



Security Council

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Letter dated 8 October 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 a briefing 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, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa (on behalf of the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam in connection with the video teleconference on “The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo” convened on Tuesday, 6 October 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to 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 briefing and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia
President of the Security Council



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

I am grateful for this opportunity to update the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in conjunction with the issuance of the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/919).

My briefing today will touch on the continuing political tensions in the country the progress being made on the Mission's transition, and efforts to pursue a comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians.

At the outset, I wish to emphasize that, notwithstanding the pandemic, MONUSCO has successfully maintained continuity of operations and mandate delivery by introducing a range of measures and procedures that have helped to ensure that the Mission is not a vector of transmission for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Among other things, the Mission enhanced its internal screening and treatment capacity in order not to place an additional burden on the local medical system. A temporary halt was placed on troop rotations and staff returning from abroad were required to self-quarantine. Movements were also temporarily halted between Kinshasa, where the outbreak commenced, and the provinces where the Mission's operations are concentrated.

Although MONUSCO's civilian and uniformed personnel had their professionalism and patience of sorely tested during this difficult period, they continued to carry out the Mission's work, demonstrating their adherence to United Nations values.

In this context, I wish to reiterate my appreciation to the troop- and police-contributing countries of MONUSCO for their flexibility, particularly concerning the temporary halt on troop rotations, and to all Mission personnel, civilian and uniformed, for their unwavering professionalism and dedication during this time of great uncertainty. I am pleased to report that rotations have resumed and that all civilian personnel are present at their duty stations and working under appropriately flexible arrangements.

In my previous briefings to the Security Council, I have underlined the dual nature of the current political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the one hand, I believe that, despite its internal differences, the political class accepts and even appreciates the opportunities offered by the ruling coalition between Cap pour le Changement and Front commun pour le Congo. On the other hand, there are persistent tensions between the members of the coalition that have threatened to undermine what has come to represent a key pillar on which the country's long-term stabilization rests.

To this challenge we must now add another — the risk that politicking and positioning ahead of the 2023 elections will become the overriding focus, to the exclusion of the governance reforms and stabilization measures that the country needs. The current political dispensation remains fragile and could yet unravel. At the same time, it has the potential to sustain and advance the gains that have already been made, should all actors work towards this goal. It is as much a learning process for the members of the ruling coalition — who were political opponents and must now overcome their differences and build trust among one another — as it is for the

opposition and civil society, who must learn to navigate a new political landscape and work to ensure that the peaceful transfer of power becomes a routine occurrence.

In this context, I have spared no effort in the exercise of my good offices. I continue to meet regularly with stakeholders from across the political spectrum, both inside and outside of Government, to remind them of the delicate juncture at which the country finds itself and urge them to focus on implementing the reforms needed to address the pressing needs of the population and place the country on the path to long-term stability and sustainable development. In doing so, I have sought to impress upon all my interlocutors that there is a difference between normal political competition and behaviour that undermines the stability of the country.

The Security Council will soon receive the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO. I am pleased to report that fruitful discussions are ongoing with the Government at the most senior levels to achieve a common understanding of the way forward. President Tshisekedi has underlined his wish for a gradual transition and a responsible exit of MONUSCO. He has stressed that this should be undertaken through a progressive transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to the Government, in coordination with the United Nations country team.

Given the complexity of the conflict environment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the joint strategy is based on a series of region-specific strategies, tailored to the particular needs of the six provinces, outside of Kinshasa, where the Mission is still present. There is agreement with the Government that in the coming years, MONUSCO will gradually consolidate its footprint in the three provinces where active conflict persists — namely, North and South Kivu and Ituri — while pursuing its work of good offices and institutional strengthening at the national level. As part of this process, the Mission should be able to withdraw from the Kasai region, which is in a phase of post-conflict consolidation, relatively soon. In Tanganyika, recent improvements in the security situation should enable the Mission to reduce its military footprint, despite continued domestic armed group activity in the north and low-level inter-community conflict in some areas.

I have already touched on the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is described in detail in the report of the Secretary-General. I have consistently condemned the serious abuses and violations that continue to be committed against civilians. MONUSCO is working closely with the Government and the Congolese security forces to provide comprehensive responses in all areas affected by armed group violence.

At the core of its current activities, the Mission remains focused on improving the implementation of its protection of civilians mandate, including by enhancing the performance of its peacekeepers and harnessing the technological capabilities at its disposal, such as unarmed aerial systems. The Mission will continue to work closely with the Congolese military and police to strengthen their ability to protect the civilians in the remaining areas of the country affected by insecurity.

