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Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

Provisional

8873rd meeting

Tuesday, 5 October 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kimani	(Kenya)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mr. De Rivi��re
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Mexico	Mr. G��mez Robledo Verduzco
	Niger	Mr. Abarry
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization
Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2021/807)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2021/807)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Ms. Nelly Godelieve Madieka Mbangu, Coordinator of Sauti Ya Mama Mukongomani/Voice of Congolese Women.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/807, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Ms. Keita, Ambassador Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of the Niger, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ms. Mbangu.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita (*spoke in French*): I thank the Security Council for this new opportunity to address it to present the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/807) on the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and to provide an overview of the current situation in the country.

I would like to focus my briefing today on the overview I presented to the Council in March (see S/2021/316, annex I) and the challenges and opportunities that arise on the road that we must travel together with the Government and the Congolese people in order to continue consolidating the country's democracy, strengthen its institutions and move forward resolutely towards stabilizing the eastern provinces and ensuring the protection of civilians.

The first, and arguably the greatest, challenge concerns security and the protection of civilians in the eastern part of the country. Since the declaration of a state of siege by the Government in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, the Mission has redoubled its efforts to support the armed forces, the police forces and the judicial authorities in order to restore the presence and authority of the State in each of the territories concerned. The force's intelligence-gathering capabilities have been enhanced. Training is provided to the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) on military tactics and respect for the principles of human rights and humanitarian law.

The state of siege made it possible to strengthen the partnership between MONUSCO and the FARDC, which translates into progress on the planning and execution of operations. In that regard, all rapid reaction units should be deployed by the end of October to strengthen our capacities to protect civilians during joint operations against armed groups, in accordance with the human rights due diligence policy. Nevertheless, much remains to be done, including to ensure that the human rights of the population are systematically respected in the fight against armed groups.

The promulgation of the ordinance creating the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, on 5 July, and the subsequent appointment of the national coordinator represent a great opportunity. There is a close link between the state of siege and the Programme, which takes complementary approaches to ensure the sustainable dismantling of armed groups. I assured the President and the Prime Minister that the United Nations is fully at the disposal of the Government to advance those processes, including through the sub-working group on the Programme between the Government and MONUSCO.

Finally, the Mission also intensified its political engagement with actors from the conflict zones so

that they support the implementation of the state of siege and maintain a constructive dialogue with military governors.

Although joint military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces resulted in the dismantling of several of the group's strongholds, human rights violations perpetrated by State and non-State actors — in particularly in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces — remain worrisome. Between June and August, 367 people were the victims of arbitrary and extrajudicial killings, and 203 others, in particular women and children, were subject to sexual violence. In some regions, in particular in South Kivu, intercommunal conflicts have been fuelled by hate speech. I unequivocally condemn all hate speech, including recent statements encouraging the "cleansing" of Hauts Plateaux and justifying the murder of members of the Banyamulenge community. Such populist, belligerent speech poses a threat to the country's stability and should be judicially sanctioned in a way that sets an example.

The security situation and difficulties in accessing the east of the country continue to hamper humanitarian operations in a context in which one in three people requires assistance. Food insecurity and cyclical epidemics are major concerns. Attacks against schools and hospitals have exacerbated humanitarian challenges in several regions in the east, in particular in Ituri. With more than 5 million people displaced within the country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the highest number of displaced on the African continent. More than 26 million Congolese people are suffering from food insecurity, that is, 29 per cent of the population. I would urge Member States to increase their contributions to the 2021 humanitarian response plan, which provides \$1.98 billion to meet priority needs. To date, unfortunately, the plan has received only slightly more than one quarter of its financing.

I would like to underscore the unwavering commitment of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team to a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse and to provide comprehensive assistance to victims. Following recent allegations regarding the response to Ebola, the humanitarian country team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has strengthened its systems to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse. To do so, \$1.5 million has been made available through the humanitarian fund.

