



Briefing on MONUSCO (DRC), 29 March 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri

Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and thank you Special Representative Keita for your briefing. I also welcome the Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

The recent visit of the Security Council was a tangible sign of our collective priority towards peace and stability in the eastern DRC. The PRST we have agreed to is a step in the right direction. As the Council listened to DRC Authorities, to people in eastern DRC, to MONUSCO and to regional partners, it is clear that challenges continue.

Entire generations have only experienced conflict and violence. We echo the Secretary-General's condemnation of the violence perpetrated by armed groups against civilians and his call for them to lay down their arms unconditionally.

We call on all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. We also condemn all attacks against MONUSCO and peacekeepers, and express our condolences to the family of the victim.



In the same vein, we urge all State actors to stop backing armed groups. We also underline the fact that the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of the DRC must be respected.

M23, ADF, CODECO and other armed groups keep ravaging a land rich in resources that should be a source of wealth for its people. It is crucial that efforts are made to tackle the conflict in the eastern DRC.

We urge Authorities to continue tackling corruption, engage in holistic security sector reform, and doing their utmost to protect civilians. We commend the Congolese Armed Forces for supporting age-verification assessments of more than 7,000 armed forces candidates. Vetting and codes of conduct are crucial for a professional and accountable security sector.

We commend the extensive regional initiatives aimed at peace and stability in the country. Coordination with regional players remains key to ensure that all efforts to this end are mutually reinforcing. The full, equal, and meaningful participation of women must also be supported at all levels. Furthermore, their safe participation as voters, candidates, observers, and civil educators requires monitoring and reporting of violations and reprisals.

Malta strongly condemns the sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, including abductions and forced marriages. We urge the Government to develop, operationalise and resource the reparations fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.



Meanwhile, 30% of the population requires humanitarian assistance and protection.

We are concerned that M23 offensives have caused the displacement of up to 800,000 people to Goma and its surroundings since March last year. Through the EU's extensive efforts, air bridges are now able to assist in alleviating the situation and additional EU funds amounting to 47 million euro cover immediate needs such as nutrition, healthcare, water and sanitation, shelter, and protection.

Malta commends the critical work of MONUSCO as it operates in an ever-increasing challenging environment. At the same time, it continues to protect civilians and assist the DRC authorities on multiple fronts. Gender must remain a cross-cutting consideration of the Mission's priority benchmarks. We also underline the need to redouble efforts to combat disinformation against MONUSCO.

In view of a future Mission configuration in line with Resolution 2666, troops must be appropriately equipped and ready to engage with a pro-active and mobile posture. We also emphasise the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

President

I close by highlighting the fact that elections scheduled for later this year are crucial, and this process should lead us all to invest in breaking the cycle of



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violence. The Congolese people deserve an environment conducive towards their aspirations. I thank you.