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# Security Council

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## United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 49 of Security Council resolution [2765 \(2024\)](#), covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the previous report of 29 November 2024. It describes the progress and challenges in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

#### II. Political developments

2. Political developments during the reporting period were characterized by the territorial expansion of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), supported by the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF), in North Kivu and South Kivu in the eastern part of the country, triggering a sharp escalation of tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. This led to intensified regional and international efforts to restore dialogue.

3. While much attention remained focused on the deteriorating security situation in the east, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, announced plans to create a multidisciplinary commission to examine a potential constitutional revision. This was followed by the appointment of Marthe Odio and Aristide Nguru to the Constitutional Court on 15 January, raising concerns over institutional impartiality among the opposition, segments of the political majority and civil society.

4. Former President Joseph Kabila announced his intent to rally a broad coalition against a potential constitutional reform, including in a joint statement issued with opposition leader Moïse Katumbi on 26 December 2024. On 15 January, the Catholic and Protestant Churches launched a joint road map for a social contract focused on restoring peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. As part of broader consultations, the Churches' meetings with the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC)/M23 in Goma and with the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, in Kigali on 12 and 13 February, respectively, triggered criticism from presidential party officials. To prevent further polarization that could exacerbate the ongoing security crisis,



MONUSCO continued to engage with actors across the political spectrum to foster consensus and dialogue. On 28 February, President Tshisekedi announced a reshuffling of the Government, envisaging the formation of a national unity government and the restructuring of the Union sacrée de la nation.

5. Following significant progress under the Luanda process in 2024, the Angola-Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda tripartite summit, initially scheduled for 15 December, was postponed sine die, following calls by Rwanda for direct dialogue between M23 and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That proposal was rejected by the latter, which instead insisted that the M23 issue, alongside those of other Congolese armed groups, should be addressed by the Nairobi process.

6. On 28 January, following the capture of Goma by M23, supported by RDF, demonstrations in Kinshasa expressing support for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) against the M23 coalition in the eastern provinces escalated, with attacks targeting several embassies, as well as premises of MONUSCO and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The Congolese authorities condemned the events and committed to reinforcing security measures.

7. On 29 January, in his address to the nation, President Tshisekedi called for national mobilization in response to “Rwanda’s war of aggression”, strong sanctions from the international community against Rwanda and the exclusion of Rwanda from serving as a United Nations troop-contributing country. Rwanda expressed disappointment over the lack of international condemnation of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and denounced abuses against Congolese Tutsi communities.

8. Meanwhile, AFC/M23 continued to demand direct dialogue with the Congolese authorities, expanding its prerequisites, inter alia, to include the “withdrawal of all foreign forces”, including FDLR, the Burundi National Defence Force, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and “mercenaries”. Following the capture of Goma and Bukavu, AFC/M23 reiterated its political objective of regime change in Kinshasa.

9. In response to a rapid deterioration of the security and political situation, and the increasing risk of a regional crisis, diplomatic efforts intensified. At the regional level, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the East African Community (EAC), SADC and the Economic Community of Central African States held emergency meetings on 28, 29 and 31 January and 7 February, respectively.

10. On 8 February, a joint EAC-SADC summit in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, reaffirmed calls for the cessation of hostilities and an immediate ceasefire, which were endorsed by the Peace and Security Council on 14 February. The summit’s final communiqué stressed the need to implement the harmonized plan for neutralizing FDLR and disengaging RDF from the Democratic Republic of the Congo while also resuming direct negotiations with all parties, including M23, under the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

11. On 24 February, the EAC and SADC Chiefs of Defence Forces met in Dar es Salaam and recommended that an EAC-SADC field technical assessment team be constituted to evaluate the security and humanitarian situation, as well as the status of critical infrastructure, in North and South Kivu. They also recommended that SADC and EAC enhance, and second additional staff to, the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to monitor a cessation of hostilities, ceasefire and the humanitarian situation. They also called upon the United Nations to develop appropriate measures to enhance the capacity of MONUSCO in North and South Kivu. On 13 March, the Extraordinary

Summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC announced the phased withdrawal of the SADC Mission and the termination of its mandate.

12. On 15 February, the President of Angola, João Lourenço, assumed the rotating presidency of the African Union, during the thirty-eighth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. On the eve of the African Union Summit, President Lourenço, in his capacity as the African Union-designated mediator, highlighted dialogue as the solution to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and expressed concern about the military advances of M23, supported by RDF. On 12 March, the Government of Angola announced that it would commence the facilitation of direct talks between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 on 18 March in Luanda. On 17 March, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced that it would participate in talks with AFC/M23. However, on the same day, AFC/M23 cancelled its participation, attributing its withdrawal to recent sanctions imposed on its members. Angolan authorities later announced that the talks would not take place on 18 March. In a joint statement released following a meeting hosted by the Emir of Qatar in Doha on 18 March, President Tshisekedi and President Kagame reaffirmed the commitment of all parties to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire as agreed at the joint EAC-SADC summit of 8 February and agreed to continue discussions.

13. On 28 February, following the adoption of Security Council resolution [2773 \(2025\)](#) one week earlier, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, travelled to Kinshasa to discuss with President Tshisekedi and MONUSCO leadership the implementation of the resolution.

14. Meanwhile, MONUSCO continued to employ its good offices at the national and provincial levels in support of the Nairobi and Luanda processes, offering its political and technical expertise.

### III. Protection of civilians

15. The security situation in the MONUSCO area of operations deteriorated drastically from early January due to a renewed offensive by M23, supported by RDF, leading to the capture of several strategic cities and towns. The reporting period was marked by a significant build-up and reinforcement of foreign military forces in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. A recruitment drive in support of FARDC was launched across the country.

16. Following the capture of Minova by M23, supported by RDF, on 21 January, the security situation in South Kivu also worsened rapidly. M23 later took control of other towns and cities in the province, including Kalehe, the Kavumu airport and, on 16 February, Bukavu. This gave M23 control of the shore of Lake Kivu. On 18 February, M23 advanced further and captured Kamanyola, on the border between Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. MONUSCO recorded 614 security incidents in Ituri and North Kivu, resulting in 1,044 civilians reportedly killed, including 126 women and 148 children, and 324 others injured, including 63 women and 57 children. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) were the main perpetrator of violence against civilians (455 civilians killed).

