the increased activity of armed groups, are seeing a new surge with a heavy toll on the local population. The situation in Ituri clearly proves the need to broaden support to the disenfranchised combatants under the framework of the appropriate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. A national framework policy on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, if prepared, could also play a helpful role.

We commend the measures taken by the FARDC and MONUSCO with a view to strengthening their presence in Ituri and deepening coordination in the province. We call upon Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zerrougui to continue her good offices with the aim of facilitating the search for a sustainable solution to the situation in the eastern provinces.

In these circumstances, we find it crucially important that, despite persisting tensions, members of the country's ruling coalition continue to resolve their differences through dialogue and that the coexistence model remain in place. We urge both blocks of the coalition to continue to work along those lines. We all need to support the Kabila-Tshisekedi tandem for the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We note that the work on a joint strategy for a phased, responsible exit by MONUSCO has slowed down during the pandemic. We should not, however, overdramatize that. We hope that the Mission will soon be able to resume consultations with Kinshasa. All decisions on the exit strategy should be made while taking into account the situation on the ground and carefully considering the priorities of Kinshasa, States of the region and troop-contributing countries.

We also note that MONUSCO has started implementing the recommendations contained in the report of retired Lieutenant General Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*. We would like to recall our position on the document. In principle, we are supportive of the measures being taken to strengthen coordination between peacekeepers and FARDC and enhance the operational capacity of the Force Intervention Brigade. We continue to believe, however, that cooperation on intelligence-sharing should be carried out in strict compliance

with the peacekeeping principles and the Security Council's mandate. We urge the peacekeepers to focus on military reconnaissance and exercise more caution while using other forms of intelligence, especially those relying on special methods of obtaining information.

To conclude, I would like to reassure the participants that the Russian Federation, both as a permanent member of the Council and as a member of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, will continue contributing to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the stabilization of the overall situation in the Great Lakes region.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Council, Tunisia, South Africa and the Niger, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important and timely meeting on the Democratic Republic of Congo. We would also like to thank and commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in that country and the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2020/554). Similarly, we thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO, Leila Zerrougui, for her comprehensive briefing.

We recognize the encouraging political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo despite the existing security and humanitarian challenges. Our delegations commend the governing coalition's continued commitment to resolving their differences through dialogue. We are fully convinced that a constructive dialogue among all Congolese is required for the realization of their national priorities. In this regard, the African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines echo the sentiments of the Secretary-General that dialogue remains the only solution to resolve differences.

On the security front, our delegations are concerned by the continued instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo owing to the destabilizing activities of armed groups and persistent intercommunal tensions. We therefore underscore the centrality of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region as a long-term solution to create stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider region. Our delegations also emphasize the importance of MONUSCO's role in stabilizing eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and recognize the efforts of the Force Intervention Brigade in addressing the threat posed by the armed groups. The Force Intervention Brigade requires the continued support of the Council in this regard and needs to be fully capacitated in order to remain effective in addressing the threat against the civilian population in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines condemn all violent attacks on civilians and MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which often result in casualties, and call for MONUSCO to be more responsive overall to the requirements to fulfil its protection of civilians mandate and to effectively address such attacks.

In relation to the recent attacks against MONUSCO, we express our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased peacekeeper and to the Indonesian authorities. We also wish the injured peacekeeper a speedy recovery. In this connection, our delegations reiterate calls on the international community and partners to mobilize the necessary resources to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its efforts to strengthen its institutions and to advance the security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes. In that regard, we call on the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the country's partners to include a community-based approach in the SSR and DDR priorities, especially as relates to the reintegration of demobilized combatants.