At the same time, it is important to understand that the protection of civilians goes well beyond the conduct of military operations. This is why the Mission is working with the Congolese authorities and local communities, civil society, women's organizations and young people as part of an integrated approach that combines support to community reconciliation, strengthening of the justice system, professionalization of the security forces, and monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses. MONUSCO is also working hand-in-hand with the United Nations country team, the World Bank, the Peacebuilding Fund and other multilateral and bilateral partners to develop and implement a range of programmes designed to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the population and set the country on the path to sustainable development.

In this context, I wish to express deep concern over recent reports of attacks — including killings and kidnappings — on humanitarian actors trying to provide relief to populations affected by conflict. I urge all stakeholders to enable humanitarian access to populations in need and recall that resolution 2417 (2018) condemns unlawful denial of humanitarian access to civilian populations.

The stabilization of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend to a large extent on progress made towards the dismantling of armed groups and the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants into their communities. It is vital, in this context, that we avoid repeating the experiences of the past, where large numbers of ex-combatants were granted amnesty and integrated into the Congolese security forces, undermining their professionalism, discipline and unity of command. The prospect of obtaining a rank in the Congolese security forces was an incentive to form an armed group, resulting in a deadly cycle of *recyclage*, the consequences of which are still being felt today.

I have continuously emphasized the need to break this cycle and implement a programme of community reintegration that seeks to build the resilience of communities receiving ex-combatants and provide for their legitimate needs, while removing the incentive to form and join armed groups. I believe that this is one of the most urgent priorities facing the country today, and it is one on which I continue to engage with the Congolese authorities at the national and provincial levels, as well as interested donors. I call on the Council to throw its full weight behind efforts to foster this new, community-based approach to reintegration, which represents a clear break with the failed policies of the past.

MONUSCO remains committed to exploiting synergies with other United Nations presences in the Great Lakes. In particular, the Mission continues to work closely with the Office of the Special Envoy on a range of issues, including the promotion of non-military measures to tackle the threat posed by armed groups, the importance of which I have already emphasized, and the development of the United Nations regional strategy. The Mission is also committed to working closely with the African Union, the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community, all of which play an essential role in promoting peace and development in the subregion.

To conclude, as I have stated before, the elections of 2018 and resulting peaceful transfer of power were a historic turning point that has made it possible to start envisaging MONUSCO's progressive drawdown and withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Serious challenges remain and there is clearly much work to be done to place the country on the path to long-term stability and long-term development. I therefore call on the Security Council to continue supporting MONUSCO in its efforts to help the Congolese Government and people preserve the gains made during the Mission's presence and create the conditions for its responsible exit.

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

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting and I also thank Special Representative Zerrougui and Ambassador Abarry for their valuable insights.

I would like to begin by commending the actions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) that have enabled the protection of civilians and the continuation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, despite the coronavirus disease pandemic and the increased violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Many armed groups have not responded to the call for a global ceasefire and continue their attacks. This violence will continue to require a rapid, robust and effective response from MONUSCO, in particular from its rapid reaction force and force intervention brigades, together with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUSCO is reporting a significant increase in the number of human rights abuses and violations, which reached 2,140 last quarter. This highlights the challenges facing the Mission and possible plans towards its exit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The gradual transfer of MONUSCO's responsibilities has to ensure that there are no setbacks in the progress made; it must not undermine the safety and security of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The development of the joint transition strategy and its benchmarks must be conducted together with the main humanitarian partners and other international and national civil society organizations. This would help ensure that the strategies and activities of various stakeholders are aligned, and that the activities supported by MONUSCO will not be disrupted. Strong cooperation with the Congolese authorities must tackle the large number of human rights violations, which remains a significant problem. Accountability for such violations must be established in order to avoid the prevalence of a culture of impunity and build trust in the country's security forces. Strengthening of rule-of-law and of justice institutions is a critical component of efforts addressing the root causes of conflict.

The challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain numerous and diverse: armed group violence and its links to the illicit trade of natural resources, floods and the Ebola virus disease, now in the west of the country, in addition to the pandemic.

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

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank Special Representative Leila Zerrougui and the Ambassador of the Niger for their interventions. I would like to emphasize three points.

First is the adaptation of our response to the persistent security challenges. Certain regions, such as the Kasais or Tanganyika, are entering a promising phase of stabilization. The Congolese authorities must continue to consolidate the progress that has been achieved in strengthening institutions and socioeconomic development in order to take over from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which has begun to disengage in these regions.

Other regions remain heavily affected by violence against civilians, particularly women and children, as well as against the security forces. Sexual violence persists. It is in these regions, in Ituri and the Kivus, that the Mission's efforts must be recentred to meet the conditions for its withdrawal when the time comes. Moreover, a regional approach remains indispensable, as the violence in the east is perpetrated by national as well as foreign armed groups.

The joint strategy being prepared with the Congolese authorities to allow for a progressive transfer of MONUSCO's tasks has to address the root causes of the conflicts. It will have to include clear and realistic indicators in terms of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and reinstallation of foreign armed groups, in terms of security sector reform, rule of law, and control of the exploitation of natural resources.

