



Security Council briefing on MONUSCO, 9 December 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms. Francesca Gatt

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

Thank you, President. I also thank SRSG Keita, and Ms. Passy Mubalama for their insightful briefings, and welcome the DRC Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie, as well as representatives of Rwanda and Angola to this meeting.

As we address the situation in the DRC for the last time as a member of this Council, Malta acknowledges that a number of pivotal developments have taken place. We witnessed an evolving security landscape across the DRC and in MONUSCO's transition, including the completion of its withdrawal from South Kivu and its support to SAMIDRC in North Kivu.

The ceasefire agreement between the DRC and Rwanda through Angola's mediation is a notable step forward. We commend the launch of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism and the signing of an MoU for its operationalisation. We also value MONUSCO's role in these efforts.



Yet, despite considerable efforts across all levels, the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Armed groups such as the ADF, CODECO and Zaire continue to commit serious violations and abuses. We condemn their actions and urge them to disarm.

The expansion of M23 remains deeply concerning. The group's territorial advances and the appointment of administrators in areas under its control are outright violations of the sovereignty of the DRC. Malta categorically condemns these actions. We reiterate that any form of external support to M23 and other armed groups operating in the DRC must cease immediately. This also applies to the presence of foreign military forces in the DRC. DRC's natural resources must remain under its control.

Malta reaffirms its unwavering support for the Group of Experts supporting the 1533 Sanctions Committee. Their rigorous investigations continue to provide this Council with important and impartial analysis.



Malta is also concerned with recurring incidents of GPS jamming and spoofing that have disrupted MONUSCO's operations, including incidents that suspended critical flight operations. These incidents have also disrupted the provision of aid by humanitarian actors and has made access more cumbersome. Aid for the most in need is being delayed. These deliberate interferences are unacceptable, and must stop. We call for swift accountability.

President,

The latest report lays bare the devastating humanitarian crisis in North Kivu, where IDPs are trapped in militarised zones, subjected to violence, and being denied human dignity. We deplore the rise in sexual- and gender-based violence. Women and girls endure daily exposure to rape and sexual violence.

During last month's visit by the Sanctions Committee to Goma, we heard first count stories of the high level of violence. No one is safe but especially children, young girls and women, who are accepting this violence as a grim routine to protect their families. This suffering cannot be normalised. It must stop.



What was especially sad was that some IDPs believe that narrating their personal experiences are only ‘empty words’ as nothing will change. We cannot let this suffering be ignored.

President,

Violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on aid workers, have reached alarming levels. On child protection measures, Malta commends MONUSCO’s support to FARDC’s efforts to verify and exclude children from recruitment. We reiterate our call for robust child protection mechanisms, particularly in transition contexts, and strongly encourage that lessons learned from South Kivu to guide future transitions.

We also recognise MONUSCO’s pivotal role in supporting the authorities in the justice system and security sector reform. As requested in Resolution 2594, gender-responsive analysis and technical gender expertise must be integrated into all aspects of MONUSCO’s transition to ensure the needs of women are fully integrated in all prioritised and sequenced stages.



To conclude, President, as the Council approaches negotiations for the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, Malta will prioritise strengthening civilian protection, ensuring robust child protection measures, and ensuring that priority is given to the women, peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, Malta will continue to advocate for the genuine commitment of all parties to the Luanda Process, including the establishment of a platform for gender experts and the meaningful participation of women as mediators. This is important to support ongoing regional political efforts and as well as the revitalisation of the Nairobi Process. Malta remains resolute in its commitment to advancing peace and stability for the Congolese people.

I thank you.