#### North Kivu

17. M23, supported by RDF, pursued its territorial expansion (see map), capturing mine-rich areas and strategic cities, including Masisi Centre, Sake and Goma on 4, 23 and 27 January, respectively. As a result, the freedom of movement of MONUSCO

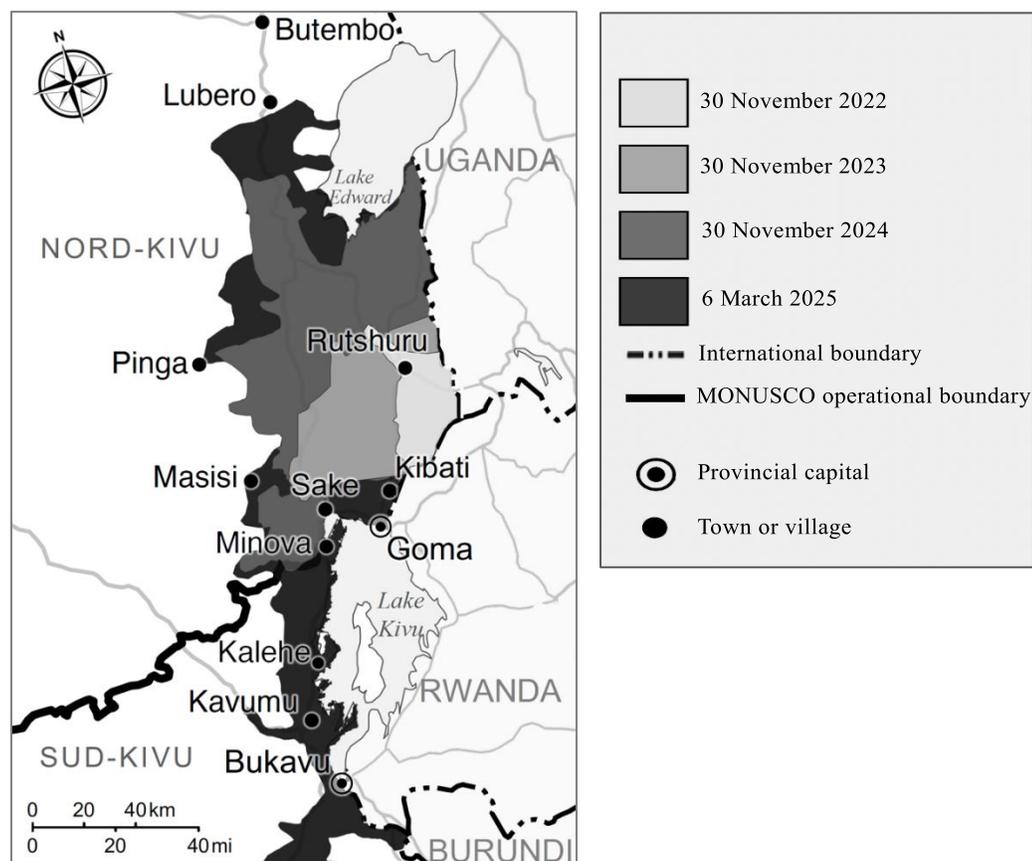
has been increasingly restricted, including in Sake, Kiwanja, Kitshanga and Kanyobagonga and around Goma, where the Mission maintains positions.

18. In response to the advances by M23, supported by RDF, on 23 January towards Sake, which included the use of heavy artillery, MONUSCO enhanced information-sharing and joint tactical planning with FARDC. MONUSCO also activated Operation Springbok III aimed at preventing further advances on Mubambiro and Goma, and bolstered its defensive posture with a quick reaction force, a rapid deployment battalion, a reserve battalion, special forces and an artillery battery.

19. Despite these efforts, M23 seized Goma on 27 January. RDF support for AFC/M23 included indirect fire and aerial support and at least one RDF drone strike on 26 January. The clashes resulted in three MONUSCO peacekeepers being killed and 37 other peacekeepers injured. Goma airport sustained severe damage.

Map

**Expansion of territory held by the Mouvement du 23 mars, supported by the Rwanda Defence Forces, 30 November 2022–6 March 2025**



Source: MONUSCO/Joint Mission Analysis Centre.

Base map source: United Nations Geospatial, MONUSCO deployment map.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

20. The capture of Goma significantly heightened insecurity and protection challenges in North Kivu. At the peak of the M23 offensive, over 1,800 civilians and disarmed Congolese defence and security forces were sheltered at MONUSCO bases. Critical infrastructure, including water and electricity supplies and medical services, were seriously disrupted. Uncollected bodies remaining in the streets of Goma and in

Lake Kivu contributed to the spread of infectious diseases. Weapons proliferation, looting, reports of targeted killings and other serious violations and abuses, together with a surge in vigilante justice, fuelled by escaped prison detainees and other armed actors, further destabilized the security environment and heightened the risk of public unrest and the breakdown of law and order.

21. Following the death of the Governor of North Kivu, Major General Peter Cirimwami, who sustained gunshot wounds while visiting the front line on 23 January and subsequently succumbed to his injuries, MONUSCO engaged with his successor, Major General Somo Kakule Evariste, who was appointed on 29 January and is based in Beni, to coordinate protection priorities with the Congolese provincial authorities.

22. Persistent threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers and M23 restrictions on MONUSCO freedom of movement, together with M23 control of the Goma airport, severely affected MONUSCO operations and forced the Mission to carefully balance its mandated priority to protect civilians with the need to ensure the security of its personnel. Amid growing M23 hostility towards MONUSCO, between 3,000 and 4,300 civilians gathered at various MONUSCO bases around Goma on 17 February to demand the handover of disarmed security forces under MONUSCO protection, echoing the repeated demands of M23.

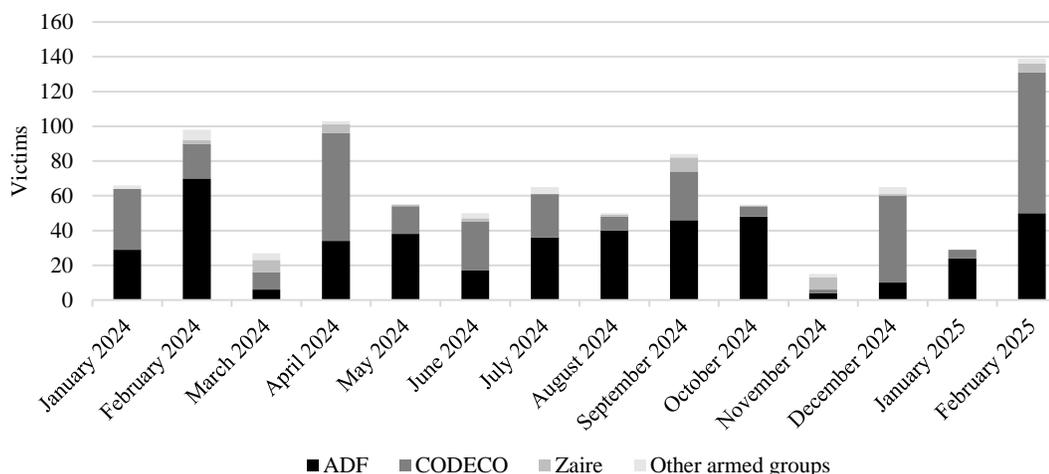
23. Meanwhile, M23, supported by RDF, continued to consolidate its control, establishing parallel administrations in large parts of Masisi, Rutshuru, South Lubero and Nyiragongo territories, as well as in Goma and surrounding areas. On 5 and 11 February, respectively, M23 appointed a parallel provincial government for North Kivu and a mayor for Goma. The group installed its own parallel police, established customary and administrative services and continued to levy taxes, while continuing military recruitment.