That brings me to my second point.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are on the rise, particularly in the east. The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose work I commend, can do more to address this — for example, by making additional designations. The development of a national strategy for the fight against impunity and the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms is essential. The Congolese authorities must also continue to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court.

The end of the tenth Ebola epidemic in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as of the measles outbreak, are major successes. Efforts must continue to combat the coronavirus disease, cholera and the Ebola epidemic that has broken out in the western part of the country. The threat of famine is a matter of particular concern. The Government knows that it can count on the full support of France, as evidenced by the European humanitarian airlift set up before the summer.

We must be fully vigilant with regard to the protection of hospitals and humanitarian personnel. I welcome the mobilization of MONUSCO to contribute to the safety of Dr. Mukwege and the Panzi clinic. Local protection capacities must be further strengthened.

Finally — and this is my third point — improving MONUSCO's action must remain at the centre of our attention in view of the renewal of its mandate. All possible measures must be taken to enable MONUSCO to attain its full operational capacity. An ambitious reform of the Force Intervention Brigade also remains indispensable.

Last December, the Council unanimously underlined the importance of improving the efficiency of the Brigade by assigning new staff officers and additional units. As President Tshilombo Tshisekedi recalled before the General Assembly (see A/75/PV.5), the Democratic Republic of the Congo supports the principle of an enhancement of the Brigade's operational capacity. We therefore encourage the Secretariat and the contributing countries to continue their discussions in order to swiftly achieve the implementation of the Council's decisions.

The Force Intervention Brigade played a major role in the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars in 2013 thanks to its offensive posture. It is that dynamism and agility that must be swiftly restored in order to protect civilians and neutralize armed groups. The full engagement of contributing countries is indispensable in that regard. We owe this to the Congolese State and to the population.

It is time for resolution 1325 (2000), whose twentieth anniversary we are celebrating this month, to become a reality for Congolese women and men. France, in its national capacity and within the Council, will continue to support the rights of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Resolution 2538 (2020) must also be operationally implemented within MONUSCO.

A new stage in the relationship between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations is taking shape. The long-term peace and stability of the country depend on it.

Annex IV**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter**

I would like to make a couple of points on the security situation and the human rights and humanitarian situation. We are concerned about the persistent levels of violence in North and South Kivu and Ituri. The activities of, and attacks by, armed groups, especially the Allied Democratic Forces, must stop. As a consequence, the protection of civilians remains a key challenge. We are glad to see some positive signals, such as a peace pledge in Mahagi territory in Ituri in August. The reported 8 per cent increase in human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, is of particular concern to us. Almost half of all human rights violations are attributable to State security activists. That number indicates a clear need for reform and for greater accountability.

The humanitarian situation continues to be alarming, with more than 25 million people depending on humanitarian aid. Once again women and children are being hit disproportionately hard. We urgently call on the international community to support the humanitarian response plan, which is dramatically underfunded at this stage. Germany has so far contributed approximately €70 million for humanitarian assistance measures in 2020, including response measures regarding Ebola and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Let me make some remarks on the political situation and reform efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Even if the country has navigated strikingly well through the Ebola epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic so far, the massive socioeconomic repercussions have to be dealt with. Therefore, we call on political actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage constructively, and we encourage the Government to continue its work on much-needed reforms in the security sector, the justice sector and the economy. It is important to focus on what needs to be done now. We should not only look towards the electoral year 2023. Strong democratic institutions and respect for the rule of law, for equal and meaningful participation of women in the fight against impunity and against corruption will be crucial.

Let me also say a couple of words on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), on the reconfiguration of Mission and on benchmarks. We reiterate Germany's support for MONUSCO. MONUSCO remains indispensable in supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular regarding the protection of civilians and in the east of the country. We encourage the Mission to continue in its reform process and to abide by resolution 2502 (2019), as well as the recommendations contained in the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers".

We note with concern that allegations of five cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by members of MONUSCO were recorded. We stress that these allegations must be properly investigated by troop- and police-contributing countries and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, respectively.

On the reconfiguration of MONUSCO, it is important to ensure national ownership in developing a joint strategy. We need a conditions-based reconfiguration and realistic benchmarks. Security-sector reform must be at the core of that process. The progress made should be secured and close links with new peacebuilding efforts should be allowed.

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

At the outset, allow me to thank the briefers, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Abdou Abarry.

Indonesia has been following the progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since we joined the Council in January 2019. We join the Secretary-General's call on all Congolese stakeholders to work together to continue laying the foundations for peace, stability and sustainable development.^[P] Allow me to touch on the following points.

First, the Great Lakes region has great potential for sustainable peace. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General explained, in order to sustain peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we need to work together on a range of issues in the region, including through the promotion of non-military measures to tackle the threat posed by armed groups, as well as community reintegration, which we need to explore further.