On the humanitarian situation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to experience a worrying humanitarian crisis, and the coronavirus

disease pandemic is exacerbating the situation. The unintended consequences of the pandemic response have increased vulnerabilities to other public health issues, while the re-emergence of Ebola virus cases are also a cause for concern, as they delay the progress of the important stabilization work by MONUSCO and other partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Nevertheless, we commend the ongoing swift response and decisive efforts undertaken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO, other United Nations agencies, the African Union and the World Health Organization. Our delegations call for sustained international support to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to mitigate the negative impact of these diseases on its people and economy. We also emphasize the need for flexible financial arrangements to bolster development efforts within the country, in line with national priorities and in accordance with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Turning to the situation in the region, our delegations wish to underline the importance of fostering strong and effective regional relations and cooperation and, in that context, wish to commend President Tshisekedi for his continued outreach to the regional Heads of State. We support the continued commitment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo in achieving sustainable peace, security and stability. SADC's response to recent calls by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia to help mediate the border issue attests to that commitment. Furthermore, our delegations are encouraged by the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations and by their undertaking to continue engaging in support of the consolidation of stability and democratic governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also commend the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region for its efforts, alongside MONUSCO, in pursuing a regional strategy to address the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The illicit extraction and trade of minerals remains a major source of revenue that sustains armed group activity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore, we commend the recent efforts of Member States of the region to improve traceability in the gold sector, namely, Rwanda's adoption of a national certification mechanism and Burundi and Tanzania's implementation of domestic certification processes following the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in accordance with the Lusaka Declaration. Our delegations encourage further efforts of the regional and international partners to tackle illegal supply chains.

Finally, our delegations commend the United Nations, MONUSCO, troop-contributing countries, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and international partners for their commitment and efforts to stabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo and protect civilians from ongoing threats despite the prevailing challenges. It is our considered view that any drawdown of MONUSCO should be based on the positive evolution of the situation on the ground for the handover of MONUSCO tasks to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are of the firm view that it is imperative for the international community — through the African Union, the United Nations and international partners — to continue to maintain solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide the necessary political, financial and other support in an effort to ensure that there is no reversal of the gains made thus far.

Annex XI**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zerrougui and our briefers today.

At the outset, I would like to offer the United Kingdom's condolences following the death of the Indonesian peacekeeper during the attack on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) on 22 June. Our hearts go out to the families Ambassador Djani wrote to. Nothing can soften the blow or the anguish they feel, but the thoughts of the whole Council are with them. I agree with Ambassador Djani that we should redouble our efforts regarding the protection of our peacekeepers. We also reiterate our condemnation, as a Council, of the senseless attack and call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

We welcome the response of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak and commend MONUSCO for its support in responding to the pandemic. It is, however, concerning that COVID-19 preventative measures are hindering humanitarian access. Reallocation of resources and expertise is increasing the vulnerability to other health issues, such as Ebola and measles, of which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently dealing with the world's largest outbreak. We recognize that the secondary efforts concerning COVID-19 will also hit the Democratic Republic of the Congo hard, requiring support to address the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. That will require a unified response from the political class of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as support from the international community.

The United Kingdom remains a committed development partner and friend to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people. In 2019, the United Kingdom was the second largest donor, providing more than \$99 million in humanitarian appeals. COVID-19 poses a risk not only to health but also to the progress made on stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We remain concerned about the overall security environment, in particular the deterioration in the security situation in Ituri, where 333 civilians were killed between March and May.

We are disappointed that no armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have responded to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and therefore echo that call and urge all armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to lay down their weapons.

In addition to tackling the threat armed groups pose to civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sustained efforts must be undertaken to cut the revenue streams that enable them to operate. We heard a bit about this again today. In that regard, we commend the work of organizations such as Save Act Mine and call for the strengthening of regional efforts to address illegal cross-border trade in national natural resources.

There has been important progress at the regional level in the past year. It is critical to the stability of the Great Lakes region — in particular, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo — that the momentum is not lost and that States resolve their differences through diplomatic efforts. In this regard, we are concerned by the increasing tension at the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Zambia border and urge a resolution to be found through diplomatic channels.

