



Security Council briefing on MONUSCO, 11 December 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri

Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I thank SRSG Keita, and Mrs Sandrine Lusamba for their comprehensive insights. I also welcome the representatives of the DRC and Rwanda to the meeting.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo stands at a critical juncture:

Tensions with Rwanda remain alarming, and the use of proxies increases the risk of open conflict.

Armed groups continue to commit atrocities and terrorise civilians.

Rising humanitarian needs are reaching levels that are simply impossible to address.

Intercommunal sexual and gender-based violence is increasing widely, even outside the eastern provinces.

Additionally, heightened tensions in the build up to the incoming elections give rise to concern. Transparent, inclusive, and fair electoral processes are essential to ensure a stable government for the country's future.

Within this sobering context, the Security Council is negotiating the renewal of MONUSCO.



Let me thank France for leading the current negotiations, carefully considering both the Secretary-General's assessment and the Disengagement plan.

Attempting to build on these important documents, Malta will contribute to negotiations by focusing attention on the protection of children in armed conflict. After two years, we recently convened with the Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting of the DRC to address specific issues related to the Mission's withdrawal and its potential impact on children.

The figures are shocking. Reported grave violations strongly underestimate the real numbers due to a lack of access to certain areas and untracked violations, among other reasons. The reported number of casualties so far indicates that 2023 might become the deadliest year for children since the establishment of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in 2005.

Children also face increased risks. During the electoral period, children are associated with, or voluntarily join, political or electoral demonstrations. This potentially exposes them to violence and repression. We thank MONUSCO and UNICEF for their work ensuring that political parties sign a charter against the use of children for political and electoral purposes.

Simultaneously, the perceived tolerance of patriotic armed groups mobilised to fight against the M23 has led to an upsurge in child recruitment.



President, implementing a responsible withdrawal of MONUSCO means protecting the most vulnerable. Malta advocates for sufficient residual civilian presence in regions where the military will depart, allowing time for knowledge transfer, training, and capacity-building.

We must preserve the gains achieved so far. Together with Congolese authorities, MONUSCO and UNICEF have done commendable work, leading among other achievements to no new verified cases of recruitment and use of children by FARDC between 2021 and 2023.

Regarding WPS, we are encouraged by the strong presence of female candidates for upcoming elections. We encourage additional measures to promote and facilitate women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation in the political process.

We also ask the UN to consult regularly with women's civil society organisations, and to ensure that comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise is included throughout the transition.

We commend the adoption of a law on the protection and reparations for victims of conflict related sexual violence.

In conclusion, President, Malta is determined to ensure collective measures to mitigate the impact of the transition and remains ready to engage with Security Council Member States to consensually adopt the renewal of MONUSCO. I thank you.