(spoke in English)

The second challenge — which I have already addressed in my previous exchanges with the Council — concerns the process of democratic consolidation. While the formation of a new Government in April this year provided an opportunity to advance on critical reforms, the focus of political actors and civil society alike is increasingly gravitating towards the 2023 elections. There is still no consensus on the composition of the National Independent Electoral Commission, and several members of the opposition have organized rallies to contest the reform of the Commission, which has already been adopted by Parliament. In this context of political suspicion, I reiterate the need for an inclusive and peaceful electoral process founded on dialogue, trust and transparency. To that end, MONUSCO continues to pursue its good offices with actors across the political spectrum, including to advocate for increased women's participation in this process.

(spoke in French)

Beyond those challenges, the implementation of the transition plan that was submitted to the Council as an annex to the current report of the Secretary-General is a real opportunity for the Congolese Government and the United Nations system. The operationalization of the plan is closely linked to the Government's programme of action and will hinge to a large extent on the ability of the authorities to finance their priorities and to create the conditions necessary for the Mission's withdrawal. The Government's draft law on financing for 2022, which focuses on security, education and health care while providing budget lines to speed up economic growth, is a step in the right direction. The ongoing resolute support of partners in achieving those far-reaching programmes will be extremely important.

With a view to the Mission's withdrawal from the province of Tanganyika in June 2022, the Mission is working closely with the agencies, funds and programmes to ensure the necessary programme assistance to build on the gains made in the province to date and to deal with the last remaining pockets of insecurity. Clearly, that will integrate the lessons learned from the withdrawal from the Kasai in June of this year.

(spoke in English)

Finally, I would like to highlight President Tshisekedi's ongoing efforts to improve the political climate in the Great Lakes region through active diplomacy and the conclusion of bilateral agreements aimed at fostering increased economic cooperation.

As I have previously noted, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's term at the helm of the African Union offers an opportunity to not only foster peace, stability and development in the Great Lakes region but also to consolidate the partnership between that continental body and the United Nations. Special Envoy Xia and I will continue to work hand in hand to support the realization of the Secretary-General's strategy for the Great Lakes region, in close consultation with the Governments of the region.

As we approach the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, I believe that the joint transition plan constitutes a road map that can help guide the work of the Mission in the coming years and prepare the ground for its orderly and responsible withdrawal. That must not obscure the fact that there is still much to do to silence the guns in the eastern provinces, foster the political dialogue necessary to pave the way for credible and transparent elections in 2023, and support the long-term strengthening of the country's institutions. I therefore call on the Council to continue to provide its full backing to MONUSCO, including by endorsing the joint transition plan with adequate financial resources and playing an active role in its operationalization.

The President: I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Abarry.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to address the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I intend to give an overview of the Committee's work since my most recent briefing to the Council, on 6 October 2020 (see S/2020/987).

Since my previous briefing, the Committee has had a total of three in-person meetings, all in 2021. Because of the coronavirus disease pandemic, it also met informally by video-teleconference on three occasions in 2020 and four in 2021. In 2020, during the informal consultations held by video-teleconference on 20 November, the Committee heard briefings on the arms embargo presented by the head of the Joint Mission

Analysis Centre of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); several representatives of the MONUSCO Arms Embargo Working Group; the head of the Programme Planning and Management Section of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS); and a representative of UNMAS in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Committee also heard a briefing from the Secretariat.

During the informal consultations held by video-teleconference on 3 December, the Committee heard a briefing from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2020/1283) and examined the conclusions and recommendations appearing therein.

In 2021, during the informal consultations held by video-teleconference with the States of the region on 22 January, the Coordinator of the Group of Experts presented the main conclusions and recommendations contained in the midterm report, following which some States of the region made comments on the report.

During the informal consultations held by video-teleconference on 20 May, the Committee heard a briefing by the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the final report of the Group (S/2021/560) and examined the conclusions and recommendations contained therein. During the same meeting, the Committee heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict, Mrs. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, on the situation of children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Also in 2021, during the briefing for Member States held on 9 July, the first in-person meeting held since the start of the pandemic, the Coordinator of the Group of Experts presented the main conclusions and recommendations contained in the Group's final report, as contained in document S/2021/560, after which some States in the region shared their comments on the report.

In informal consultations held jointly on 13 July with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, the Committee heard briefings by Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

During informal consultations on 30 July, at a meeting on the topic "Gold, tantalum and tungsten mined