

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

|                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Bilagsnr.:</b>                  | <b>406</b>                     |
| Land:                              | DR. Congo                      |
| Kilde:                             | Security Council Report        |
| Titel:                             | DRC and the Great Lakes Region |
| Udgivet:                           | Marts 2016                     |
| Optaget på<br>baggrundsmaterialet: | 25. oktober 2016               |



## March 2016 Monthly Forecast

### AFRICA

## DRC and the Great Lakes Region

### Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will be briefed by Maman Sambo Sidikou, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, will also brief on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement.

The Council is expected to renew the mandate of MONUSCO, which expires on 31 March 2016.

A ministerial-level open debate on the Great Lakes region is also planned in March, at the initiative of Council president, Angola, with the Secretary-General, Djinnit and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, briefing. The foreign ministers of Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are also expected to participate.

### Key Recent Developments

Rebel groups continue to spread violence in eastern DRC. In his most recent [briefing](#) to the Council on 14 January, Sidikou said that there was a significant deterioration in eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu. The operations of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against the Force Démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) have displaced FDLR fighters and ethnic Tutsis, and there has been an increase in Mayi-Mayi rebel groups' activities against the FDLR, with reprisal attacks by suspected FDLR elements. These have resulted in civilians being caught up in the fighting and being killed, displaced, forcibly abducted or harassed, often on the basis of ethnicity and perceived collaboration with opposing groups.

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist Ugandan group, continues to wreak havoc in North Kivu. The group was reportedly responsible for an attack on FARDC positions and a village near the town of Eringeti on 12 February, in which six civilians were killed and 14 others were kidnapped.

On the political front, the presidential elections scheduled for November continue to be a deeply divisive issue, given the absence of an agreed electoral calendar or a budget for the elections. Many fear that President Joseph Kabila intends to stay in power beyond the constitutionally mandated two terms, which end at the end of the year, and that the impractically dense electoral calendar and consequent delays are part of this strategy. While Kabila has not commented publicly on his political future, the government's official line is that he will abide by the constitution. In any event, as preparations for elections are at a standstill, it seems less and less likely that presidential elections can or will be held on time.

On 28 November 2015, Kabila called for a national dialogue to address several issues, including the election calendar and funding. The main opposition parties have refused to participate, insisting that it is yet another tactic to avert elections.

The UN, AU, EU and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF) issued a joint press statement on 16 February that underscored the necessity of an inclusive political dialogue in the DRC and urged all Congolese political actors to spare no effort, within the framework of the country's constitution, to ensure the successful holding of elections. The statement further recalled the appointment of former Togolese Prime Minister Edem Kodjo as Special Envoy by the AU Commission to facilitate the political dialogue. (Despite the request of the DRC, the UN has yet to appoint a mediator for this purpose.)

Opposition parties and civil society groups organised a “stay-at-home” strike, bringing business and civic activity in Kinshasa to a standstill on 16 February, in order to pressure Kabila to step down at the end of his term.

During his 14 January briefing, Sidikou said that the political polarisation has heightened tensions and contributed to an atmosphere of increased harassment and human rights violations, mostly against opposition members, civil society representatives and journalists. Combined with the violence in the east, he added, holding peaceful and timely credible elections seems less and less likely.

Sidikou also spoke about the Secretary-General’s proposal to reduce MONUSCO by 1,700 troops, in accordance with the DRC’s wishes to see MONUSCO downsized. He stated that the drawdown will be accompanied by a process of transforming MONUSCO into a more agile and proactive force, which will ensure that MONUSCO exercises greater operational capability, even as the force is gradually reduced in overall numbers. He added that the resumption of security cooperation would be a key aspect of this strategy and asked for the Council’s support for this approach. (Since then, MONUSCO and the DRC have signed a technical agreement on coordination of military activities.)

For its March presidency, Angola has planned an open debate that aims at looking at the Great Lakes Region holistically. With Burundi, CAR and the DRC all on the Council’s agenda, the open debate seeks to encourage more strategic thinking about achieving peace and security in the region. One aspect Angola wishes the open debate to focus on will be on natural resources as drivers of conflict in the region, together with the wider relationship between development and security in the Great Lakes. Angola, as the current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), hosted the ICGLR heads of state summit on 12 February, which focused on accelerating the affective implementation of the ICGLR’s “Pact on Security, Stability and Development” and its Protocols.

Relatedly, on 11 February, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held a session on natural resources and conflicts in Africa. In a press statement after the session, the PSC recognised that fairness, transparency and accountability in the management of natural resources is critical to preventing conflict and promoting sustainable development in Africa.

The Secretary-General visited Goma and Kinshasa on 23-25 February. While in Kinshasa, he presided over the opening session of the Great Lakes Private Sector Investment Conference. Later he met with Kabila, government officials, opposition figures and civil society representatives, stressing the importance of political dialogue as a way to address challenges linked to the electoral process. He expressed hope that constructive dialogue would lead to peaceful and credible elections in accordance with the constitution. He also stated that during the election period, the fundamental rights of freedom of the press, expression and peaceful assembly must be upheld.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 27 January, the Group of Experts assisting the DRC Sanctions Committee briefed the Committee on their recent update report. The report said that there is evidence to suggest that an attack attributed to the ADF in May 2015, in which two Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed, was actually committed by the FARDC.