We need to maintain the momentum of peace that was started by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in January 2019. We call on all partners to use that momentum to enhance their support and assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

A silo mindset will no longer work. All of the United Nations system and its partners in the region should work together. We need to enhance efforts to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues on a peaceful path and that its people experience peace, stability and prosperity even beyond the 2023 elections. The role of neighbours and regional organizations is essential to help maintain that peaceful climate. Neighbours know best.

We welcome the efforts of Special Representative Zerrougui to continue engaging with all parties from across the spectrum. Building trust is important.

Secondly, we need to increase humanitarian assistance in the country. That is an essential element for the advent of a sustainable peace. We join the Secretary-General in commending the Congolese Government for having taken swift and decisive action to limit the spread of the coronavirus disease.

Nevertheless, we also realize that other humanitarian challenges are facing the country. These include the re-emergence of the Ebola virus disease and, as set out in the most recent report on food security, the fact that nearly 22 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are now acutely food-insecure — the highest number in the world. We call for all partners to increase their humanitarian support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also join the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire so as to provide ample access for humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, Indonesia continues to support the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its leadership. To that end, we need to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. Increasing attacks by armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces have claimed numerous innocent lives. Last June, such attacks claimed the life of an Indonesian peacekeeper, an engineer who was there to help with the infrastructure and the livelihoods of the people in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was the first casualty in MONUSCO in the past two years.

To be able to carry out its mandate of protecting civilians, MONUSCO needs first to be able to defend itself. The safety and security of peacekeepers remains a high priority for Indonesia. It is time for us to seriously look at our peacekeeping efforts to increase their professionalism, performance, funding and capacity.

We will continue our efforts to save lives and protect civilians through community engagement, winning their hearts and minds to build trust. Just as we promised at the beginning of our membership, in January 2019, Indonesia will continue to be a true partner to our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva

We join other speakers in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Ms. Leila Zerrougui, and the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations Abdou Abarry for the information that they shared.

We agree that the security situation in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is far from having been stabilized. The Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire remains unheeded. We find particularly concerning the upsurge in violence observed recently in Ituri and North Kivu. Despite the ongoing military operations conducted by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the Allied Democratic Forces continue to carry out violent attacks against civilians and to step up the pressure on the Congolese military and peacekeepers. The past months also saw the intensification of raids by other armed groups, which continue to grow in number, together with inter-ethnic violence, in particular in Djugu territory.

The complex security and humanitarian situation is further aggravated by the re-emergence of the Ebola virus in Equateur province and the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The continuing tensions within the governing coalition in Kinshasa represent yet another factor negatively affecting the situation. We fully support the Secretary-General's call on all Congolese stakeholders to abandon narrow partisan behaviour and work together to continue laying the foundations for peace and stability in the country. Interference in the domestic affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is unacceptable.

We acknowledge the contribution being made by MONUSCO, including its Force Intervention Brigade, in countering armed groups and protecting civilians in the eastern provinces, fostering reconciliation processes and supporting, through its good offices, the development of a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration framework and provincial road maps. We welcome the improvements in coordination achieved between the Mission and the FARDC, as well as the expansion of the operational area of the force in Ituri province. Concerning sanctions, we remain convinced that the restrictions imposed on the country should under no circumstance negatively affect the efficiency of the military operations conducted by the FARDC against armed groups.

We look forward to the publication this month of a MONUSCO joint strategy for a gradual transition and responsible exit from the country, commissioned by the Council last year. We strongly believe that all decisions in that regard should be made taking into account the situation on the ground and upon careful consideration of the views expressed by Kinshasa, States of the region and troop-contributing countries.

Russia, being part of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, will continue assisting the process of peace and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At this juncture, we are focusing particular attention on assisting Kinshasa in tackling the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic and other infectious diseases, including the Ebola virus. In recent months we have shared with the Democratic Republic of the Congo two mobile microbiological rapid-test laboratories as well as personal protective equipment. We stand ready to further

promote epidemiological cooperation with Congolese colleagues, including on vaccine-related issues.

Annex VII

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 three African countries that are members of the Security Council, namely, the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important and timely meeting on the Democratic Republic of Congo. We would also like to thank and commend the Secretary-General on his comprehensive report on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2020/919), and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, on her comprehensive briefing.

Today the A3+1 wishes to focus our intervention on the political processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the security and humanitarian situation; regional processes; and support for MONUSCO and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The prevailing political situation in the country provides a rare opportunity to build a stable long-term future and a unified country. In that regard, the unity of the current establishment is paramount in order to address the myriad challenges that the country is facing.