24. In the Grand Nord area, exploiting the security vacuum created by the redeployment of FARDC to southern Lubero to engage M23, a surge in ADF attacks in late December, in particular in Lubero and Beni and near Butembo, resulted in at least 224 civilians killed. In response, MONUSCO established a standing combat deployment in Mbau and Oicha, strengthening the Intervention Brigade's presence and enhancing its ability to protect affected populations. In January, cooperation between MONUSCO and FARDC improved, leading to more coordinated efforts against ADF. Meanwhile, growing anti-MONUSCO sentiment, fuelled by persistent insecurity and civilian frustration over the protracted conflict, further constrained the Mission's engagement with local communities, complicating its protection efforts.

### **Ituri**

25. In Ituri, reciprocal attacks between Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) factions and Zaire increased, in particular in Djugu and Mahagi territories, with attacks targeting civilians near sites for internally displaced persons, on farmland and in mining areas. ADF also continued to pose a grave threat to civilians (see figure I).

Figure I  
**Killings of civilians by armed groups in Ituri Province verified by the Mission, January 2024–February 2025**



Source: MONUSCO/United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
 Abbreviations: ADF, Allied Democratic Forces; CODECO, Coopérative pour le développement du Congo.

26. On 31 December, MONUSCO concluded Operation Secure Harvest, which involved over 860 joint patrols in approximately 40 locations, allowing farmers in Ituri to safely harvest their crops while facilitating MONUSCO collaboration with FARDC.

27. In January, the security situation briefly improved following a shift in ADF activity from southern Ituri to North Kivu, along with preparations for the Aru II dialogue and the enrolment of Zaire elements in the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme. However, this was followed by an uptick in violent attacks against civilians by ADF, CODECO and Zaire in February. From 8 to 27 January, MONUSCO supported government-led consultations involving representatives from the national disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme and the Armed Defence Reserve with armed groups, including Zaire, CODECO, the Force de résistance patriotique de l’Ituri, the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo and Chini ya Tuna. These discussions were aimed at preparations for the Aru II dialogue, which have stalled due to the growing insecurity in the East.

28. Following a CODECO attack during the night of 10 to 11 February on Djaiba, in Djugu Territory, which killed 58 civilians, including 27 children, and injured 8 others of Hema origin, MONUSCO conducted a medical evacuation operation on 11 February, transporting six injured civilians, including four children, from Djaiba to Bunia. MONUSCO also dispatched patrols to protect two internally displaced persons sites in Djaiba and Lodha and established mobile operating bases in Lodha and Aar to prevent a further escalation of violence.

29. From 12 to 15 February, CODECO killed 16 civilians in Lodja, Bassa, Gina and Aar, triggering the displacement of hundreds of internally displaced persons towards the Bule area. In response to threats of attacks on internally displaced persons sites in Drodro and Lodha, as well as on Dhendro and Bule, MONUSCO systematically deployed patrols to these areas. Other incidents attributed to Zaire were also reported, including the killing of four civilians in the Landa and Lingo localities.

30. On 31 January, due to the deterioration of the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) deployed approximately 2,000 additional troops in North Kivu. In Ituri on 16 February, UPDF crossed the border in southern Irumu and deployed approximately 1,000 soldiers to Bunia, which remains outside the area of the joint FARDC-UPDF Operation Shujaa. In a statement published on X (formerly known as Twitter) on 21 February, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, said that UPDF soldiers present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were tasked with fighting ADF alongside FARDC and protecting construction of the Kasindi-Beni-Butembo road. President Museveni added that UPDF had secured the permission of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to deploy in Lubero and Bunia. On 1 March, a convoy of 12 UPDF vehicles entered through the Goli border point and advanced to Mahagi town, where they established a presence near the airport. On 2 March, additional reinforcements entered, reaching Mahagi before proceeding to Ngote, between Mahagi and Djugu.

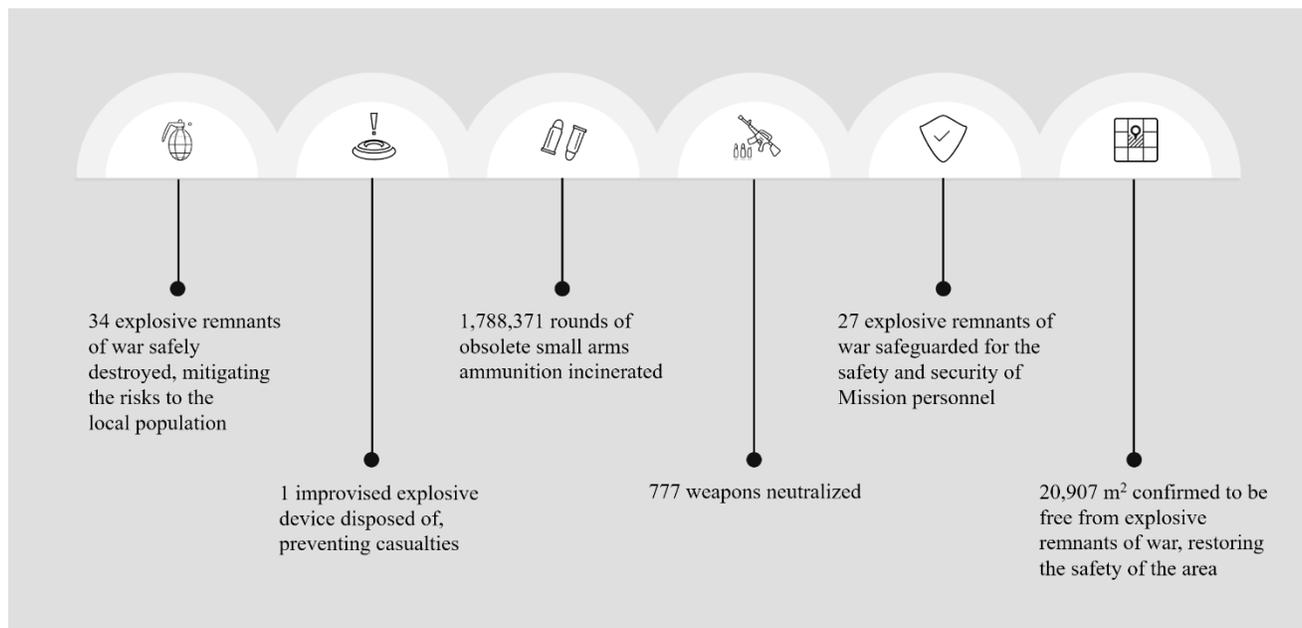
31. MONUSCO continued to patrol along main supply routes, including in Djugu and Mahagi territories, to enhance security and to facilitate economic activity and the freedom of movement of civilians and other security actors. Adjustments in posture and command improved response times. For the alerts to which it was possible to respond, MONUSCO mobilized within 15 minutes to deter potential attacks.

