



## Security Council briefing on MONUSCO, 30 September 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Mr. Darren Camilleri

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

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Thank you, President. I begin by thanking SRSK Keita, Ms. Therese Nzale-Kove and Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu, Chair of the 1533 Committee, for their briefings. I welcome the Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Angola to the Chamber.

President

Malta welcomes Angola's diplomatic efforts, which have been instrumental in facilitating the ceasefire agreement between the DRC and Rwanda.

This agreement represents an encouraging step towards de-escalation. We also commend the role played by MONUSCO and the work of the Reinforced Ad-Hoc Verification Mechanism in the monitoring of the ceasefire.



Commitments made must be fully respected, and the DRC and Rwanda must continue to engage in good faith.

We strongly encourage the two sides to commit to the agreed plan to neutralise the FDLR, and the development of a plan for the disengagement of forces.

We also avail ourselves of this occasion to reiterate our call for the cessation of all foreign military support to the M23 and other armed groups operating in the DRC.

While regional diplomatic efforts have led to a reduction in violence, the M23 has continued to expand. These actions, including external support to the group, only seek to jeopardise ongoing peace efforts.

Other armed groups, such as the ADF, CODECO, and Wazalendo, also continue to violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law.



Women continue to be disproportionately affected. High levels of sexual- and gender-based violence make the eastern DRC one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman and a girl. We unreservedly condemn these heinous crimes.

President

MONUSCO's withdrawal from South Kivu is now complete, and we commend the cooperation between MONUSCO and DRC authorities.

Regrettably, as the M23 crisis is spilling over and impacting the activity of armed groups, we have seen an increase in the recruitment of children in the region.

Malta reiterates the urgent need to intensify efforts to safeguard children, particularly in South Kivu. The protection of children must remain an integral part of our efforts. This includes the continued presence of child protection staff, as highlighted in MONUSCO's report.



The crisis in the eastern DRC remains inextricably linked to the country's rich natural resources. If revenues are equitably shared with the local population, alongside strengthened state institutions, we could unlock the region from the spiral of poverty and desperation.

Malta condemns, once again, the consolidation of M23 control over the coltan mining area near Rubaya in Masisi territory. In this latest reporting period, the M23 has imposed a tax on production, generating an estimated 300,000 dollars in monthly revenue.

We echo the Secretary-General's concerns about the severe risks of cross-border smuggling. We also support the Group of Experts' repeated warnings about the significant risk of contamination in the international supply chain.

President



We are deeply shocked by the violence following the attempted prison break at Makala. We hope that the announced official inquiry commission will shed light on the events and hold perpetrators accountable.

Together with rule of law, civic space remains an essential pillar to the foundation of democracy. Attacks on human rights defenders, civil society members, and the rise in hate speech, and mis- and disinformation, must be urgently addressed.

I thank you.