Some details about the circumstances of the incident, however, remained unclear.

In March, the Committee may meet to receive an update from MONUSCO on the implementation of the arms embargo in the DRC.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 February, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a media statement that expressed alarm over reports of escalating inter-communal violence in the Lubero and Walikale territories, North Kivu province. During the preceding weekend, at least 21 people were killed and 40 wounded, and 70 houses were burned down. There were also reports of massive displacement of civilians, looting, abductions and at least three rapes in the area. The attack may have been prompted by the killing of at least 14 members of the Nande ethnic group on 7 January, presumed to be by the FDLR. According to the statement, tensions between the Hutu and Nande communities, which have been increasing since

November 2015, seem to have reached an alarming level and could lead to large-scale violence and further displacement. In January, the UN Joint Human Rights Office documented 411 human rights violations, compared to 347 recorded in December 2015. Of these violations, 52 were related to the restriction of democratic participation, compared to 45 such violations documented in December 2015.

## Key Issues

The key issue for the Council in March is renewing MONUSCO's mandate and deciding whether to lower its troop level.

A major concern is the political tension surrounding the electoral calendar and Kabila's possible attempt to remain in power.

The continued violence of rebel groups on the population in North Kivu remain a serious threat to peace and security.

Renewing cooperation between MONUSCO and the DRC is another issue of concern for the Council.

On the Great Lakes more generally, key issues are cross-border drivers of conflict that affect several States in the region, such as illicit trade in natural resources, the movement of arms and rebel groups.

## Options

The Council will adopt a resolution renewing MONUSCO's mandate in which it might lower MONUSCO's troop level by 1,700 troops or maintain its current level. In addition, the resolution could:

- encourage MONUSCO to implement plans to develop a more proactive and visible presence in eastern DRC and prepare for possible instability in other areas due to the political situation;
- urge the Secretary-General to appoint a mediator to help facilitate the DRC national dialogue;
- call on all political actors to abide by the constitution and its term limits; and
- call on opposition parties to immediately enter into a national dialogue in order to reach consensus on an electoral calendar and hold elections on time or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Council could also consider visiting the country during the electoral period to take stock of the situation and deliver a strong political message to interlocutors.

On the Great Lakes, the Council may consider adopting an outcome document recognising the impact of cross-border issues on security and stability and the need for strategic thinking and enhanced cooperation to address these issues at the regional level.

## Council Dynamics

On the issue of troop reductions, some Council members, including the UK and the US, are concerned about the DRC's desire to downsize MONUSCO, in particular if DRC-MONUSCO cooperation does not improve dramatically. On the other hand, some countries take the view that the proposed reduction will not affect MONUSCO's operations in the east or contribute to a deterioration in the security situation, particularly in light of MONUSCO's plans to divert the freed resources to enhance the capacity of the remaining peacekeepers. They also emphasise that renewed cooperation between MONUSCO and the DRC in the east, which is related to the DRC's wish to accelerate MONUSCO's drawdown, is of critical importance to improving the security situation.

France is the penholder on the DRC.

## UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC

### Security Council Resolutions

26 MARCH 2015

**S/RES/2211**

This was a resolution renewing MONUSCO and its intervention brigade until 31 March 2016.

29 JANUARY 2015

**S/RES/2198**

This was a resolution renewing the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts.

**Security Council Presidential Statement**

9 NOVEMBER 2015

**S/PRST/2015/20**

The Council stressed the importance of neutralising armed groups in the DRC and concern that joint operations between the Congolese army and the Force Intervention Brigade in cooperation with the whole of MONUSCO had yet to resume.

**Secretary-General's Report**

24 DECEMBER 2015

**S/2015/1031**

This was the report of the Secretary-General on MONUSCO.

**Security Council Meeting Record**

14 JANUARY 2016

**S/PV.7603**

The Council was briefed by Special Representative Sambo Sidikou on the latest MONUSCO report.

**Security Council Letter**

16 DECEMBER 2015

**S/2015/983**

This letter contained the Secretary-General's recommendation for reducing MONUSCO's troop strength by 1,700 peacekeepers.

**Other Relevant Facts****Special Representative of the Secretary-General**

Maman Sambo Sidikou (Niger)

**MONUSCO Force Commander**

Lieutenant General Derick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi (South Africa)

**MONUSCO Size, Composition and Cost of Mission**

Strength as of 31 August 2015: 19,784 troops (including 462 military observers and 1,090 police), 840 international civilian personnel, 2,725 local civilian staff and 450 UN volunteers.

Approved budget (1 July 2015-30 June 2016): \$1.33 billion

Mission duration: July 2010 to present