32. Relations between the provincial assembly, civil society and the military governor deteriorated amid debates over the state of siege in place since May 2021 and concerns over governance and representation gaps. MONUSCO leveraged its good offices to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders, de-escalate tensions and encourage the participation of civil society actors in governance processes. The Mission also engaged with youth associations, including the youth parliament and the provincial youth council, to raise awareness across the province's five territories of the risks of association with armed groups, contributing to reinforcing trust and collaboration between youth and provincial authorities.

33. MONUSCO continued to provide technical expertise and guidance to local and provincial stakeholders to facilitate the establishment of a permanent dialogue mechanism in Ituri aimed at consolidating existing initiatives by monitoring the implementation of local peace agreements and mediating disputes.

34. The Mine Action Service cleared 34 explosive remnants of war, disposed of one improvised explosive device, incinerated 1,788,371 rounds of small arms ammunition and cleared 20,907 m<sup>2</sup> of land in Ituri and North Kivu (see figure II). The M23 offensive into Goma resulted in the contamination of parts of the city with explosive ordnance. UNMAS safeguarded 27 explosive remnants of war and supported MONUSCO by assessing and rendering safe 777 weapons. However, M23 restrictions on the freedom of movement of MONUSCO have prevented UNMAS from assisting with the safe disposal of unexploded ordnance.

Figure II  
**Activities of the Mine Action Service, 1 December 2024–28 February 2025**



Source: MONUSCO/Mine Action Service.

## IV. Human rights situation

### A. Human rights and international humanitarian law

35. The human rights situation, in particular in M23-controlled areas, sharply deteriorated and access constraints significantly impeded verification of allegations of human rights violations and abuses. In North Kivu, MONUSCO has received credible reports of killings of at least 126 persons in areas under M23 control since 26 January, as well as abductions of civilians and forced recruitment of youth, including children, in and around Goma. In North and South Kivu, M23 destroyed and dismantled internally displaced persons sites, forcing the return of those displaced without ensuring safety guarantees or appropriate conditions. Reports of forced recruitment and forced labour of civilians by M23 were also received. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has documented breaches of international humanitarian law, including the assault on and raid by M23 of two hospitals in Goma and the subsequent abduction of at least 130 sick and wounded people suspected of being FARDC or of being affiliated with groups operating under the Wazalendo or Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP) label.

36. In North and South Kivu, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office received requests for individual protection from human rights defenders, journalists, members of civil society and judicial authorities under threat and at risk of reprisals from M23.

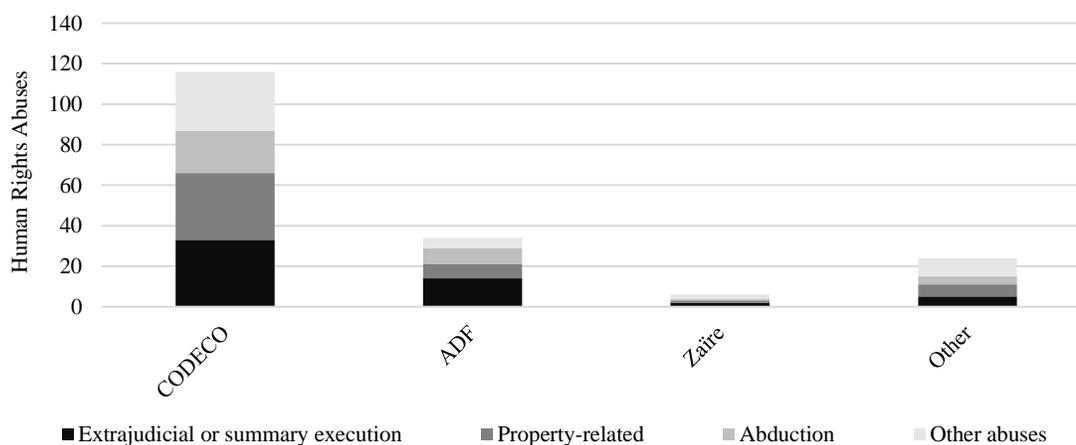
37. MONUSCO continued to receive reports of extrajudicial killings, sexual violence and other human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by members of FARDC and armed groups, including those organized under the Wazalendo or VDP label, in the Petit Nord area of North Kivu and in Kalehe territory, South Kivu.

38. In addition, ethnically motivated attacks, arbitrary arrests and detentions and threats in South Kivu, North Kivu, Kasai Central and Kinshasa continued to be documented. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office has received 12 allegations of hate speech and incitement to hostility targeting the Banyamulenge and Tutsi communities or those who speak Kiswahili. Incidents of physical and verbal violence against journalists by unknown individuals in Goma, one case of lynching by an angry mob at an internally displaced persons site and death threats against opposition activists in Kinshasa, all due to their perceived ethnicity, have also been documented. In December, following advocacy by MONUSCO, the draft law against tribalism, racism and xenophobia was resubmitted to the National Assembly.

39. In Ituri, the human rights situation also significantly deteriorated. CODECO and ADF were responsible for the most serious abuses, with a significant spike in December, including 88 people killed by CODECO and 76 victims of killings by ADF in Ituri and North Kivu. An investigation conducted from 15 to 22 January documented 92 violations and abuses affecting at least 164 victims, committed primarily by armed groups (95 per cent), notably CODECO (73 abuses) and Zaire (12 abuses), while 5 per cent were committed by State agents (see figure III).

Figure III

**Human rights abuses by alleged armed perpetrators in Ituri Province verified by the Mission, 1 December 2024–28 February 2025**



Source: MONUSCO/United Nations Joint Human Rights Office.

Abbreviations: ADF, Allied Democratic Forces; CODECO, Coopérative pour le développement du Congo.

40. On 30 January, the Audiovisual and Communication Council called on media outlets to refrain from disseminating information concerning the conflict in the east without citing official sources, and from broadcasting live call-in programmes on military operations, or face sanctions.

41. On 3 December, the Minister of Justice launched Operation Ndobu to combat urban crime in Kinshasa, declaring that death sentences for alleged criminal gang members (“Kulunas”) would be enforced. Approximately 170 individuals have since been transferred to Angenga prison, Mongala Province, for execution, following their convictions and sentencing by mobile courts. On 18 January, President Tshisekedi informed the diplomatic community in Kinshasa that the death penalty would be applied only in cases of terrorism or treason; however, the scope of those crimes could be subject to interpretation.

