



Security Council briefing on MONUSCO (DRC), 26 June 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Darren Camilleri

Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President. I also thank ASG Pobee for her insightful remarks, and welcome the Ambassadors of DRC and Rwanda.

We find ourselves at a crucial point in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The appalling brutal attacks against the population perpetrated by armed groups, such as the CODECO attack in the IDPs Lila camp and the deadly ADF attack on a school near the DRC border in Western Uganda, are deplorable and provide a harrowing reality to the people of the region.

As we extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, we emphasise the need for all armed groups to lay down their weapons and urge parties to refrain from actions that hinder the path to peace and stability.

The upcoming general elections present a unique opportunity. In this regard, we take note of the temporary conclusion of voter registration and commend the attention given to gender parity.



While we acknowledge that registration may have faced security challenges in certain regions, we encourage authorities to respect, protect, and promote the right to peaceful assembly or association, freedom of opinion and expression. These are essential components of democracy and indispensable to the full enjoyment of all human rights.

We are concerned with developments concerning the recent law establishing the military defence force, as it holds the risk to undermine the efforts of both the Nairobi Process and the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Community Recovery, and Stabilisation Programme. We underline the importance of aligning legislation with international standards, with the technical support of relevant UN entities.

We commend the Joint Human Rights Office for its support to the government in combating impunity. We recognise the recent conviction for crimes against humanity by the Uvira Military Tribunal in South Kivu, which sets an important legal precedent. The Joint Human Rights Office, in collaboration with MONUSCO's force mobility and security provision, enables field investigations and mobile courts, which serve as strongholds against impunity.



We welcome the significant regional political and military efforts being undertaken. We hope that confidence-building measures will prevail over hate speech in public discourse. We urge for immediate de-escalation and restraint between the DRC and Rwanda and encourage the utilisation of regional verification mechanisms to defuse tensions.

President

The figures of human rights violations and abuses are alarming. They include widespread sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, the recruitment and use of children, and attacks on schools, which have recently increased three-fold. According to reports, the situation in the eastern provinces, particularly in Ituri, is worse than ever.

In view of this, we underline the need for a survivor-centred and gender-responsive approach in preventing and responding to these forms of violence and abuse, taking into account the specific needs of all vulnerable groups without any discrimination. With 25% of the population currently facing acute food insecurity, the DRC has one of the highest numbers of food-insecure people in the world.



As we prepare to engage in the transition of MONUSCO, we advocate for a tailored approach that prioritises the protection of civilians. However, we cannot afford a security vacuum. We firmly believe that the protection of civilians, child protection, sexual violence in conflict, and accountability should remain front and centre.

With the aim of supporting stabilisation in the DRC, the EU is currently implementing a set of actions for the total amount of 17 million €, under the Global Europe Rapid response pillar.

President

Achieving peace and security in the eastern DRC hinges upon addressing the underlying causes of conflict, also with the support of regional initiatives. The abundant natural resources of the DRC's fertile land should serve as a catalyst for the country's well-being, with the commitment by DRC authorities towards expanding state authority, promoting accountability, and implementing transitional justice measures which should remain at the core of our efforts.

I thank you.