



Security Council Briefing on MONUSCO, 28 September 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I thank SRSG Keita for her work and that of her team. I thank Mrs Modi for her remarks. I also thank Gabon as the Chair of the 1533 Security Council Committee for the report.

[As we have heard], the humanitarian situation in the DRC continues to be a concern. The number of food-insecure people this year alone is estimated at 25.8 million, and it is highly likely that these figures are an undercount. The number of displaced people is skyrocketing. Sexual and gender-based violence continues unabated, and that the recruitment of children remains a challenge. While we welcome the systemwide Scale-Up for the eastern DRC activated last June and the corresponding operational plan, we note that the humanitarian response is underfunded compared to the needs.

President

This periodic briefing arrives at a pivotal juncture, as we stand in the final trimester preceding Presidential elections. It is crucial that the electoral process embodies the principles of freedom, fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. Civic space should remain unimpeded to shape public discourse. Beyond the electoral outcome, progress can truly shape the country's destiny and instil trust in institutions.



We are concerned of incidents of intimidation and violence directed towards political opposition figures and civil society representatives. We commend President Tshikenedi's invitation to NGOs and international organisations to observe the electoral process. Malta places its trust in the Congolese Government to guarantee their safe and unimpeded participation.

In this vein, we echo the Secretary-General's call for a swift adoption of the draft law against tribalism, racism, and xenophobia.

President

The Security Council will soon be tasked with negotiating the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, aligning with the ongoing revision of the Joint Transition Plan that paves the way for an eventual withdrawal of the Mission.

Malta welcomes the convergence towards a withdrawal that aligns with the realities on the ground and envisions a transition that involves the transfer of MONUSCO's core responsibilities to the Congolese Authorities.

Guided by these principles, we lend our support to the Secretary-General's proposal to withdraw units from South Kivu. We believe that establishing a well-defined timeline for this process is imperative, and we are prepared to engage in negotiations to forge a unified vision. At the same time, we positively consider an enhanced mandate to support the training and capacity-building of the national security forces.



Malta encourages enhanced and structured coordination between MONUSCO and the EAC Regional Force and stresses the importance of focus on the outcomes of the AU-led peace support operations' negotiations.

President

Malta reiterates its steadfast commitment towards a peaceful resolution to the protracted conflict in the eastern DRC. We unequivocally condemn the atrocities committed by all armed groups and expect all parties to honour the decisions and agreements reached under the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

The strengthening of the judicial system must remain at the heart of multilateral and governmental endeavours, offering hope to communities perpetually exposed to heinous crimes and violations. If wielded effectively, it will also serve as a deterrent against future transgressions.

We welcome the initiation of a prosecutorial investigation mission to Lala earlier this month and appreciate the Government's commitment to hold those responsible for the violence on 30 August accountable. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims of this heinous massacre.

In conclusion, President, we maintain our conviction that military endeavours, no matter their vigour, will never suffice to resolve the conflict in the eastern DRC. Genuine political dialogue and concerted efforts towards



**THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UN NEW YORK**



Malta
2023-2024

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL

compromise must take precedence to pave the way for peace and stability in the region.

I thank you.