42. On 7 February, the Human Rights Council, of which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a member since 1 January 2025, held a special session on the

country, subsequently establishing a fact-finding mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as an independent commission of inquiry to investigate serious violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in North and South Kivu since January 2022.

## **B. Child protection**

43. Between 1 December and 28 February, MONUSCO verified 472 grave violations of children's rights against 403 children (313 boys and 90 girls), including abduction (206), killing and maiming (115), recruitment and use (88), sexual violence (39), attacks against schools and hospitals (19) and denial of humanitarian access (5). Grave violations were verified in North Kivu (350), Ituri (84) and South Kivu (38) and were attributed to M23 (266), CODECO (52) Nyatura (45), ADF (18), Raia Mutomboki (14), Mai-Mai Mazembe (11), FDLR-Forces combattantes abacunguzi (7) and other armed groups (39). The Congolese defence and security forces were responsible for 19 violations, and foreign forces for 1 violation.

44. In the context of the renewed M23 offensive, MONUSCO received reports of an increase in abductions and forced recruitment of children in areas controlled by the armed group. However, the security situation on the ground constrained the Mission's ability to verify these reports.

45. In December, as a result of engagement by MONUSCO, two armed groups operating under the Wazalendo or VDP label in North Kivu signed unilateral declarations to prevent child recruitment and use and other grave violations against children. MONUSCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also engaged the Government regarding the adoption of a charter against the instrumentalization of children for political, electoral and conflict purposes.

## **C. Gender and conflict-related sexual violence**

46. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office documented 106 cases of conflict-related sexual violence against 331 individuals (260 women, 70 girls and 1 boy), of which 156 were survivors of conflict-related sexual violence committed by FARDC, followed by CODECO (45), Twigwaneho (34), FDLR (25), Mai-Mai groups (19) and M23 (15). Most of these cases were documented in North Kivu (65 cases), followed by Ituri (19 cases) and South Kivu (22 cases). The M23 offensive in North Kivu and South Kivu and the subsequent mass displacements, along with an influx of combatants and escaped prisoners, have significantly heightened the vulnerability of girls and women to conflict-related sexual violence. Moreover, security and access constraints severely inhibited the verification of such abuses, with many cases going unreported.

47. During the 27 January Muzenze prison break in Goma, 4,709 inmates escaped, with Congolese officials reporting that at least 165 women had been raped by male inmates. The women's wing of the prison was subsequently set on fire, killing nearly all female inmates and their dependants. In South Kivu, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office verified over 100 cases of rape against women in several villages in Fizi territory between 22 and 25 February by FARDC soldiers and Twigwaneho elements.

48. Before the M23 offensive, United Nations police conducted 10 awareness-raising sessions on sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence at internally displaced person camps for 1,028 community members, including 477 women and 330 children. In addition, four capacity-building workshops were conducted for 79 members of the Congolese National Police, including 17 women.

## **V. Humanitarian challenges and response**

49. The humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the most severe in the world. As of December 2024, 7.8 million Congolese were internally displaced, including 2.8 million in North Kivu, 1.7 million in South Kivu and 1.4 million in Ituri. The situation in the eastern provinces has severely deteriorated since January as a result of M23 offensives in North and South Kivu.

50. In North Kivu, the escalating crisis triggered massive new displacements in extremely precarious conditions. As at 20 February, 96 per cent of displaced persons from 14 sites in and around Goma – totalling 677,000 people – had left. There are growing concerns about the potential involuntary nature of these movements and the lack of viable alternatives for those affected. The fighting has severely strained medical facilities, while humanitarian facilities and warehouses were looted and ransacked, leading to the loss of vital food, medical supplies and emergency stockpiles. Health risks are rising due to mpox and cholera outbreaks in Goma, while medical facilities remain overwhelmed with the treatment of the wounded. Humanitarian organizations are adapting operations, while access to many areas remains challenging due to the volatile security situation. The capture of the Goma airport by M23 further hampered humanitarian logistics and access.

51. In South Kivu, M23 offensives have displaced over 250,000 people since early January, further straining the limited resources of host communities. Between 1 January and 10 February, more than 100,000 people fled to Idjwi. Cash assistance by humanitarian partners, targeting approximately 36,000 newly arrived displaced persons, had to be suspended due to the deterioration of the security environment. In Uvira, over 126,000 internally displaced persons are currently without assistance due to ongoing clashes restricting humanitarian access. The capture of the Kavumu airport by M23 also hampered humanitarian logistics and access.

52. On 26 January, in response to the scale and severity of the crisis, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved a \$17 million rapid response allocation from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support urgent life-saving interventions in North and South Kivu.

53. The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, jointly launched on 27 February by the Government, the United Nations and humanitarian partners, is aimed at providing assistance to 11 million out of 21.2 million people in need with a budget of \$2.54 billion. The escalating conflict, worsening needs and operational constraints underscore the urgent need for greater international support to scale up response efforts. As at 28 February, the response plan was funded at only 7 per cent.

## **VI. Support for the stabilization and strengthening of State institutions and for key governance and security sector reforms**

### **A. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration**

54. On 22 January, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team facilitated a workshop in Kinshasa with the new leadership of the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme and with partners to identify priorities and strengthen collaboration, including the strengthening of the programme's governance structures, the development of socioeconomic development initiatives and a complementary violence reduction approach. This followed the appointment, on 19 December, of Jean de Dieu Ntanga Ntita as the new national

coordinator of the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme, alongside two deputies.

55. In Ituri, in the context of the Aru II dialogue, the Mission supported the national authorities, including the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme, for the partial demobilization of 1,217 Zaire combatants in January, who handed over 108 weapons to the authorities in Mabanga, in Djugu territory. MONUSCO has been providing short-term employment opportunities to ex-combatants and community members to facilitate reinsertion and foster social cohesion. Following consultations with provincial, national and international partners, as well as with the United Nations country team, a joint partner support plan has been developed to accelerate the socioeconomic reinsertion of these demobilized combatants while ensuring that those who are suspected of committing serious human rights violations and abuses will be disqualified. However, the recent cycle of attacks against civilians risks derailing the initial disarmament and demobilization progress made in the framework of this dialogue.

56. In December, two pilot projects under the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme, supported by MONUSCO in collaboration with the United Nations country team and other international partners, were completed. These projects, which have been ongoing since June 2022, were implemented in Ituri, North Kivu (Beni and Lubero) and South Kivu and supported the community-based reinsertion of 8,628 beneficiaries (1,770 of them women), including 1,482 ex-combatants and 6,075 community members. Beneficiaries rehabilitated 77.5 km of roads, enhancing local infrastructure and injecting over \$1.6 million into the economy in the form of wages paid directly to beneficiaries. The projects also allowed the provision of psychosocial support, facilitating 48 community dialogues to address reinsertion challenges and the training of 677 women leaders to improve their participation in conflict resolution.