Against that backdrop, the A3+1 delegations commend the continued efforts by the Congolese to resolve their political differences in a peaceful manner. We are also pleased with the ongoing constructive dialogue aimed at resolving political tensions, as reflected in the public commitment and reaffirmations to the coalition made by President Félix Tshilombo Tshisekedi and former President Joseph Kabila. This is vital to lasting peace and national reconciliation.

On the security front, the A3+1 remains deeply concerned by the ongoing instability and insecurity as a result of the belligerent actions by armed groups in North Kivu, which continue to draw due attention, particularly as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) are carrying on with attacks on civilians, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO. The situation is similar in South Kivu, where the redeployment of the FARDC to other areas in the east has created a security vacuum, leading to active recruitment by some armed groups.

That illustrates the need to put in place sustainable and enduring security measures in the areas affected. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the progress registered in the peace agreements between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and armed groups in Ituri province. However, we are concerned that the delay in the implementation of the demobilization and reintegration process, partly due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, could impact the situation negatively.

It is in that context that the A3+1 underscores 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 the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We note the consolidated force presence in Ituri province to respond to militia violence and in Beni territory to address the threat posed by the ADF.

In that regard, the A3+1 emphasizes the importance of fully supporting MONUSCO's role in stabilizing the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and recognizes 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 that regard, and needs to be fully trained to remain effective in addressing the threat against the civilian population in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite enormous expectations and the complexity of the task.

Although we have seen some progress in the stabilization and strengthening of State institutions, the A3+1 remains concerned about the prospect of a hastened and rushed drawdown of MONUSCO. It is our view that the Mission's drawdown should be based on a comprehensive plan to improve the capacity of the State to deliver while MONUSCO reduces its presence in the country.

That plan should include completed security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; fully functional State institutions, such as immigration and border control; improved police and army, and a strengthened judiciary. Lastly, the drawdown of MONUSCO should be predicated on a positive evolution of the situation on the ground in order to ensure a successful handover of Mission tasks to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Turning to the regional cooperation efforts, the A3+1 reiterates the importance of fostering strong and effective regional relations and cooperation, as reflected in the Government's campaign to build bridges and not walls. In that respect, we are satisfied by the Government's continuing efforts to engage regional partners to address common threats to the region.

For the period under review, the A3+1 welcomes the meeting between President Tshilombo Tshisekedi and President Denis Sassou Nguesso, as well as the cooperation agreement signed between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola on security and public order in border areas. Furthermore, we continue to support the long-standing commitment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo to achieve sustainable peace, security and stability. In that respect, we are pleased with SADC's deployment of a technical mission in September, which resulted in the adoption of a phased approach to the demarcation of the affected border.

The A3+1 also commends the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region for its efforts alongside MONUSCO and welcomes their commitment to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo to achieve sustainable peace, security and stability.

The A3+1 remains concerned about the current humanitarian situation. The slowdown in new reported cases in the COVID-19 pandemic is a welcome development, but the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic continues to be a concern. In that regard, we commend the ongoing swift response and decisive efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO, other United Nations agencies, the African Union and the World Health Organization.

Our delegations welcome the multisectoral response plan for the Ebola outbreak, which aims to strengthen the effectiveness of a health system struggling to provide basic social services and to reach those affected, mainly women and children. It is our hope that major challenges such as insufficient funding and the lack of decentralized access to testing and treatment will be addressed in a timely manner, with the assistance of the international community.

The A3+1 remains deeply concerned about the extreme levels of hunger in the country, with the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis revealing that more than 21 million people are experiencing a crisis level or worse of acute food insecurity. We also reiterate our concerns about the high levels of displacement in the eastern parts of the country as a result of clashes between armed groups, intercommunal violence and excessive rainfall and flooding.

Our delegations call for sustained international support to enable the country's authorities to mitigate the negative impact of these humanitarian challenges for the people and the economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We reiterate 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.

The A3+1 also calls for further efforts by regional and international partners to tackle the illicit extraction of, and trade in, mineral resources, which remain a major source of revenue for armed groups in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, on behalf of the A3+1, I commend the efforts and commitment of the United Nations, MONUSCO, troop-contributing countries, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and international partners to stabilize the country and protect civilians from ongoing threats, despite the prevailing challenges. Our delegations therefore reiterate calls to 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, as well as to advance the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

The A3+1 is of the firm view that it is imperative for the international community — through the African Union, the United Nations and international partners — to maintain solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and provide the necessary political, financial and other support in order to build on the gains made thus far.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Political Coordinator of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Sonia Farrey**

Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Zerrougui for her briefing and commending the continuation of the vital operations of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) throughout the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We are also grateful to Ambassador Abarry for briefing us on the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We welcome President Tshilombo Tshisekedi's call for electoral reforms based on consensus. We call on all parties to reduce tensions, which jeopardize progress, and to work together to seek reform in order to deliver timely and credible elections.