We must not lose sight of the vital work that is still needed to put an end to instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the difficult circumstances posed by COVID-19, we commend the continuation of MONUSCO's operations, and the UK welcomes the progress made to review and tailor protection of civilian strategies to each province where MONUSCO is present. Delivering protection of civilians on the ground remains challenging, and we are alarmed by the number of civilian deaths during this reporting period. We urge MONUSCO and its troop-contributing countries to pursue the reforms set out in the report *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers* by retired Lieutenant General Santos Cruz and to promptly implement the necessary improvements to its Force Intervention Brigade.

We welcome the continuation of closer working and coordination between the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and MONUSCO to address the security challenges in the region. We encourage them to continue to deepen their cooperation in order to improve civilian protection.

In the spirit of cooperation, we call on the Government and MONUSCO to resume, as soon as possible, the vital initiatives that have been paused due to COVID-19. In particular, we call for the resumption of the Government's engagement with MONUSCO on security sector reform. We also call for the prompt resumption of discussions between the Government and MONUSCO on the Mission's exit strategy, as well as the development of clear benchmarks for the transition of the United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In concluding, let me underline what the United Kingdom believes to be the top priorities for MONUSCO in the coming months, namely, to continue to support the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of COVID-19; to implement the Santos Cruz report recommendations; to work on the reform of the Force Intervention Brigade; and the joint development by the Government and MONUSCO of the Mission's exit strategy. We will be monitoring those issues closely and hope to see progress ahead of MONUSCO's mandate renewal later this year.

Annex XII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Pham Hai Anh**

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and Jamal Usseni for their briefings.

My delegation strongly condemns the recent attack on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) that resulted in the death of a peacekeeper and injured another. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of the victim, the Government of Indonesia and MONUSCO. On this occasion, we reiterate the vital importance of ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel in accordance with resolution 2518 (2020).

This aforementioned incident, among others, shows how volatile the security situation still is in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, accordingly, how insecure the livelihood of millions of civilians is.

We remain gravely concerned over the deterioration of the security situation in several parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in Ituri province, where over 300 civilians have been killed in the past three months and 300,000 have been displaced since the beginning of the year. Continuing violence perpetrated by various armed groups and intercommunal clashes are hampering our core mandate of protecting civilians on the ground.

On a positive note, we welcome the determination of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in maintaining a favourable political climate, as well as improving relations and promoting reconciliation among countries of the region. We commend the swift action of the Government to minimize the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This is an important step to avoid major impacts to the challenging socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the country.

In light of the current situation, we would like to make the following observations.

First, apart from military measures that are being undertaken, my delegation would like to stress the importance of working towards a sustained solution to the continuing instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A comprehensive approach should include promoting dialogue and mediation for the sake of reconciliation and tolerance, and strengthening State authority in different conflict areas. It is also important to lay emphasis on the enhancement of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, as well as those for security sector reform.

Secondly, we have always had confidence in the contribution of regional cooperation. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been showing practical outcomes. We praise the efforts of signatory countries and the guarantors of this framework agreement. Its full implementation is crucial to eliminating threats posed by armed groups and to settling the issues of the illicit exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and other cross-border illegal activities.

Thirdly, addressing the root causes of instability, including those that fuel intercommunal conflicts, demands efforts to improve the livelihoods of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are deeply worried about the high number of people in need of assistance across the Democratic Republic of the Congo

and the plight of millions of internally displaced persons and refugees. The already dire humanitarian situation continues to be aggravated by the current uncertain security situation in the east, the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-emergence of Ebola. We therefore call for greater support from the international community for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which should also anticipate the response to and recovery from COVID-19.

Last but not least, we fully support the important role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MONUSCO towards peace and stability for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also welcome the good partnership between the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government and MONUSCO.

Given the current volatile security situation, we feel that there is a pressing need for the formulation of a most comprehensive and prudent set of benchmarks for the MONUSCO exit strategy so as to avoid an unwanted relapse.