57. In North Kivu, and increasingly in South Kivu, the renewed offensive of M23 led to widespread recruitment campaigns by FARDC, including under the label of the Wazalendo or VDP, as well as by M23. In early February, three new FARDC/Armed Defence Reserve recruitment centres opened in Beni and Butembo. Government support for Wazalendo/VDP groups led to the increased proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

58. The Mission continued to support the repatriation of foreign combatants and their dependants, repatriating three male combatants, two female combatants and one boy and two girl dependants to Rwanda, jointly with the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme, between December and mid-January. Following the capture of Goma by M23, MONUSCO, in coordination with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, is taking steps to ensure the safe and voluntary disarmament and repatriation of foreign armed groups.

## **B. Security sector reform and support for the justice system and the fight against impunity**

59. MONUSCO continued to advocate for the operationalization of the National Commission on Security Sector Reform under the Office of the National Security Adviser. However, the recent M23 offensive delayed the Commission's launch and led the Government to divert resources towards immediate security needs.

60. From 2 to 6 December, with MONUSCO support, the Military Schools General Command organized a workshop for 54 representatives of FARDC staff commands

and specialized corps, including 17 women, to develop a standardized military training doctrine in line with the requirements of contemporary field operations.

61. To enhance national capacity for investigating and prosecuting international crimes, MONUSCO trained judicial actors in ballistic and digital investigations in Goma and Bunia. MONUSCO technical and logistical support for the organization of mobile court hearings in North Kivu led to the conviction of an armed group leader for war crimes committed between 2011 and 2014 in Masisi territory, North Kivu. The Mission also contributed to strengthening the accountability of judicial actors and institutions through four judicial inspections in Ituri.

62. Following the fall of Goma, civilian and military justice systems in the city ceased to function, with infrastructure damaged, files destroyed and magistrates leaving the city. In South Kivu, the judicial authorities, with the support of the Mission's residual capacity, have digitized priority judicial files to safeguard them. Similar actions were also carried out preventively in Bunia.

63. Prison overcrowding remained severe, with admissions far exceeding releases as the decongestion commission in Kinshasa halted operations. MONUSCO supported efforts in Beni and Bunia to fast-track case processing, resulting in the release of 519 inmates, including 23 women and 59 minors. Similarly, 111 prisoners were released through presidential pardon, while 49 detainees, including 34 men and 15 minors (including 1 girl), were released from Bukavu prison on 13 February by the ad hoc decongestion commission there. MONUSCO also facilitated mobile court hearings, leading to 20 acquittals and subsequent releases (17 civilians and 3 military) and 185 convictions, including 66 members of FARDC and 2 police officers. MONUSCO technical and logistical support contributed to the release of 221 detainees and the transfer of 225 others following judicial inspections in Congolese National Police detention facilities in Bunia, Beni, Goma and Bukavu.

64. The M23 offensive led to prison breaks in North Kivu, at the Muzenze prison in Goma, as well as at the Bukavu and Kabare prisons in South Kivu. These incidents resulted in the escape of 7,208 prisoners, including 4,709 from Goma, 2,278 from Bukavu and 221 from Kabare. Among them were 4,502 high-risk inmates, including M23 and ADF members, who accounted for 62 per cent of the escaped. On 19 February, FARDC deserters attacked the Uvira prison to free comrades. About 553 inmates escaped, and over 300 fled the Kalemie central prison.

## **VII. Gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal**

65. Building on the lessons learned from the MONUSCO transition in South Kivu, the provincial integrated transition team in North Kivu was officially relaunched on 3 December. In Ituri, the team met on 21 January to discuss next steps for relaunching the working groups and identifying priorities for the transition. From 4 to 6 December, the joint technical secretariat conducted a joint evaluation mission to South Kivu to assess the implementation of the provincial transition road map. The evaluation mission underscored the urgent need to bolster FARDC and Congolese National Police deployments to protection hotspots, in particular in Mwenga, Fizi, Kalehe and Baraka, and to enhance logistics, equipment and supplies in support of deployed forces. The first midterm report of the United Nations support plan for the transition in South Kivu, completed in January, highlighted funding gaps despite resource mobilization efforts by the Government and the United Nations system.

66. Planning at the provincial and national levels was significantly affected by the rapid deterioration in the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In South Kivu, implementation of the Government's provincial road map for

the transition was suspended following the capture of Bukavu by M23. The efforts of the joint working group comprising the Government, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team to define the modalities of the tailored approach to the Mission's disengagement were severely compromised by the advances of M23 in North and South Kivu, raising questions about the continued feasibility of the exercise in a radically changed context.

## **VIII. Women and peace and security**

67. MONUSCO continued to employ its good offices to promote inclusive governance and the meaningful participation of women in the political sphere. On 21 January, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo met with Congolese women leaders to revive advocacy for peace in the eastern part of the country. Participants highlighted the need for dialogue to address the crisis in North and South Kivu, the urgency of humanitarian aid for displaced populations and the importance of women's solidarity and advocacy at the national, regional and international levels. In addition, MONUSCO and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) met with women leaders and ambassadors to discuss the response to the security and humanitarian crisis in North Kivu.

68. MONUSCO continued to promote positive masculinity by training 40 Congolese National Police and FARDC officers, as well as 17 women mediators and peace ambassadors, in Goma. In Bunia and Ituri, MONUSCO partnered with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children to develop a positive masculinity action plan, which offers opportunities for dialogue while promoting an inclusive way to build strong, violence-free households and communities.

## **IX. Mission effectiveness**

### **A. Mission performance**

#### **Military component**

69. MONUSCO deployed 10,173 troops, 7.67 per cent of them women, and 448 United Nations military experts on mission, of whom 23 per cent were women, against an authorized strength of 11,500 troops and 600 military experts. The percentage of women among military staff officers and observers remained steady at 23 per cent, while female participation among contingents saw a slight decline from 7.73 per cent to 7.67 per cent. In line with its Action for Peacekeeping Plus commitments, MONUSCO evaluated 22 military units, implementing performance improvement plans for each. On 10 February, Lieutenant-General Ulisses de Mesquita Gomes took command of the force component of MONUSCO.

70. The closure of the Goma airport disrupted scheduled troop rotations, medical evacuations and cargo transport, forcing costly rerouting via Entebbe, Uganda, and straining force sustainment. Level IV medical evacuation flights to Kenya and Uganda could not be conducted, and casualty evacuation/medical evacuation flights into Goma remained suspended. In the central sector, flight restrictions blocked aerial evacuations from Kitshanga, Kiwanja, Kanyobagonga and Sake, forcing lengthy road evacuations and jeopardizing casualty evacuation protocols. Since taking control of Goma, M23 has insisted that MONUSCO provide 48-hour advance notice for logistical convoys and has imposed restrictions on deliveries to the SADC Mission. The movement restrictions have also blocked fuel deliveries, affecting generators and critical communications. Military deployments to Goma remained restricted.