We remain committed to ensuring long-term stability and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The deterioration in North and South Kivu, the resurgence of conflict in Ituri and increased Allied Democratic Forces activity in areas previously controlled by the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are of concern. There is a critical need for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is grounded in a comprehensive national strategy to be developed by its Government.

We are encouraged by MONUSCO's work with governors in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo on the development of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration road maps and welcome reports that a number of armed groups and militia combatants are ready to surrender. We call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support that momentum by nominating a national focal point and developing a comprehensive national framework on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The human rights situation remains deeply troubling, in particular the increased abuses by armed groups, widespread conflict-related sexual violence and continued violations by State agents, including in the context of measures implemented to tackle COVID-19. We condemn the involvement of the armed forces and police of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in conflict-related sexual violence.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for the adoption of a national transitional justice strategy capable of addressing the culture of impunity and providing justice. We urge all State agents to demonstrate full respect for human rights and call for continued efforts by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on improving the human rights environment.

As the second-largest bilateral donor to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Kingdom remains a committed humanitarian and development partner. We recognize the broader socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the health crisis and humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are concerned about the risk of further deterioration in both and a reduced capacity to respond to crises, including the eleventh Ebola outbreak in Equateur province and growing concerns of food insecurity.

We echo the Secretary-General's call to investigate fully the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2018-2020 against those working on the Ebola response in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sexual exploitation

and abuse are abhorrent, and the United Kingdom expects thorough investigations whenever allegations are made.

The protection of civilians is of the utmost importance to peace and stability. We welcome MONUSCO's development of targeted provincial protection-of-civilian strategies. Local and national ownership will be essential to their successful implementation.

We call for the prompt implementation of mandated reforms to MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade. While we note the delays due to COVID-19, it is crucial that all relevant stakeholders, particularly the relevant troop-contributing countries, cooperate constructively to ensure the full implementation of the reforms mandated by the Council.

Finally, we look forward to receiving MONUSCO's exit strategy — developed jointly with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — later this month. We expect the transition to be conditions-based, with clear and measurable benchmarks. We call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate actively in planning MONUSCO's exit. National ownership will be critical in ensuring a sustainable exit.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank Special Representative Zerrougui for her briefing today. I would like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Abarry for his update on the status of the important work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United States is deeply troubled by rising levels of violence in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, which were characterized by clashes between armed groups; tit-for-tat militia attacks against civilians, including many women and children; and the continued brutal campaign of the Allied Democratic Forces. We must use all the tools at hand to work towards the peaceful resolution of historic drivers of conflict and an end to impunity.

This is a policy priority for the United States. Our Ambassador to Kinshasa, Michael Hammer, travelled to North and South Kivu last week to meet with key officials and civil society to assess how the United States-Congolese partnership can benefit local people.

With more than 1,300 civilians killed in attacks in the first half of 2020 alone, it is clear that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) would benefit from additional operational support. The United States supports the Organization's efforts to add three new Quick Reaction Force units to the Force Intervention Brigade. These new units, together with the increase in the number of military staff officers and new intelligence capabilities, will equip the Mission to enable it to more effectively counter the threats that have contributed to the devastating death toll this year in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As President Tshilombo Tshisekedi said during his remarks to the General Assembly last month (see A/75/PV.5), boosting the Force Intervention Brigade's operational capacity can help to stop asymmetrical attacks on Congolese civilians living in insecurity for more than two decades now — two decades too long.

We also welcome the President's call for increased efforts by international actors to dismantle armed group networks. As just outlined by Ambassador Abarry, we remind all armed group actors and their business associates that sanctions under resolution 1533 (2004) remain in place. We view appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions as an essential tool against actors and entities that undermine the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The path to sustainable peace will require political solutions to localized conflicts, as well as improved governance. We were encouraged by the initial surrender of more than 450 Nduma défense du Congo Rénové fighters in August, and would urge more progress on the Government's disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri armed group.

But sustainable peace can take root only when accompanied by broader political and economic reforms. To that end, we applaud the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the steps it has taken to improve governance and human rights, fight impunity and stop trafficking in persons and child soldier recruitment. We hope to see progress in reducing the number of human rights violations committed by State security forces and increased prosecution of both State and armed-group actors for human rights violations and abuses. We also urge more accountability for those with command responsibility and call for the improved prevention of sexual violence in conflict and stronger support and protection for survivors.

We also congratulate President Tshilombo Tshisekedi for taking steps to professionalize the Congolese military by appointing new leadership this summer, as well as for appointing the first woman Constitutional Court judge and a new director of the country's financial investigation unit. While there is a long road ahead to sustain these gains, we think it is important to recognize progress to date.

With that in mind, we are very concerned about the recent allegations of widespread sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who claimed to be employed by international organizations and private relief agencies in North Kivu as part of the Ebola response. The United States takes these allegations very seriously and calls upon the organizations and agencies involved to conduct a thorough investigation and hold offenders accountable. The United States will continue to work with the United Nations to develop programmes and capabilities to conduct thorough investigations and prosecute these crimes.