71. Staff officers from multiple troop- and police-contributing countries have been either evacuated or instructed not to return from leave, creating significant operational gaps, which have had a direct impact on command and control functions, real-time decision-making and coordination across the force.

### **Police component**

72. As at 21 January 2025, the MONUSCO police component had deployed 1,327 personnel from 31 contributing countries, comprising 1,047 formed police personnel from six formed police units (including 210 women) and 276 individual police personnel (including 88 women).

73. The performance of formed police units has significantly improved, with better equipment deployment, high serviceability rates and increased operational effectiveness. This has resulted in 634 additional quick-response interventions, 17 more escorts and 18 extra patrols in and around internally displaced persons sites compared with the previous reporting period.

74. During the recent developments in the east, the two formed police units in Goma strengthened their defensive posture, deploying additional quick reaction teams at MONUSCO bases. They also conducted critical security interventions, including the extraction of United Nations personnel from danger zones and joint escorts with the military to support United Nations staff relocations. During the advance of M23 on Goma, sustained shelling destroyed the women's barracks at the MONUSCO Jambar camp, partially damaged the men's barracks and affected other facilities. Following the takeover of Goma by M23, the police units reinforced the Mission's efforts to protect United Nations personnel and assets, despite severe logistical and operational challenges, including movement restrictions and patrol limitations. These constraints, imposed by M23 through numerous checkpoints, hindered essential operations such as evacuations of United Nations staff and civilian protection near internally displaced persons camps. During the hostilities, nine formed police unit members sustained minor injuries.

75. In Kinshasa, formed police units faced constraints on their capacity to secure United Nations premises amid growing civil unrest. The events of 28 January exposed gaps in the capacity of the Congolese National Police to protect United Nations installations, highlighting the urgent need for reinforced security measures and resource allocation in Kinshasa. Two formed police units, with 360 personnel in total, are solely responsible for securing all United Nations staff and assets, as no other MONUSCO forces are present, raising serious concerns about the adequacy of security arrangements and the ability of the formed police units to manage potential risks in an increasingly volatile environment.

### **Civilian component**

76. As at 27 February, 2,050 civilian personnel (23 per cent of them women), including 252 United Nations Volunteers (47.2 per cent of them women) and 38 government-provided personnel (32 per cent of them women), were serving with MONUSCO.

## **B. Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System**

77. In line with its reporting obligations, MONUSCO utilized the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System to conduct a mission-wide assessment that informed parts of the present report in order to enhance the information available to the Security Council on the Mission's impact vis-à-vis mandated priorities. Data

generated against the Mission's results framework were also used to produce fact sheets and infographics.

### **C. Strategic communications**

78. MONUSCO intensified efforts to counter misinformation and disinformation through social media monitoring, public awareness initiatives in national languages, grass-roots outreach, media engagement and radio content to combat hate speech. Targeted training sessions and awareness campaigns in Kinshasa, Goma and Bunia, in which 30 per cent of participants were women, strengthened community engagement and partnerships with influencers. In addition, MONUSCO and the United Nations Headquarters misinformation and disinformation team trained Radio Okapi and public information staff to enhance the Mission's response capacity.

79. To mark 25 years of MONUSCO and its predecessors (United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), the Mission launched "MONUSCO beyond the headlines", an information campaign highlighting its contributions and countering disinformation narratives.

80. During the M23 offensive in North and South Kivu, MONUSCO and Congolese authorities enhanced joint communication to ensure coordinated messaging. In a joint press briefing, government and FARDC spokespersons acknowledged the support of MONUSCO during operations and honoured fallen peacekeepers. Social media monitoring helped to counter disinformation and assess public sentiment, while verified battlefield footage and recognition of the role of MONUSCO in the protection of civilians helped mitigate anti-MONUSCO sentiment.

81. Despite these efforts, targeted misinformation and disinformation campaigns led by M23-affiliated online campaigners escalated, in particular against the Mission's leadership and female staff, with some receiving threats of sexual violence.

### **D. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse**

82. MONUSCO continued to manage legacy cases of sexual exploitation and abuse while maximizing its efforts to prevent further cases of serious misconduct. From 1 December 2024 to 27 February 2025, a total of 11 cases of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported. While three had occurred in 2025, eight had occurred in previous years. Nine of the 11 cases were attributed to military personnel and two to civilians.

83. MONUSCO remained committed to providing assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and, during the period under review, referred three alleged victims to the United Nations Population Fund and three of their children to UNICEF. The Mission continues to foster partnerships with Member States to reinforce their commitment to combating sexual exploitation and abuse, while upholding the highest standards of conduct for all personnel. This Mission's commitment to the fight against misconduct was emphasized during the visits to MONUSCO of the Victims' Rights Advocate, Najla Nassif Palma, from 15 to 20 December and the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Christian Saunders, from 18 to 22 January. The latter also focused on assessing the effectiveness of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse frameworks in the country during the MONUSCO transition, including the provision of support to victims.

84. Between 26 January and 20 February, MONUSCO conducted briefings and refresher trainings on the prevention of misconduct, especially sexual exploitation

and abuse, in Kinshasa and Entebbe for about 700 civilian, military and United Nations police personnel from Goma, Bukavu and Beni.

## **X. Regional support**

85. In line with Security Council resolution [2765 \(2024\)](#) and its mandate, MONUSCO remained committed to delivering targeted, demand-driven support to the SADC Mission and the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, despite the challenging operating environment during the period under review.

### **A. Implementation of Security Council resolution [2746 \(2024\)](#)**

86. From December until early January, in response to specific requests from the SADC Mission, MONUSCO provided logistical assistance and capacity-building support, including the allocation of an armoured vehicle and the facilitation of key personnel movements.

87. Following the capture of Goma by M23, MONUSCO provided rations and potable water for 4,500 SADC Mission troops for 15 days, as well as medical support for four injured SADC Mission troops. The Mission also coordinated the repatriation of the human remains of 16 SADC Mission soldiers via Entebbe. On 24 February, MONUSCO facilitated the repatriation on medical grounds of 192 SADC Mission troops by transporting them by road to the Gisenyi airstrip.

### **B. Support of the Mission for the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism**

88. Building on the commitments made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda under the Luanda process, the Mission encouraged both parties to fully operationalize the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism in charge of monitoring the ceasefire that initially came into force on 4 August.