We remain concerned about similar allegations perpetrated by MONUSCO peacekeepers against civilians. Of all missions, this Mission continues to have the second-highest number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. We urge all troop- and police-contributing countries to enforce the Organization's zero-tolerance policy and swiftly and credibly address criminal allegations. We urge MONUSCO and the United Nations to take prevention seriously, including by repatriating contingents that display a pattern of abusive behaviour.

Finally, as requested in the mandate adopted in December, we look forward to receiving — later this month — a joint exit strategy with measurable benchmarks for progressively transferring MONUSCO's tasks to the Congolese authorities, the United Nations country team and other stakeholders, with the goal of achieving a responsible exit of MONUSCO in the coming years.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ambassador Abdou Abarry, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their insightful briefings.

My delegation is pleased to note that, during the reporting period, there were continuous efforts to ensure an overall environment conducive to the advancement of the political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite ongoing tensions. We also welcome regional diplomatic efforts with neighbouring countries and reaffirm the key role of subregional organizations and the importance of cooperating with them.

However, we are deeply troubled by the continued deterioration of the security situation in some parts of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. Confrontations between armed groups, intercommunal conflicts, attacks against civilians by the Allied Democratic Forces and various other armed groups, as well as the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) are of particular concern.

Numerous recent attacks claimed tens of civilian lives and affected United Nations personnel on the ground. We strongly condemn those attacks and urge all parties to heed the ceasefire appeal of the Secretary-General. We would also like to reiterate the vital importance of ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

In addition, Viet Nam is concerned over the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where over 25.6 million people are currently in need of assistance. Various health challenges, including the coronavirus disease pandemic, the re-emergence of Ebola in the west and measles and other dangerous diseases, are putting increasing amounts of pressure on the already dire socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in many regions of the country. We therefore call for greater support from the international community to the Democratic Republic of the Congo at this critical moment.

Against the current backdrop, my delegation would like to stress the following points.

First, the protracted conflicts in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo serve to emphasize the need to work towards a sustainable solution. It is important to find a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of conflict. Greater focus should be placed on enhancing dialogue between communities and addressing socioeconomic issues and the illegal exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources. We also support efforts relating to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as well as security sector reform programmes.

Secondly, we would like to reiterate the importance of deepening regional cooperation, which will also contribute to peace and security. As we have all witnessed, stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region has benefited from meaningful cooperation among countries. We would like to welcome the commitments made by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi and his counterparts in promoting cooperation and reconciliation in the region. In this regard, we salute the contributions made by the Southern African Development Community, the

Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union.

Last but not least, Viet Nam has full confidence in the role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MONUSCO in favour of peace and stability in the country. The close partnership between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO represents the vital need for our support for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome MONUSCO's close contact and cooperation with the President and various local authorities to help address the root causes of conflict and develop targeted provincial strategies for the protection of civilians.

We look forward to further discussions on the joint strategy for the transition of MONUSCO and would like to stress the importance of preserving what we have done our utmost to achieve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Annex XI**Statement by the Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations, Paul Losoko Efambe Empole**

[Original: English and French]

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October 2020 and to thank its delegation to the United Nations for taking the initiative to organize today's meeting concerning the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his determination and commitment to the cause of my country. I would like to associate these thanks with all the members of the Security Council for the attention they continue to pay to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2020/919) and thanks Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO, for briefing us on it. I also thank Ambassador Abarry, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for his briefing.

Allow me to add the voice of my delegation to this discussion on the concerns raised by the report of the Secretary-General and to make a few comments, mainly on the security, humanitarian, human rights and economic situation in my country.

The security situation, which has remained generally calm, has nevertheless been marked by attacks carried out by remaining and still active armed groups and other militias in the east of our national territory. In flagrant violation of human rights, these armed groups continue to attack MONUSCO peacekeepers, the civilian population and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in well-identified localities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They commit kidnappings, massacres and killings — often in reprisal against civilians. As we have repeatedly reminded the Council, the conflicts imposed by the armed groups in this part of my country have caused significant loss of human life, massive destruction of property and infrastructure and numerous violations of human rights.

Worryingly, some of these groups, which showed signs of losing steam after the recent offensive launched by the FARDC, are unfortunately resuming recruiting young people into their ranks. This represents a real danger for the future — one that we must quickly stop; youth must be used for building the future of the country, not for its destruction. In this regard, the FARDC is determined to continue its offensives, with the support of its partners, including MONUSCO, until the complete eradication of these negative forces.

Furthermore, and as described in paragraph 11 of the report before us today, looting and control over natural resources increasingly seems to be the main motivation behind these conflicts and the proliferation of armed groups in the east of my country. Indeed, as stated by His Excellency Mr. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, these armed groups, which are engaging in unconventional and asymmetrical warfare, have the means that allow them to continue their activities, and these means often come from the illicit exploitation of natural resources flowing outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo through well-established networks and with the help of certain accomplices.

In this context, my delegation would like to reiterate the appeal launched by the President of the Republic to the international community through the General Assembly for appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions against these armed groups, networks and other accomplices, which, through their harmful activities, are destroying all our efforts aimed at conservation and the sustainable management of biodiversity and the protected areas located in the east of our country. It is true that it will be very difficult to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to completely neutralize these armed groups without eradicating their sources of supply and support, namely, these networks and other accomplices.

My country's Government welcomes the support of MONUSCO, in particular the logistical facilities provided to the FARDC and the Congolese national police in their effort to restore order and security. My Government also welcomes the ongoing collaboration between its experts and those of MONUSCO in their discussions within the framework of the dialogue on, and strategic review of, the transformation of the United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, as also underlined by the Head of State, prior to agreement on the final contours of the future of MONUSCO on the national territory, the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to see the strengthening of collaboration within MONUSCO units and with the FARDC on the ground during the period when MONUSCO is preparing its departure, so that the firepower expected to protect the population and restore peace, security and the full authority of the State over the entire national territory, including in localities where the presence of armed groups is still visible, is effective. In the meantime, the Government is also continuing to explore, with the help of certain partners, the options for non-military solutions for dealing with both national and foreign armed groups in order to bring peace definitively to the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a constant concern for the Government, which guarantees respect for freedoms linked to the democratic space and which strives to strengthen its action in the fight against impunity, unethical acts and human rights abuses, including the fight against sexual violence and in favour of access to justice for victims, the improvement of prison conditions, the professional supervision of public demonstrations and the resolution of intercommunal violence, in particular through the creation and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms. It is with this objective in mind that the country's Agency for the Prevention and the Fight against Trafficking in Persons, the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the Agency for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption were created, with a view to strengthening policies to prevent corruption among those in charge of the executive and the private sectors and to put an end to certain bad practices in the management of public affairs.

With respect to the rights of women — and of young girls in particular — the Government has been tirelessly stepping up efforts aimed at promoting and protecting them, in particular by combating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence through the promulgation of several legal and administrative instruments. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be happy to see the United Nations and the contributing countries concerned follow up on investigating the allegations of sexual abuse of Congolese girls and women committed by MONUSCO peacekeepers, in accordance with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on this matter.

In the context of the fight against violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed against children in territories affected by conflicts, a road map has been drawn up with a view to putting an end to recruitment and the use of children in armed groups and ensuring their protection against sexual violence.

With this road map, which has been signed by a dozen commanders of armed groups, more than 553 children have been freed from the hands of the warlords.

The humanitarian situation remains dire in the east of the country, as does the security situation following the multidimensional crisis triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as well as by the numerous displacements of populations fleeing atrocities in conflict zones. Moreover, as was stated in the Security Council meeting held on 17 September 2020 on this subject (S/2020/930), and specifically in connection with the follow-up to resolution 2417 (2018), after decades of armed conflict, the escalation of violence is again driving worrisome levels of food insecurity and hunger in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

For its part, and in order to meet the varied and complex challenges that have been brought about by the pandemic in the health, economic and security sectors, the Government has set up a multisectoral committee and a technical secretariat that have developed a structured response plan against COVID-19 and an emergency multisectoral programme to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, which was launched by the President of the Republic on 18 June 2020. It is through these efforts that my country has been able to reduce the case fatality rate of the pandemic from 10 per cent in the early days of the outbreak to less than 2.5 per cent today.

As stated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 8 of his report, the economic situation has been further weakened by the collateral effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Indeed, the current context marked by COVID-19 represents a real challenge that slows the pace of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, as I just mentioned, the Government has developed an emergency multisectoral programme to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 in order to cushion the shock associated with the health crisis on the socioeconomic environment and to support the revival of economic activity. In addition, in order to stabilize the situation, the Government signed a stability pact with la Banque Centrale du Congo, which has already started to bear fruit.

With regard to the 1533 Committee, the Government took note of the appointment in July of the new team from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and intends to work in close collaboration with the 1533 Committee and the new team for the fulfilment of their mandates, with a view to seeing an improvement in the situation in the country.

I would like to reaffirm the determination of the President of the Republic and the entire Government of my country to put an end to the vicious circle of armed conflict and insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and to bring about a return to normal life in that part of the national territory and the region after more than two decades of conflicts. To that end, they would like to count on the support of all partners without distinction, including the United Nations and the Security Council, in the achievement of this objective.

Finally, I could not take the floor today without saluting the memory of all those who have lost their lives for this cause, in particular the MONUSCO peacekeepers.