89. In response to a request by Angola on 14 November, the Mission built a camp at the Goma airport for 91 mechanism infantry company troops. However, on 26 January, due to worsening security and ceasefire violations, Angola withdrew its advance team, leaving the camp unused.

## **XI. Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

90. From 24 January, as M23 advanced towards Goma and furthered its progression in North and South Kivu, the Mission coordinated protective measures for United Nations personnel, humanitarian partners and critical infrastructure. Due to security threats, non-essential United Nations staff from Goma and Beni in North Kivu, as well as from Baraka, Bukavu and Uvira in South Kivu, were temporarily relocated. In Goma, 367 international staff were evacuated to Entebbe, and nearly 1,200 national staff and their dependants relocated to Kinshasa. In South Kivu (Bukavu, Uvira and Baraka), 49 international staff were evacuated to Entebbe or Bujumbura, Burundi, and another nearly 1,200 national staff and their dependants relocated to Kinshasa. In Beni, 97 international staff were evacuated to Entebbe and 459 national staff and their dependants relocated to Kinshasa. Essential personnel remained to sustain critical

operations, including food distribution, medical assistance and protection for vulnerable communities.

91. In addition, 232 national and 75 international staff sheltered in the MONUSCO compound during intense fighting in Goma, with shelling causing indirect damage around MONUSCO bases. On 17 February, a demonstration against MONUSCO, with participants mobilized by M23, took place in Goma. There were at least 14 recorded cases of forced entry or uninvited visits by M23 or unidentified armed personnel at United Nations staff residences, as well as restrictions on the movement of staff at the Gisenyi border.

92. The evacuation and relocation of MONUSCO personnel were carried out under highly complex conditions, made possible through close coordination with and the effective support of United Nations teams in Rwanda and Uganda.

93. Following the 28 January violent protests in Kinshasa against the M23 offensive, the United Nations adopted alternate working arrangements for all its personnel and ordered the evacuation of the families of international staff members.

## **XII. Observations**

94. The military offensive launched by M23, supported by RDF, has upended the lives of millions of innocent civilians and brought the Great Lakes region to the brink of regional war. I am appalled by the terrible suffering of civilians, including alarming levels of conflict-related sexual violence inflicted on Congolese women and children, who continue to bear the brunt of the violence. Reports of abductions, killings and involuntary returns of internally displaced persons in areas under M23 control are deeply alarming. I am also deeply concerned about continued reports of sexual violence, looting and killings allegedly perpetrated by FARDC and armed groups operating under the Wazalendo or VDP label. I welcome the decision of the Human Rights Council to establish a fact-finding mission and an independent commission of inquiry on the serious human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in North Kivu and South Kivu.

95. I deplore the loss of two South African peacekeepers and one Uruguayan peacekeeper during the offensive by M23, supported by RDF, on Sake and Goma. I express my condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers and to the Governments of South Africa and Uruguay and wish a speedy recovery to those injured in defence of the mandate provided by the Security Council. I recall that attacks against United Nations personnel may constitute war crimes and call on the appropriate authorities to bring those responsible to justice. I extend my condolences to the families of the fallen SADC Mission soldiers and to the Governments of South Africa and Malawi. I wish a speedy recovery to all SADC Mission personnel injured during the offensive on Sake and Goma. I urge M23 to lift all restrictions on MONUSCO freedom of movement and to refrain from any action aimed at preventing the Mission from discharging its mandated responsibilities. I urge the Security Council to ensure that those responsible for impeding the work of MONUSCO or endangering the lives of United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel are held accountable for their actions.

96. The impacts of the M23 offensive in North and South Kivu have stoked political tensions in an already highly charged environment. Despite rising frustration with persistent insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is no justification for the violent attacks against diplomatic installations, including United Nations facilities, that took place in Kinshasa on 28 January. I count on the Congolese authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that those responsible are held to

account. MONUSCO remains available to provide support for investigations, as necessary.

97. I welcome the decisions of joint EAC-SADC summit of 8 February, as endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 14 February, calling for an immediate ceasefire and for the reopening of the Goma airport and humanitarian supply routes. I regret that a cessation of hostilities has not yet materialized. In line with Security Council resolution 2773 (2025), M23 must halt its offensive and immediately withdraw from Goma and Bukavu and all controlled territories. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected and RDF must withdraw. I reiterate the unwavering support of the United Nations for the Luanda and Nairobi processes and commend President João Lourenço of Angola and the former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, for the progress achieved through their efforts. I call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to return to the negotiating table and recommit to the implementation of the concept of operations for the neutralization of FDLR and the withdrawal of Rwandan forces, and for early resumption of dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congolese armed groups, with the aim of preparing the ground for their disarmament, demobilization and community-based reintegration.

98. I strongly condemn the continued attacks against civilians in North Kivu and Ituri perpetrated by ADF, M23, CODECO, FDLR and other armed groups. I call on these groups to immediately lay down their weapons and for the Congolese armed groups to join the disarmament, demobilization, community recovery and stabilization programme and for members of non-Congolese armed groups to return to their countries of origin. The United Nations remains committed to supporting dialogue with Congolese armed groups, including M23, within agreed frameworks, and will continue to support regional efforts to devise comprehensive responses to the continued threat posed by foreign armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

99. MONUSCO remains determined to deliver on its mandated priority tasks. While the Mission's ability to implement all aspects of its mandate has been severely constrained in Goma and other M23-occupied areas of North Kivu, outside of these areas it continues to implement its mandate to protect civilians and support key State institutions. MONUSCO stands ready to leverage its capabilities in support of regional peace efforts, working closely with the African Union, EAC, SADC and other key regional actors.

100. Discussions with the Government on the gradual and sustainable withdrawal of MONUSCO have been placed on hold as the focus has shifted to confronting the immediate challenges posed by the continued offensive of M23. While the Security Council has requested further details by 31 March from the joint working group on the tailored approach to the Mission's disengagement, many of the key assumptions that informed the group's previous deliberations are no longer valid in the current context. Nevertheless, the Mission remains committed to the gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal and will continue to pursue joint transition planning with the Government.

101. I call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community to provide all necessary support to ensure the financing of the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. I call on all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law.

102. There can be no military solution to the current crisis. It is therefore imperative that the parties return to the negotiating table without further delay and engage in a good faith effort to find a lasting political solution to recurring cycles of conflict that

have plagued the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo for far too long. Bringing an end to the illegal exploitation of the country's natural resources remains a critical component of any effort to bring lasting peace to the region. I strongly urge all stakeholders to support the implementation of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and reaffirm the readiness of the United Nations to address what remains a key driver of conflict. I encourage the full and meaningful participation of women in peace initiatives at all levels.

103. I wish to express my gratitude to the Special Representative for her determined leadership and persistent efforts, and to all MONUSCO personnel, members of the United Nations system, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region for their continued efforts towards lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

